

**TEA**



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## School Phased Re-opening Planning and Execution



# A note on TEA policy

- Texas Education Agency (TEA) FY20-21 Attendance and Enrollment policy ([link](#)) allows for a period of up to eight weeks during which Local Education Agencies (LEAs) may restrict the number of students on-campus
- LEAs are still required to allow all students to access on campus instruction who come from households without internet access or appropriate remote learning devices during this phase in period
- The second four week period requires a board approved waiver request to TEA

*Note: The situation surrounding COVID-19 is dynamic and rapidly evolving, on a daily basis. This document is not and is not intended to: (i) constitute medical or safety advice, nor be a substitute for the same; nor (ii) be seen as a formal endorsement or recommendation of a particular response. As such you are advised to make your own assessment as to the appropriate course of action to take, using this document as guidance. Please carefully consider local laws and guidance in your area, particularly the most recent advice issued by your local (and national) health authorities, before making any decision.*



# Agenda and Purpose

*This document is intended to :*



Provide a tool to develop a phased re-opening approach



Offer considerations and provide examples for determining which student populations may be prioritized for on-campus learning



Showcase examples of how to sequence students return to on-campus learning

# Steps in developing a phased re-opening plan



**Review TEA requirements**  
(student populations, attendance, and waivers)



**Determine populations preferred for on-campus instruction**



**Assess on-campus capacity given health guidelines**



**Survey families and collect data**



**Evaluate capacity alignment**



**Determine phasing timeline / criteria**



**Communicate plan with stakeholders**



# Detailed actions in developing a phased re-opening plan

<b>1</b> Review requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Evaluate how the requirements to bring back all students without device/connectivity access may impact your LEA</li><li>▪ Evaluate how, if at all, to leverage the 8 week phase-in period (second 4 week period requires board approved waiver request to TEA)</li><li>▪ Consider any other TEA attendance requirements and waiver processes (FY20-21 Attendance and Enrollment policy <a href="#">link</a>)</li></ul>
<b>2</b> Determine populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Evaluate how your LEA may prioritize certain populations to return for on-campus instruction during the phase-in period</li><li>▪ Review space requirements for the prioritized populations</li></ul>
<b>3</b> Assess on-campus capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Identify what percentage of students your LEA wants to bring back on-campus and/or what percentage of space your LEA will leverage to determine your capacity threshold</li><li>▪ Consider space and staffing constraints as well as local public health context and guidance</li></ul>
<b>4</b> Survey families and collect data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Survey families (1) to determine the # of students that must be granted access to come back, and of those, which prefer to return to on-campus learning and (2) to determine level of interest of other prioritized populations to return on-campus</li><li>▪ Consider methods to survey families that may not have device/connectivity access (e.g., mailers, phone calls, etc.)</li></ul>
<b>5</b> Evaluate capacity alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Review if there is sufficient capacity, as determined by step 3, to accommodate the required and prioritized populations</li><li>▪ If there is alignment between required/preferenced students and preferred capacity, proceed</li><li>▪ If there is not alignment, evaluate how to reduce the number of students and/or safely increase capacity</li></ul>
<b>6</b> Determine phasing timeline / criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Decide how your LEA will phase in students back to on-campus learning</li><li>▪ Phases may be determined by number of weeks, local public health context, and/or LEA ability</li></ul>
<b>7</b> Communicate plan with stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Develop a communication plan to share phased approach and any associated new protocols with stakeholders including school faculty, students, and families</li></ul>



# Potential ways to progress through a phased re-opening

*LEAs have up to 8 weeks to phase students back into on-campus learning, with board approval for the second four weeks. Phases may be determined by number of weeks or other factors relevant to the local content*



## Timeline

- LEAs may choose to phase students in at **pre-determined weeks**
  - For example, an LEA may choose to bring PK-5 back for weeks 1-3, add grades 6-8 during weeks 4-6, and finally have all students back on campus by week 7 during which it adds high school
- Phasing students in by pre-determined weeks may help schools and families better prepare and plan for on-campus instruction as well as meet space requirements

*LEAs should continuously review their phasing approach based on changing local public health content; federal, state, and/or local guidance and policy; and family/student preferences*



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Showcase examples of how to sequence students return to on-campus learning

