

Dear OUSD Community,

Governor Newsom announced on August 28 that California is moving from the COVID-19 County Watch List to a new, tiered system called [Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#). Orange County is now identified as Tier 1:Widespread (purple), which indicates that there is widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the county.

County tier rankings will be reassessed on September 8. Data is reviewed weekly, and tiers are updated on Tuesdays. To move forward, a county must meet the next tier's criteria for two consecutive weeks. If a county's metrics worsen for two consecutive weeks, it will be assigned a more restrictive tier. Public health officials are constantly monitoring data and can step in if necessary. Detailed information about the tier system is on the [CDPH website](#).

If Orange County is reclassified as Tier 2 on September 8, the county would have to stay in that tier for two weeks before school campuses could potentially reopen and allow Orange Unified to move to Phase 2 of the [2020-2021 OUSD Re-imagining Schools/Health & Safety-Driven Reopening Plan](#). **This means that schools in Orange County would be able to offer on-campus instruction no earlier than September 23.**

We understand that families have different circumstances and concerns. Our Phase 2 plan allows families to choose to remain in 100% distance learning or transition to on-campus instruction. Elementary students will also have the option to participate in a blended program with both distance and on-campus learning. Students enrolled in the EDGE Virtual Academy will not be affected.

Detailed information about reopening and criteria for closure is explained in the CDPH's July 17 [School Re-opening Framework](#).

Thank you for your patience and flexibility as we continue to navigate the new school year with the health and safety of our students and staff at the forefront of our efforts.

Warmest Regards,  
Gunn Marie Hansen, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

### **What can I do to help my county reach a lower tier?**

- Wear a mask in public.
- Wash your hands regularly.
- Keep at least six feet of physical distance when in public.
- Limit mixing with people you don't live with.