



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR JAY INSLEE

**EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION OF THE GOVERNOR
AMENDING PROCLAMATION 21.05**

21-05.2

Children and Youth Mental Health Crisis

Termination of Emergency Proclamation

WHEREAS, on February 29, 2020, I proclaimed a State of Emergency for all counties throughout Washington State as a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in the United States and confirmed person-to-person spread of COVID-19 in Washington State as a result of the continued worldwide spread of COVID-19, its significant progression in Washington State, and the high risk it poses to our most vulnerable populations; and

WHEREAS, I issued many amendatory proclamations, exercising my emergency powers under RCW 43.06.220 by prohibiting certain activities and waiving and suspending specified laws and regulations, including prohibiting most schools from conducting in-person educational, recreational, and other K-12 school programs using school facilities, as well as certain student educational and outreach services; and

WHEREAS, hospitals and health professionals who specialize in the treatment of children indicated that many of Washington's children and youth experienced a significant mental and behavioral health crisis as a result of the ongoing pandemic, which was exacerbated by continued isolation, difficulty engaging with virtual learning, and lack of regular in-person interaction with educators, school personnel, mentors and peers; and

WHEREAS, on March 15, 2021, I issued Proclamation 21-05, requiring all K-12 schools to provide at least some weekly on-campus, in-person instruction to all K-12 students no later than April 19, 2021, consistent with Department of Health guidance and the Department of Labor and Industries' requirements for employee safety; and

WHEREAS, increasing the option to return to school facilities for all K-12 students has helped to prevent or curtail mental and behavioral health issues for many students by reducing isolation and improving in-person access to educators, school personnel, mentors and peers, but it is not a panacea for the long-standing need for accessible mental and behavioral health services and supports for our children and youth that pre-dated, and was exacerbated by, the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, all K-12 schools have been open for fulltime, on-campus and in-person instruction since the spring of 2021; and

WHEREAS, while COVID-19 appears to be here to stay, recent advances in medicine, including the availability of bivalent COVID-19 boosters for people 5 years and older and vaccines for children 6 months and older, as well as treatments like antivirals, are reasons to be hopeful that we will have the tools to protect ourselves and communities from severe disease and death to the greatest extent possible; and

WHEREAS, although Department of Health statistics reflect the continued persistence of COVID-19 in the state, including continued hospitalizations and deaths due to COVID-19, health experts and epidemiological modeling experts believe that as a state we have made adequate progress against COVID-19 to end the state of emergency; and

WHEREAS, the general purpose of Proclamation 21-05 was to begin to address the acute impacts of school closures necessitated by the threat of COVID-19 by re-opening K-12 schools to regular on-campus, in-person instruction, and also to cause the Health Care Authority (HCA) and the Department of Health to develop a set of recommendations on how to support the behavioral health needs of our children and youth in the near term; and

WHEREAS, significant efforts are currently ongoing to, among other things, develop resources to support the integration of social emotional learning practices into schools and classrooms in order to promote social, emotional, and academic development; and to expand multi-tiered systems of support to increase delivery of behavioral health supports to students who most need them; and

WHEREAS, although the goals of Proclamation 21-05 have been met and meaningful actions have been taken to address the acute impacts of school closures, relevant experts, policy makers, state leaders and existing work groups, including but not limited to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and HCA's Children and Youth Behavioral Health Work Group, must continue to address the pre-existing and ongoing mental and behavioral health needs of our students over the long-term, informed by our COVID-19 experience that brought into greater light the importance of personal connections and a sense of community.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Inslee, Governor of the state of Washington, as a result of the above-noted situation, and under Chapter 43.06 RCW, do hereby proclaim that, although the threat of COVID-19 remains in all counties in the state of Washington and there remains a long-term need to address the pre-existing and ongoing mental and behavioral health needs of our students, an emergency proclamation is no longer necessary to address the acute impacts of K-12 school closures.

As a result, I hereby declare the termination of the state of emergency proclaimed in Proclamation 21-05 et seq., effective October 31, 2022, at 11:59 PM.

Signed and sealed with the official seal of the state of Washington on this 28th day of October, A.D.,