# Considerations for determining which students to bring back on-campus

Factor	Considerations
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What is student device and connectivity access?</li></ul>
Grade level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ How did younger learners perform during remote learning?</li><li>▪ What percent of local workers are dependent on schools to serve as custodians of students?</li></ul>
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Which students / sub-populations exhibited the largest performance gap pre-COVID (and/or post COVID where data is available)?</li><li>▪ Which students / sub-populations have struggled to engage in remote learning?</li></ul>
Mental health and wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Is the district able to provide tele-health and tele-counseling services?</li></ul>
Student nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What percent of students receive free or reduced lunch?</li><li>▪ How can your LEA continue to deliver nutrition and meal service to qualifying students?</li></ul>



# Student populations to consider

*LEAs may consider prioritizing specific populations to bring back on-campus during the phased re-opening that may disproportionately benefit from on-campus services and academic supports*

Student population	Example students	Rationale
 <b>Students lacking technology access</b>	Students lacking access to devices and/or connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May not be able to engage effectively in remote learning</li> <li>Offline learning tools, such as printed packets, may not be as effective as synchronous and technology-led instruction</li> <li><i>Note: LEAs are still required to allow all students to access on-campus instruction who come from households without internet access or appropriate remote learning devices</i></li> </ul>
 <b>Younger learners</b>	Grades Pre-kindergarten (PK)-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May not be able to effectively participate in remote learning at-home</li> <li>Parents may need childcare services to work</li> </ul>
 <b>Special education</b>	Students with a IEP (may also consider 504 plans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May need to bring these students back on-campus to effectively deliver services outlined in IEP and/or 504 plans</li> <li>May be better served on-campus and/or via in-person services</li> </ul>
 <b>Other special pops.</b>	English Language, At-risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May disproportionately benefit from on-campus learning and support</li> </ul>
 <b>Transition years</b>	Grades K, 6, and 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May require additional support to transition to the new expectations and processes of the next grade band</li> </ul>
 <b>Students needing add'l academic support</b>	Students whose performance gap worsened during spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May disproportionately benefit from on-campus learning and support</li> </ul>

*Note: list of students populations that may be considered is illustrative, but not exhaustive*



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# Example phasing in approaches

*There are a number of ways LEAs may consider phasing in students by population type. These examples are outlined in more detail the following pages:*

	Younger learners	Special populations	Transition years
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students in grades PK-5 are phased in over the first 8 weeks of school, along with special education students</li> <li>Grades 6-12 engage in remote learning during this period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All special populations students receive on-campus instruction daily during the 8-week period</li> <li>All other students participate in remote instruction during the first four weeks, then transition to a hybrid model alternating on-campus and remote instruction weekly the second 4-weeks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students transition on-campus by proximity to the next grade band</li> <li>Kindergarteners, 6<sup>th</sup> grades, and 9<sup>th</sup> graders return to on-campus instruction in phase 1</li> <li>Grades 2-3, 7, and 10 return in phase 2</li> <li>All other grades are in remote learning during these phases</li> </ul>
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Younger students may have more difficulty engaging with online instruction</li> <li>Families may need student supervision for work purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May disproportionately benefit from in-person direct attention, personalized tutoring, and live feedback from educators to address learning gap</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students adjusting to a new school band (i.e., high school) will benefit from becoming oriented to the new learning environment on-campus</li> </ul>



# Phasing options and requirements

	Weeks 1-4	Weeks 5-8	Weeks 9+
Students required to have access on on-campus instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LEAs are required to allow <b>all students to access on campus instruction who come from households without internet access or appropriate remote learning devices</b> during this phase in period</li> <li>LEAs may restrict the total number of students on-campus and determine which student populations may come for on-campus instruction</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All PK-8 students <b>must have the option to attend on-campus instruction five days per week</b>, though students/families may choose to continue remote learning</li> <li>For students in grades 9-12, school systems may establish a less-than-daily on campus attendance option</li> </ul>
Additional requirements and considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To extend the flexibility for an additional four weeks LEAs must submit a board approved waiver request to TEA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LEAs do not have to open every school campus, so long as families have access to on-campus learning should they so choose</li> </ul>



# Prioritization rationale for younger learners

Younger students who may need more in-person support and supervision from educators to engage with learning tasks and could be considered for an earlier return to on-campus instruction

