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Brendan Hoffman  
Director of Student Services

To: Pelham School Board  
From: Chip McGee, Superintendent  
Re: Pandemic Response  
Date: May 18, 2022  
Cc: Deb Mahoney, Business Administrator  
Sarah Marandos, Assistant Superintendent

This memo provides the Board and community an update on the District operations in light of the ongoing pandemic.

**Key Takeaways**

- The Pelham School District remains fully open to students.
- The level of community transmission has increased to **substantial** and the level of school impact remains **low**. This means we are emphasizing Pelham data.
- Masks remain optional throughout the District including on school buses.
- Those wishing to return after only 5 days from isolation or quarantine will still be required to wear a mask.
- The Pelham School District accepts at-home rapid tests.

**Level of Community Transmission**

The level of community transmission is now **substantial**. In Pelham, the number of cases per 100,000 in the last 14 days is 495. This is 70 new cases out of the population in Pelham of 14,155. Pelham's PCR test positivity rate is 13.4%. In Hillsborough County there are 516 new cases per 100,000 and a PCR test positivity rate of 14.3%. All of these levels are substantial.

**TABLE: Level of Community Transmission**

Date	Pelham		Hillsborough County (excluding Nashua)	
	PCR test positivity % 7-day avg	New infections per 100k prior 14 days	PCR test positivity % 7-day avg	New infections per 100k prior 14 days
8.17	8.7%	276	6.3%	182
9.1	8.7%	473	6.5%	270
9.15	3.5%	579	4.4%	343
9.29	5.1%	643	4.2%	439

10.8	4.5%	692	4.0%	430
10.20	2.6%	431	6.1%	430
11.3	3.3%	311	7.2%	428
11.17	7.3%	523	10.1%	680
12.1	12.9%	1,046	12.7%	947
12.15	13.7%	1,109	11.3%	1,057
1.5	26.2%	1,250	21.5%	1,000
1.19	25.3%	4,225	23.3%	2,811
2.16	4.8%	467	7.1%	474
3.2	5.2%	247	5.4%	267
3.16	Suppressed <sup>t</sup>	Suppressed <sup>t</sup>	2.8%	91
4.6	Unavailable*	Unavailable*	3.4%*	73*
4.20	6.0%	Suppressed <sup>t</sup>	3.2%	216
5.4	10.2%	410	10.7%	368
5.18	13.4%	495	14.3%	516

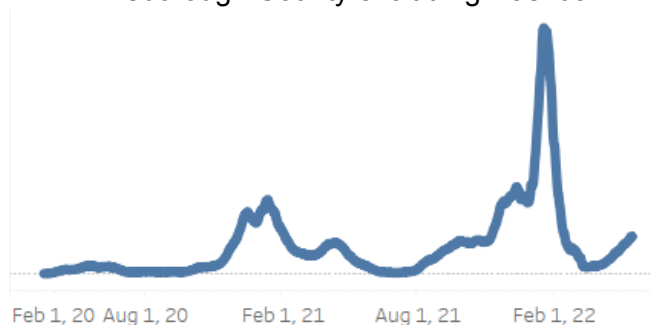
Minimal Moderate Substantial

\*NHDHHS Data was unavailable. Hillsborough County data was from the [Center for Disease Control's COVID-19 Data Tracker website](#).

<sup>t</sup>Suppressed means the rate was not calculated for towns with cases between 1 and 25 in the last 14 days. The data is limited to protect the privacy of individuals.

NH DHHS trendline from the start of the pandemic provides a visual representation of the level of community transmission. The chart indicates the rebound of new cases in the last month. This data is for Hillsborough County excluding Nashua. Town-level trendlines are not provided by NH DHHS because of the lower population.

**CHART: New Cases per 100,000 (last 14 days)**  
Hillsborough County excluding Nashua



Notes: This chart does not reconcile precisely to the table above because the chart is updated daily while the table is updated before each School Board meeting.

Level of School Impact

The level of impact on the school remains **low**. This is based on three criteria: transmission within the schools, student absenteeism, and staff capacity.

**TABLE: Level of School Impact**

Date	Transmission in schools	Student absenteeism	Staff capacity
8.17	Low	N/A	Normal
9.1	Low	4.6% - Low	Normal
9.15	Medium	7.5% - Low	Normal
9.29	Medium	9.0% - Low	Normal
10.8	Medium	8.5% - Low	Normal
10.20	Medium	5.4% - Low	Normal
11.3	Medium	5.4% - Low	Normal
11.17	Varied	9.0% - Low	Strained
12.1	Varied	9.6% - Low	Strained
12.15	Varied	7.8% - Low	Strained
1.5	Medium	20.0% - Medium	9.2%* - Strained
1.19	Varied	9.1% - Low	11.0%* - Strained
2.16	Low	5.0% - Low	6.7%* - Normal
3.2	No New Data	No New Data	No New Data
3.16	Low	5.1% - Low	4.3%* - Normal
4.6	Low	9.3% - Low	5.5%* - Normal
4.20	Low	8.0% - Low	7.4%* - Normal
5.4	Low	6.0% - Low	7.4%* - Normal
5.18	Low	7.8% - Low	9.2% - Normal

Low Medium High

\*Percent certified staff absent.

