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To: Pelham School Board
From: Chip McGee, Superintendent
Re: Pandemic Response
Date: January 20, 2020
Cc: Deb Mahoney, Business Administrator
Sarah Marandos, Director of Curriculum

I am pleased to report that yesterday all three schools in Pelham successfully resumed in school instruction for families who have chosen it. Several new practices are in place to help us maintain health and safety in the schools.

- When Masks Come Off:** While mask wearing is required at school, students and staff need to be able to remove their masks at times to eat lunch and to take mask breaks. In general, staff and students are to be at least six feet apart when removing their masks. Our staff reviewed seating charts in all schools to maximize physical distancing. In those cases when that is not possible to be six feet apart, students and staff are using clear plastic barriers.
- Staffing:** We have hired a new second grade teacher and third grade teacher to increase physical distancing in those classes. We have also approved 16 new substitute teachers, though many of those are college students who will leave in the coming weeks. We continue to recruit for substitutes and other positions. We have part time and flexible hours available. To apply please go to [our applicant page](#).
- Reopening Guidelines:** We updated our Reopening Guidelines and continue to ask that families err on the side of caution when deciding whether to keep students home from school.

Teachers, staff, and parents report they are happy to be back. Students report being a little tired.

Level of Community Transmission

The level of community transmission is varied, increasing in some areas and decreasing in others. Overall, it remains substantial.

TABLE: Level of Community Transmission

Criteria	Nov 18, 2020	Dec 1, 2020	Dec 7, 2020	Dec 15, 2020	Dec 28, 2020	Jan 6, 2021	Jan 20, 2021
COVID-19 PCR test positivity as a 7 day average	3.8% Minimal	4.8% Minimal	7.7% Moderate	9.8% Moderate	8.3% Moderate	11.1% Substantial	8.7% Moderate

Number of new infections per 100,000 population prior 14 days	240.4 Substantial	441.6 Substantial	508.4 Substantial	786.6 Substantial	613.4 Substantial	736.7 Substantial	768.9 Substantial
Number of new hospitalizations per 100,000 people over the prior 14 days	1.4 Minimal	1.4 Minimal	0.5 Minimal	0.9 Minimal	0.9 Minimal	0.9 Minimal	2.8 Minimal

NH DHHS provides trendlines for this data from the start of the pandemic that provides a visual representation of the level of community transmission. This data is for Hillsborough County excluding Nashua. (Note: These charts do not provide a y-axis scale. One can get a sense of the scale by comparing the peak data in the table above to the peak data in the charts.)

CHART: Antigen and PCR Test Positivity (Last Seven Days)

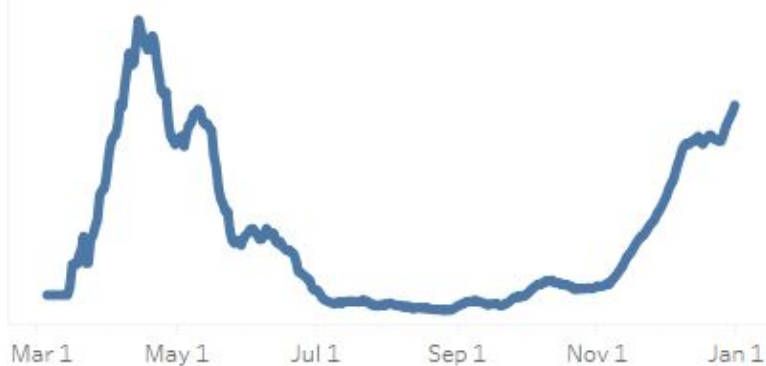
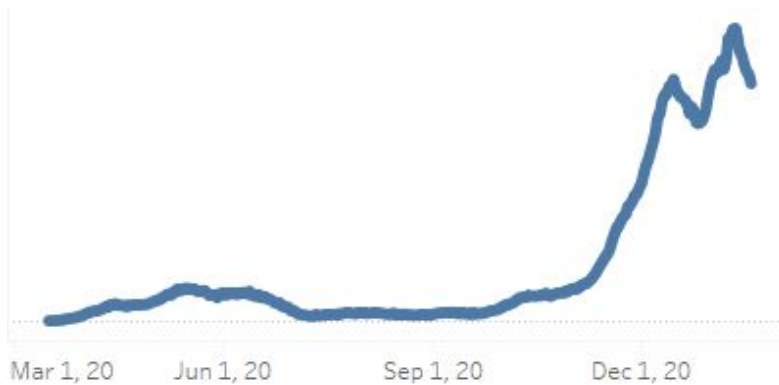


CHART: Rate of New Cases per 100,000 Population



New Hospitalizations per 100,000 Population



These charts do not reconcile to the table above because the charts are updated daily while the table is updated before each meeting, approximately every two weeks.