- First priority
- Second priority
- Third priority

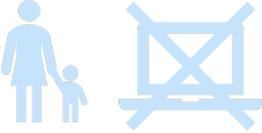
		Grades	Prioritization rationale
Elementary School	}	PK	<b>PK, K, Grades 1 and 2 (first priority):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Younger students may have more difficulty engaging with online instruction and could benefit more from supports and direction provided by in-person instruction</li> <li>Parents / families may need student supervision for work purposes</li> </ul>
		K	
		1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	
		3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	
Middle School	}	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<b>Grades 3-5 (second priority):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are more comfortable using technology to complete coursework on their own, but still may need adult support and supervision</li> </ul>
		5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
		6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
High School	}	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<b>Grades 6-12 (third priority):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older students are more adept with technology in their studies and tend to have more agency in remote instruction and work</li> </ul>
		8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
		9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
		10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
		11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
		12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	



# Example approach 1: Prioritizing younger learners

## Illustrative phased-in schedule prioritizing younger learners

LEAs may choose how to phase students back to school, such as by pre-determined weeks or other factors; weeks below are exemplary

	Weeks 1-3	Weeks 4-5	Weeks 6-8	Weeks 9+
Student populations brought back on-campus	 <p>All students without a device / connectivity access + Grades PK-2</p>	 <p>All of grades PK-2 + Grades 3-5 and special education</p>	 <p>All of grades PK-5 + other special populations</p>	 <p>All students* (+ grades 6-12)</p>
Consider...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leveraging Middle and High school campuses for younger learners through week 8</li> <li>Using weeks 2 and 3 to evaluate learnings and mitigation measures taken as well as reflect on what may need to be adjusted before bringing additional students on-campus</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soliciting feedback from families on their on-campus experience thus far</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing mitigation measures to account for additional students on-campus</li> </ul>
	<p><i>All other students are engaging in remote instruction during this time</i></p>			

*\*After the up to 8-week phase in period, all students/families who want it must have access to on-campus instruction, though families/students may choose to participate in remote learning*



# Prioritization rationale for special populations

Special populations may disproportionately benefit from on-campus learning and support, and could be considered to bring back to campus early on in re-opening plans

- First priority
- Second priority
- Third priority

Populations	Prioritization rationale
<p><b>Special Education</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May need to bring Special Education students back on-campus to effectively deliver services outlined in IEP and/or 504 plans</li> <li>▪ May be better served on-campus and/or via in-person services for aspects such as monitoring, training support and development</li> </ul>
<p><b>Students requiring additional academic support</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May be better served in-person through various on-campus support and resources</li> <li>▪ May disproportionately benefit from in-person direct attention, personalized tutoring, and live feedback from educators to address learning gap</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other special populations</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May disproportionately benefit from in-person mental and behavioral health services, academic supports, and targeted instruction</li> <li>▪ This category may include English Language Learners, At-risk students, low income students, etc.</li> </ul>



