

**Eric "Chip" McGee, Ed.D.**  
*Superintendent*



**Sarah Marandos, Ed. D.**  
*Director of Curriculum,  
 Instruction & Assessment*

**Deb Mahoney**  
*Business Administrator*

**Joan Cote**  
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**Brendan Hoffman**  
*Interim Director of  
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To: Pelham School Board  
 From: Chip McGee, Superintendent  
 Re: Pandemic Response  
 Date: February 17, 2021  
 Cc: Deb Mahoney, Business Administrator  
 Sarah Marandos, Director of Curriculum

The Pelham School District continues to operate under the Family Choice model with approximately 75% of our students in school full time and 25% remote full time. While we continue to have isolated cases of students and staff testing positive, our universal guidelines and exclusion practices appear to be providing sufficient protections for school to remain open moving forward.

**Level of Community Transmission**

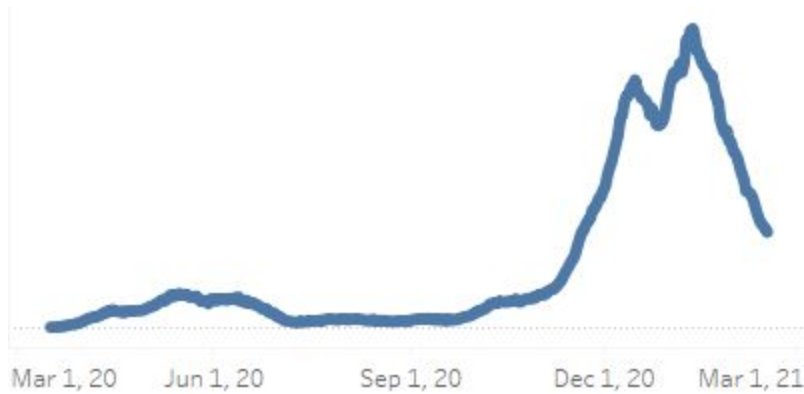
The level of community transmission has declined significantly in all three indicators since the last update on January 20, 2021.

**TABLE: Level of Community Transmission**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Nov 18, 2020</b>	<b>Dec 1, 2020</b>	<b>Dec 7, 2020</b>	<b>Dec 15, 2020</b>	<b>Dec 28, 2020</b>	<b>Jan 6, 2021</b>	<b>Jan 20, 2021</b>	<b>Feb 17, 2021</b>
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	4.6% Minimal
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	315.1 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	0.9 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. (Notes: 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: Rate of New Cases per 100,000 Population**



**New Hospitalizations per 100,000 Population**



The chart for “Antigen and PCR Test Positivity (Last Seven Days)” is not shown because it is no longer updated past January 1, 2021. These charts do not reconcile precisely to the table above because the charts are updated daily while the table is updated before each meeting.

**Level of School Impact**

The level of impact on the school is medium due to the continued strain on staffing resulting from 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 such as a close contact.

**TABLE: Staffing Capacity Data**

School	Enrollment as of 10/1	Exclusions			
		On 01.20.2021		On 02.17.21	
		Students	Staff	Students	Staff

PES	711	14	2	49	7
PMS/SAU	433	17	1	20	1
PHS	606	12	6	22	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,750</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>9</b>

We have 91 in school students currently excluded from school and 9 staff members. The increase in the number of students is a result of close contacts in school in the past two weeks. Because of our universal precautions in school and some good fortune, none of these exclusions are the result of in school transmission. While we have no evidence of in school transmission, three positive cases at Pelham Elementary School have been “epidemiologically” linked according to the NH DHHS.

Attendance today (February 17) is at 93%, including exclusions so the level of student absenteeism is low. Although staffing remains strained, we have been able to stabilize it.

**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	Feb 17, 2021
Transmission within the schools	Low	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Low	Low
Student absenteeism	5% Low	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5% Low	7% Low
Staff capacity <sup>3</sup>	Strained Medium	Strained Medium	Strained Medium	Strained Medium	Strained Medium	Strained Medium	Strained Medium	Strained Medium

Source: Pelham School District data sources.

**Conclusion**

With community transmission in decline and the school impact remaining steady, the Pelham School District anticipates continuing with the Family Choice Model for the foreseeable future.

**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 <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		Level of Community Transmission		
		Minimal	Moderate	Substantial
Level of School Impact	Low	Family Choice	Family Choice	Family Choice <sup>5</sup>
	Medium	Family Choice	Family Choice <sup>5</sup>	Primarily Remote
	High	Primarily Remote <sup>4</sup>	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
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,750</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>17</b>