

KITTITAS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
DAILY VIDEO UPDATE
Tuesday, September 01, 2020

* * * * *

Good afternoon. It's Mark Larson with Public Health.

Today, I will talk about schools opening.

You may have noticed that there are more college students in town now and this is because the off-campus students have started to return. This coming weekend, 2100 on campus students will arrive to live in single rooms in the dorms. 8% to 10% of the classes at CWU will be in person, and the rest online. The students who came back are coming back because they have apartments they're paying for and that type of thing.

Central has a big lift with this and they've been working hard to get ready. They hope to be successful with their plan.

The Kittitas School District board decided to open, a decision that was their responsibility to make. OSPI, the Washington State Department of Health and our regional Department of Health has some metrics involved saying it's risky to open schools when the incident rate for COVID-19 is greater than 75 cases per 100,000 per 14 days.

When Kittitas made the decision to open grades K-2 in person and grades 3-12 in a hybrid, we were at just under 100 cases per 100,000. We at Public Health recommended that they *not* open because of this. But that wasn't a mandate, just a recommendation, and a decision was made by the board to work on their safety plan and open.

Our rates are *now* below 75 so we'll see how that goes.

Other school districts are being more cautious and have decided it's not appropriate to open yet. Some schools are bringing back some special ed. and some kindergarten kids, to see how the numbers go.

The incident rate, which is different from the total number of cases, goes up and down. The incident rate is the number of cases that occur over a period of 14 days. We don't take the last 14 days, but we go back 10 days and then count back 14 days from there. This allows us to compare different regions (like

Kittitas County and King County, for example).

With 50,000 residents in Kittitas County, we multiply the number of cases over those 14 days by two to get our incident rate. This rate gives us an idea of risk, of how many people in the community have had COVID-19 over those 14 days.

So that's the metric we're using to decide about opening schools safely. That metric *doesn't* apply to post high school education. CWU and WSU follow different guidelines, as do preschools. A lot of preschools will be expanding because they know the need is there. They are all bringing safety plans by the Public Health Department and together we're working hard to make it as safe as possible.

[Repeats math for incident rate, see above.] With this information, we can compare Kittitas County with any county in the country if we want.

I hope that helps. I will talk to you on Friday, before the holiday weekend. Thanks a lot. Bye.

* * * * *

Transcription provided by:
DARLA HILL SAUTTER
509-312-9339 or words@middledee.com

TypeWell transcription service provides a meaning-for-meaning transcription of the event to facilitate communication access. It may not be a verbatim record of the proceedings. While a complete, accurate transcript is the goal, it is ultimately the reader's responsibility to verify all information contained herein.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Today's video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuyN25-whWE>

KCPHD channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyQzBwJLbkLj7WueKJ5w7mQ/>