# Example approach 2: Prioritizing special populations

## Illustrative phased-in schedule prioritizing special populations

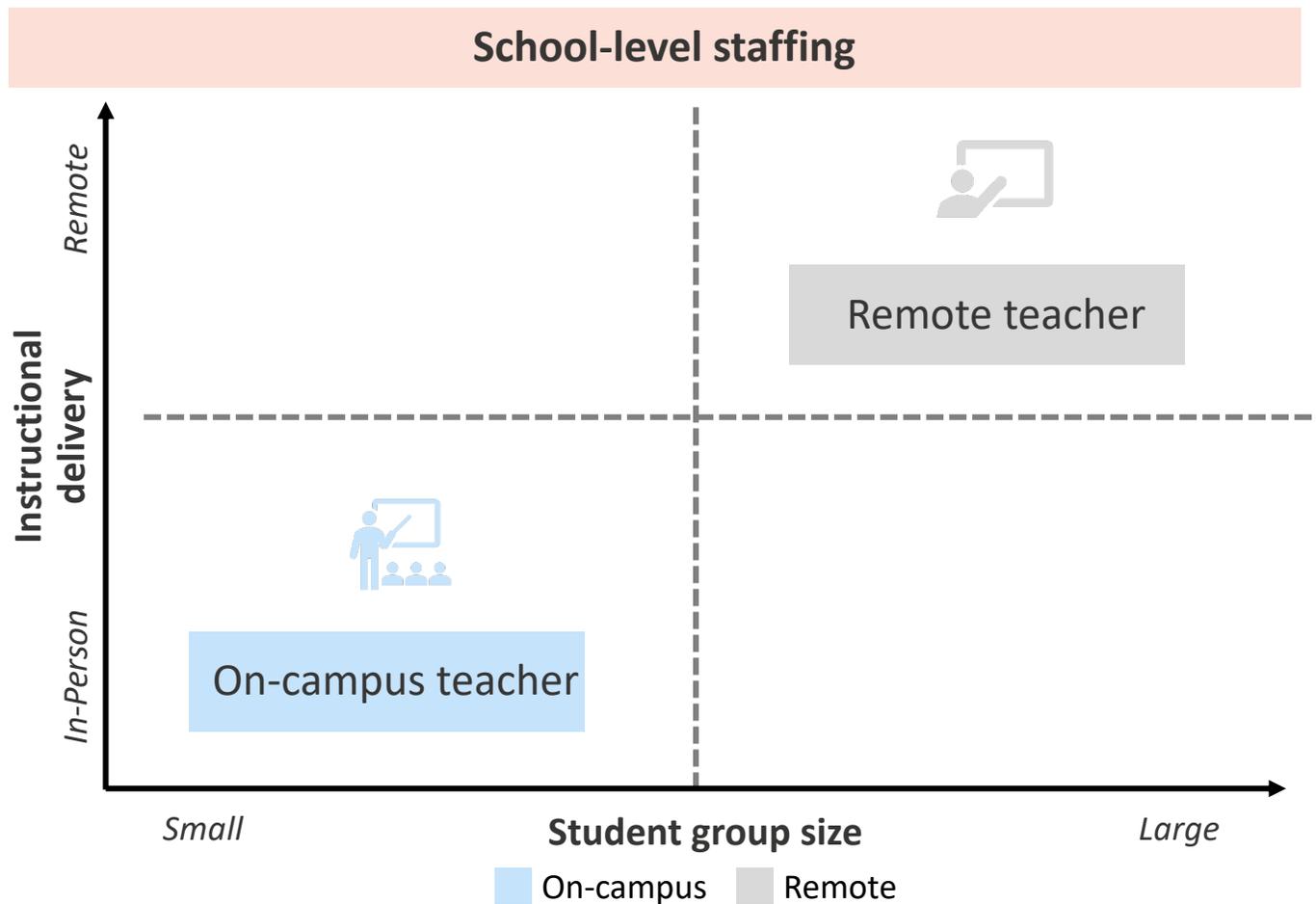
LEAs may choose how to phase students back to school, such as by pre-determined weeks or other factors; weeks below are exemplary

	Weeks 1-4	Weeks 5-8	Weeks 9+
Student pops. brought back on-campus	 <p>All special populations students only (e.g., Special Education students, English language learners, at-risk students, etc.)</p>	 <p>All special population students attend on-campus instruction every day. All other students attend school in a hybrid model, alternating on-campus and remote learning weekly</p>	 <p>All students* (+ grades PK-12)</p>
Consider...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing beginning of year assessments to evaluate learning losses and personalize learning</li> <li>Using all school campuses, or a sub-set, as well as all open classrooms to increase social distancing</li> <li>Building in mental health and wellness supports into students' daily schedules</li> <li>Grouping students into cohorts for small group / individualized support to address learning loss</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing additional support for seamless transitioning between on-campus and remote weeks</li> <li>Evaluating mitigation measures being taken and their perceived effectiveness before full scale-up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applying lessons learned in weeks 1-8</li> <li>Increasing on-campus mitigation measures</li> </ul>

\*After the up to 8-week phase in period, all students/families who want it must have access to on-campus instruction, though families/students may choose to participate in remote learning



# Example approach 2: Staffing considerations



- For weeks 1-4, consider designating teachers with strengths and prior experience working with special populations for on-campus instruction
  - Consider bringing additional teachers on-campus to increase social distancing measures
  - All other teachers instruct all other students remotely during this period
    - These teachers may have larger online classes than on-campus classes to allow for increased social distancing measures on-campus
- During weeks 4-8, consider staffing teachers by modality and, for high school, department
  - Factor in teacher effectiveness in each modality and preference into staffing allocations
  - This increases flexibility and reduces complexity of teachers' jobs by only instructing in one modality
  - Remote and on-campus teachers are paired, so that each pair has the same two cohorts of students on alternate weeks