Source: Pelham School District data sources.

Transmission within the schools - There are eight students and three staff members who are currently excluded from school as a result of testing positive for COVID-19. There are no clusters. This means transmission within the schools remains **low**.

**All Known Positive Cases of COVID-19 for Students and Staff as of 5.18.22**

School	Current*			Total for 2021-22 (recovered and current)		
	Positive Cases		Clusters/ Outbreaks	Positive Cases		Clusters/ Outbreaks
	Students	Staff		Students	Staff	
Pelham Elementary School	14	6	0/0	309	65	8/2
Pelham Memorial School	0	2	0/0	167	32	10/2
Pelham High School	11	1	0/0	206	22	5/1

Student absenteeism - Student absenteeism is at 7.8% today, which is considered **low**.

Staff capacity - Staff absenteeism was at 9.2% today. Last Friday, May 13 it was at 19.0% and high levels of absenteeism like that creates great strains on the remaining staff to cover classes. We continue to seek substitutes as well as personnel for food service, maintenance, and instructional assistants. Nevertheless, the overall impact of staff capacity remains **low**.

**Decision Grid**

The level of community transmission is **substantial** and the level of school impact is now **low**. The decision grid recommends **Emphasis On Pelham Data**. Since there are no clusters in school and actual student and staff infections declined slightly since April 20, we will maintain masks optional. We will continue to monitor all variables in case further change is needed.

Decision Grid		Level of Community Transmission <sup>4</sup>		
		Minimal	Moderate	Substantial
Level of School Impact	Low	Masks Optional	Masks Optional	Emphasis On Pelham Data <sup>6</sup>
	Medium	Masks Optional	Emphasis On Pelham Data <sup>6</sup>	Masks and Distancing
	High	Emphasis On Pelham Data <sup>6</sup>	Primarily Remote	Primarily Remote

**The Big Seven**

We will continue to follow the universal guidance described in our Reopening 2021 Plan. Our mitigation measures are (1) face coverings, (2) distancing, (3) hand sanitation, (4) screening, (5) ventilation, (6) vaccines, and (7) testing. Although face coverings are optional, they remain on the list as potential tools for future challenges. Students and staff are still required to self-screen and the District will continue its efforts related to providing additional ventilation, encouraging vaccines, and providing optional testing.

**Conclusion**

The rate of positive cases continues to increase. However, we now have additional tools including vaccinations and face a less lethal strain of the virus. This means we are able to mitigate the pandemic effects with tools such as ventilation, hand washing, and testing. If circumstances change further, we will adjust and persevere.

## Metrics Scales- Reopening 2021

Criteria	Level of Community Transmission		
	Minimal	Moderate	Substantial
New - Town of Pelham - Covid-19 PCR test positivity as a 7 day average	<5%	5 - 10%	> 10%
New - Town of Pelham - New infections per 100,000 over the prior 14 days	<50	50 - 100	> 100
Hillsborough County Excluding Nashua - Covid-19 PCR test positivity as a 7 day average	<5%	5 - 10%	> 10%
Hillsborough County Excluding Nashua - New infections per 100,000 over the prior 14 days	<50	50 - 100	> 100

Criteria	Level of School Impact <sup>1</sup>		
	Low	Medium	High
Transmission within the schools	Zero or sporadic cases with no evidence of transmission within the schools	One cluster <sup>2</sup> in the school	Two or more unrelated clusters <sup>2</sup> in the school
Student absenteeism	<15%	15-30%	>30%
Staff capacity <sup>3</sup>	Normal	Strained	Critical

Decision Grid <sup>7</sup>		Level of Community Transmission <sup>4</sup>		
		Minimal	Moderate	Substantial
Level of School Impact	Low	Masks Optional	Masks Optional	Emphasis On Pelham Data <sup>6</sup>
	Medium	Masks Optional	Emphasis On Pelham Data <sup>6</sup>	Masks and Distancing
	High	Emphasis On Pelham Data <sup>6</sup>	Primarily Remote	Primarily Remote

### Notes:

- Level of School Impact is determined by the three identified criteria – transmission rate within the school, student absenteeism, and the staff's capacity to conduct classes and school operations.
- A cluster is defined as 3 or more individuals confirmed with COVID-19 who are part of a related group of individuals (e.g. a classroom) who had the potential to transmit infection to each other through close contact within the last 14 days. Two or more clusters are defined as those with onset (based on source case symptom onset dates) within 14 days of each other.
- Staff capacity includes a school's ability to maintain adequate staff for facility operations, transportation, teaching, and administrative functions.
- Level of Community Transmission is determined by PCR test positivity as a 7 day average and new infections over 14 days per 100,000 individuals. All are determined at the county level and not the community level since Pelham is relatively small and within Hillsborough County (excluding Nashua). The level of community transmission will not be a single determining decision-making variable. Rather, it will be used in conjunction with school impact and positive test rates.
- A medium level of school impact does not necessarily mean that masks and physical distancing are required. It depends on the type of school impact and will be determined by administration in conjunction with public health officers.
- "Emphasis on local data" means that decisions about increasing safety measures including masks and distancing will be based on Pelham data over county, state or national data.
- The Decision Grid was received by the School Board on February 16, 2022.