Level of School Impact

The level of impact on the school continues to be strained due to requests for leave as well as resignations, exclusions and quarantines.

The updated Staffing Capacity Data table lists the number of current exclusions. (The previous table has been moved to the end of this memo for reference). An exclusion means a case where a person is told to not come to school for reasons related to COVID-19.

TABLE: Staffing Capacity Data

School	Enrollment as of 10/1	Exclusions	
		On 1/20.2021	
		Student	Staff
PES	711	14	2
PMS/SAU	433	17	1
PHS	606	12	6
Total	1,750	43	9

We have 43 in school students excluded from school currently 9 staff members. Because of our time remote and our universal precautions in school, none of these exclusions are the result of in school transmission.

As a result of returning to in school instruction, we are able to report again on all three indicators of the level of school impact. We have no evidence of in school transmission. Attendance today (January 20) is at 95%, including exclusions so the level of student absenteeism is low. Although staffing remains strained, we have been able to stabilize it through additional

substitutes, suspension of non-essential professional days, the payment, at the end of the school year, for certain unused personal days and an additional classroom teacher for grade 2 and grade 3 to increase physical distancing in those grade levels.

TABLE: Level of School Impact

Criteria	Nov 18, 2020	Dec 1, 2020	Dec 7, 2020	Dec 15, 2020	Dec 28, 2020	Jan 6, 2021	Jan 20, 2021
Transmission within the schools	Low	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Low
Student absenteeism	5% Low	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5% Low
Staff capacity ³	Strained Medium	Strained Medium	Strained Medium	Strained Medium	Strained Medium	Strained Medium	Strained Medium

Source: Pelham School District data sources.

Conclusion

I want to commend the community, specifically parents and staff, for getting us back to in school instruction this week. Parents have continued to adjust with changing circumstances. Staff have taken on the challenges with professionalism. Reopening required the whole district to remain committed to our universal practices and our culture of grace. And we are.

Metrics Scales

Criteria	Level of Community Transmission		
	Minimal	Moderate	Substantial
Covid-19 PCR test positivity as a 7 day average	<5%	5 - 10%	> 10%
Number of new infections per 100,000 people over the prior 14 days	<50	50 - 100	>100
Number of new hospitalizations per 100,000 people over the prior 14 days	<10	10 - 20	>20

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

Decision Grid		Level of Community Transmission		
		Minimal	Moderate	Substantial
Level of School Impact	Low	Family Choice	Family Choice	Family Choice ⁵
	Medium	Family Choice	Family Choice ⁵	Primarily Remote
	High	Primarily Remote ⁴	Primarily Remote	Primarily Remote

Notes:

Thank you to Salem School District for sharing their materials.

- 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. Capacity to maintain operations is a subjective factor.
- 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 is a subjective assessment. Account must be taken for a school’s ability to maintain adequate staff for facility operations, transportation, teaching, and administrative functions.
- Rate of community transmission with a high impact on schools will very likely be determined by local public health officials in conjunction with school officials. High impact on schools is defined as greater than 30% student absenteeism and critical effect on school operations.
- Level of Community Transmission is determined by PCR test positivity as a 7 day average, new infections over 14 days per 100,000 individuals, and new hospitalizations. All are determined at the county level and not the community level. Consequently, the rate of community transmission determined with input and guidance from local or state public health officials. The level of community transmission likely will not be a single determining decision-making variable. Rather, it will be used in conjunction with school impact and positive test rates.

PREVIOUS TABLE: Staffing Capacity Data (used 11/18/20 to 01/06/21)

School	Enrollment as of 10/1	Exclusions				Positive Cases since Pivot on 11/25	
		As of 12/7		Since 12/7		Student	Staff
		Student	Staff	Student	Staff		
PES	711	247	62	31	21	2	10
PMS/SAU	433	161	60	20	11	8	4
PHS	606	218	33	65	16	17	3
Total	1,750	626	155	116	48	27	17