# Prioritization rationale for students in transition grade years

Students in transition years may benefit more from being able to adjust to their new learning environments in person

- First priority
- Second priority
- Third priority

		Grades	Prioritization rationale
Elementary School	}	PK	<b>PK, Kindergarten, Grades 6, 9 (first priority):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students adjusting to a new school band (i.e., high school) will benefit from becoming oriented to the new learning environment on-campus</li> </ul>
		K	
		1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	
		3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	
Middle School	}	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<b>Grades 1, 2, 7, 10 (second priority):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students have had a year in their current school band to transition to their learning environment</li> </ul>
		5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
		6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
High School	}	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<b>Grades 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12 (third priority):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students are already familiar with the expectations of schools and have had the most experience in their school band</li> </ul>
		8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
		9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
		10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
		11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	
		12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	

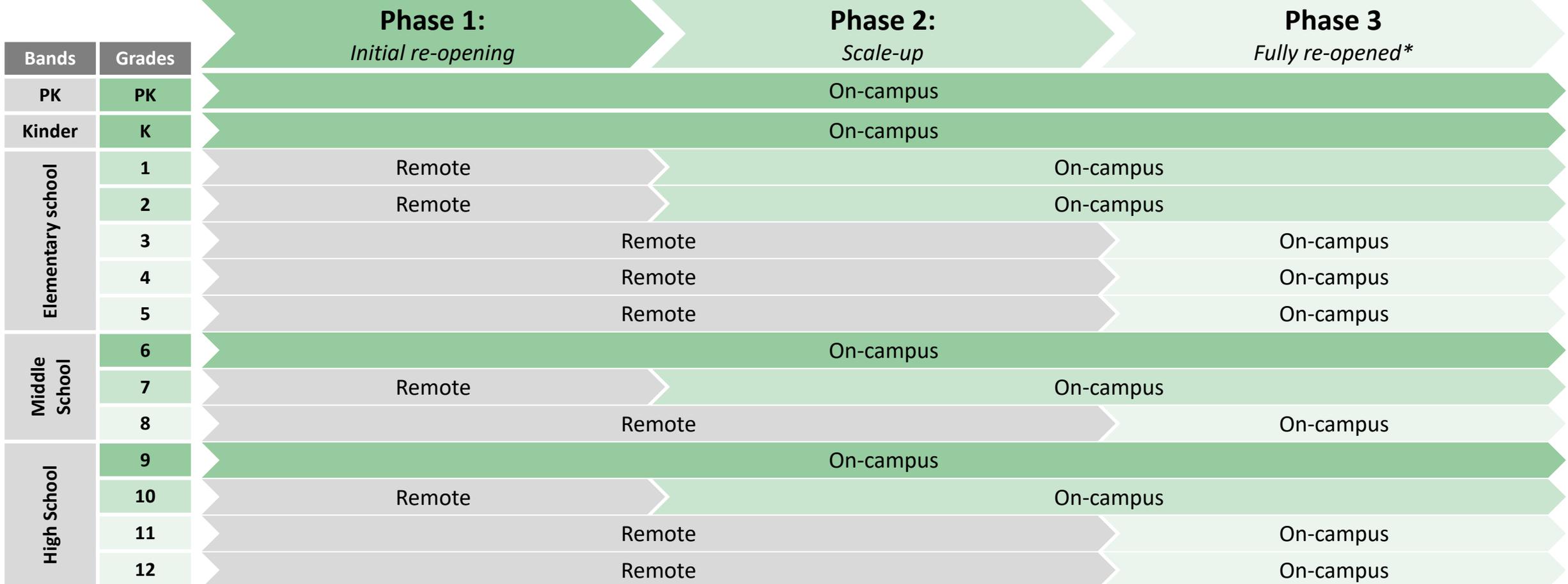


# Example approach 3: Prioritizing transition year grades

On-campus  
Remote

## Illustrative phased-in schedule prioritizing transition years

LEAs may choose how to phase students back to school, such as by pre-determined weeks or other factors; weeks below are exemplary



LEAs can consider TEA guidelines, local health guidance, and school capacity when deciding when to move between phases

\*After the up to 8-week phase in period, all students/families who want it must have access to on-campus instruction, though families/students may choose to participate in remote learning



**TEA**



*Note: Local and national health science should be prioritized relative to any of the examples included*