



# SEABURYSCHOOL

EDUCATION WITH THE BRAKES OFF

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Oct. 27, 2020

## **Dear Seabury families:**

As you are aware, COVID case counts have been on the rise for several weeks. Today, schools received an email from Dr. Anthony Chen, Tacoma-Pierce County director of health, recommending that public and private schools return to remote learning until transmission rates return to the moderate level.

The health department's message to schools states that, "The COVID-19 14-day total case rate in the county is 116 per 100,000 population (with a 6-day data lag), putting us well into the "high" activity level (over 75 per 100,000) outlined in the Department of Health's Decision Tree. ... During a two-week observation period that began Oct. 9, our daily positive cases (averaged over 14-day periods) increased by over 25 per day. Our analysis does not forecast a significant downturn on the horizon."

The health department goes on to say that, "Our latest update shows 19 outbreak-related cases at K-12 schools in Pierce County. The 0-19 age group is up by 37% and is the fastest growing age group among our cases."

We have approached having our pre-k through grade 3 classes on campus with an abundance of caution and have seen success with our safety protocols and logistics. However, with the holiday season approaching, beginning with Halloween this weekend, we need to take action to protect our children, staff and families, as well as to support bringing down cases in the region. From the beginning of the pandemic

we have assured our families that we would follow the guidance of the experts and would trust science when making decisions about when it is safest to be at school in person.

Therefore, because of the health department's strong recommendation today, we have made the very difficult decision to move back to distance learning for our K-3 students. The last day on campus for students in kindergarten through third grades will be Friday, Nov. 6.

**Here's what you need to know:**

- The last day on campus for grades K-3 will be Friday, Nov. 6.
- Family conferences on Nov. 8 and 9 will be conducted virtually, with no in-person option.
- Beginning on Thursday, Nov. 12 (following conferences and Veterans Day), all K-8 classes will resume distance learning until Tuesday, Jan. 19.
- Pre-k will remain open under the state's guidelines for childcare facilities, unless we receive other recommendations.
- Families who choose to have students return to distance learning before Nov. 6 are welcome to do so. Students can rejoin distance learning at any time, but please remember that teachers will require up to two work days to prepare any new distance learning materials.
- Distance learning box pick up will happen at both campuses on conference days. Use [THIS LINK](#) to schedule time and place for pickup.
- K-3 students on campus will take home their boxes on Friday, Nov. 6.
- This DL box will contain materials for the rest of November and December, as well as for the first week back from break. The next DL Box pickup will be shortly after we return from winter break.
- Students in grades 4 and 5 will be invited to campus for an additional small group, in-person meeting with their teachers on Nov. 6. The meeting will be similar to last Friday's with half the class coming in the morning and half in the afternoon. The schedule for those days will be provided to fourth and fifth grade families in the coming days.

- Middle school teachers will also schedule small group, outdoor, in-person meetings with students before Nov. 6. Watch the middle school news for details.
- We are investigating options for periodically bringing kids to school in small groups to meet with their teachers during the closure and will let families know more when we have more information about what is possible. We are committed to doing all we can to help our students stay connected with their teachers and with each other.

Please help our community bring down COVID numbers and get kids back in school. Be vigilant about masks, social distancing and hand washing. Check out this [blog post](#) from the Pierce County Health Department about safer ways to celebrate Halloween. Also see the department's webpage for smart guidance about [Safe Gatherings](#).

Between now and Nov. 6, please note that if you participate in activities that increase your child's risk of exposure such as attending an indoor gathering of more than three households, participating in a large, crowded outdoor gathering, or traveling outside of the area, your child will need to quarantine for 14 days and must not attend school in person during that time.

We know this is not easy news to hear – and it breaks our hearts to share it with you. While we have great confidence in our distance learning program, we would much prefer to bring more students together on campus. We continue to look forward to the day when that can happen, but the health of our Seabury community is most important. We must all be dedicated to working together to bring transmission rates back down.

I have every confidence in the resilience and creativity of our students and teachers. We will get through this together, because at Seabury, we are a family.

**Take good care,  
Sandi Wollum  
Head of school**