

Current and Future Plans for Schools Regarding COVID-19

By Judith Castillo

Neighborhood News Staff Writer

Schools in Texas reopened this fall for students in both virtual and in person settings. As the semester wore on and risk levels have increased yet again, individual school districts have used local health guidelines to determine the best course of action for their individual localities.

The [Texas Education Agency](#) has stated on their website that it will help coordinate the dissemination of resources between the state and school districts. It does not, however, have the general authority to close the schools. School closures would need to be coordinated by school districts with guidance from the local health authorities. The prospect of another complete school closure like the ones experienced in March is a question many have, although the answer is not so straightforward. Again, it would be local health metrics that drive a decision such as complete shut-down.

What are schools going to do as the second half of the '20-'21 school year nears? The rate of infections is being monitored closely by local districts, and they are responding to the heightened levels through a pause on any more students being allowed to return to in person until infection levels stabilize.

The Department of State Health Services website has links to all the counties in Texas and up to date information on risk levels, school information, testing locations, vaccinations and more. The DSHS website serves as a centralized and most frequently updated source of information for your area.

K-12 school's response to current COVID cases is fluid as they work to do what's best for younger learners. The best learning environment for young children is in person, consequently, districts will continue to protect that option for those who would most benefit. For post-secondary institutions, many in Texas and throughout the United States have already announced changes to the Spring calendar, such as the reduction or elimination of a Spring Break 2021. Check your University's website for details.

With more widely available testing and the vaccine's rollout through the coming year, the school situation will likely continue to offer both in person and virtual learning, and many changes. Keep up to date with the [local health department's website](#).

