

Benchmarks

There are two key components to reopening school buildings for in-person instruction. First is the quality of the school’s mitigation plan, or the “how”. This plan outlines strategies the school will implement to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among students and staff upon reopening school buildings regardless of the building is open for [onsite support services](#) or in-person instruction. This plan must be adopted, implemented, and posted on the LEA’s website before onsite support services may begin. The second is the level of spread occurring within the community, or the “when”. Both the school’s individual mitigation plan as well as degree of community spread are equally important in determining when it is safe to reopen a school building.

The CDC defines community spread as follows:

Minimal community spread: Evidence of isolated cases or limited community transmission, case investigations underway; no evidence of exposure in large communal setting

Moderate Community Spread: Sustained transmission with high likelihood or confirmed exposure within communal settings and potential for rapid increase in cases

Substantial Community Spread: Large scale, controlled community transmission, including communal settings (e.g., schools, workplaces)

The ADHS further defines community spread levels with the thresholds outlined below. These thresholds are consistent with the national standards set by the Coronavirus Task Force.

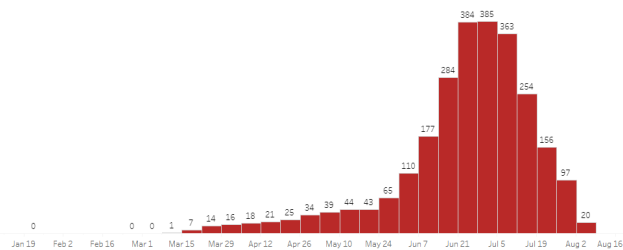
Benchmarks	Minimal	Moderate	Substantial
Cases	<10 cases/100,000	10-100 cases/100,000	>100 cases/100,000
Percent Positivity	<5%	5-10%	>10%
COVID-like Illness	<5%	5-10%	>10%

Understanding the Benchmarks

Cases

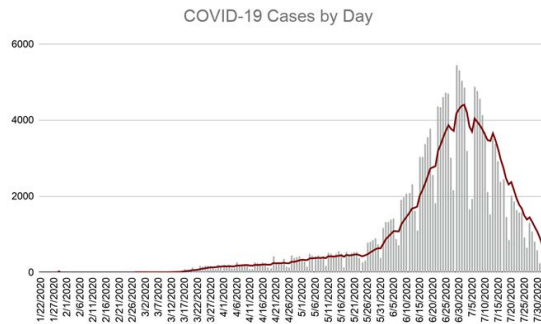
Benchmark: Two weeks below 100 cases per 100,000 (not including the current week)

Rate of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population by week



OR

A decline in weekly average cases for two consecutive weeks (not including the current week)

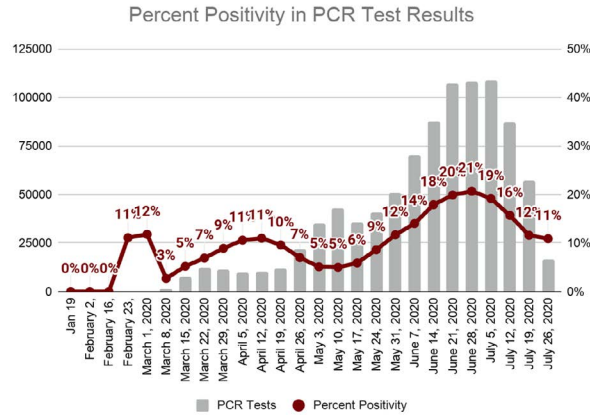


Data Source: ADHS MEDSIS Confirmed and Probable Cases

Available by: County

Percent Positivity

Benchmark: Two weeks with percent positivity below 7% (not including the current week)

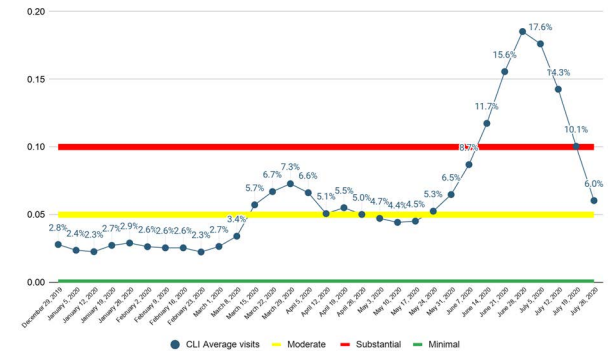


Data Source: ADHS Electronic Laboratory Data

Available by: County

COVID-like Illness

Benchmark: Two weeks with hospital visits due to COVID-like illness below 10%



Data Source: BioSense Syndromic Surveillance Platform

Available by: BioSense Region

- **Northern:** Apache, Coconino, Navajo, Yavapai Counties
- **Central:** Gila, Maricopa, Pinal Counties
- **Southeastern:** Cochise, Graham, Greenlee, Pima, Santa Cruz Counties
- **Western:** La Paz, Mohave, Yuma Counties