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Brendan Hoffman
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To: Pelham School Board
From: Chip McGee, Superintendent
Re: Pandemic Response
Date: January 6, 2020
Cc: Deb Mahoney, Business Administrator
Sarah Marandos, Director of Curriculum

We continue to track community transmission and the impact on our schools. Based on this information, I continue to recommend our plan for reopening the Pelham School District safely on January 11 with Grade 1 - 12 returning to in school instruction for those families that have chosen in school. To make this possible, we have made adjustments to several areas of our guidelines. I have highlighted in yellow clarifications from the original plan from December 28.

1. Each school principal is revising the protocols for times when masks come off during lunch and mask breaks to allow for six feet of physical distance. **In cases where six feet is not possible, students set up clear plastic barriers.**
2. Each teacher will review the seating arrangements in classrooms to maximize physical distancing.
3. Administration will revise and republish the Reopening Guideline. **This will be ready by January 8.**

This recommendation is based on the same metrics used by the Pelham School District since the start of the pandemic: the level of community transmission and the level of school impact.

Level of Community Transmission

The level of community transmission was declining as of Dec 28 and has increased over the last three days.

TABLE: Level of Community Transmission

Criteria	Nov 18, 2020	Dec 1, 2020	Dec 7, 2020	Dec 15, 2020	Dec 28, 2020	Jan 6, 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
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

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
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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)

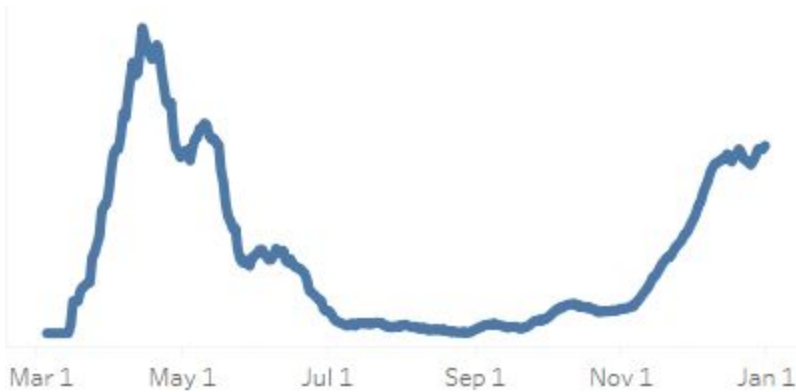
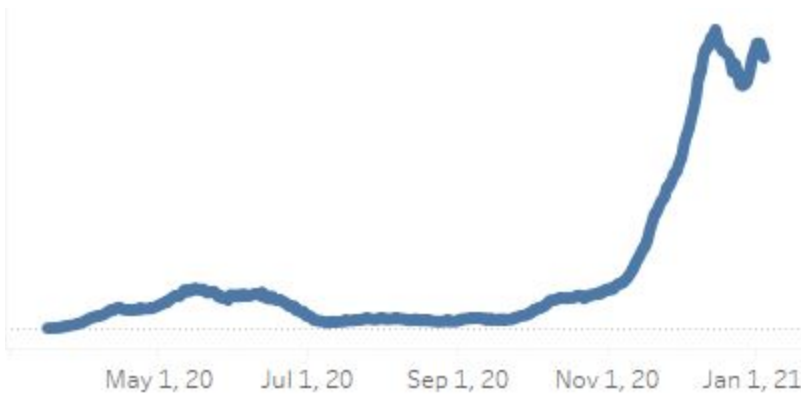
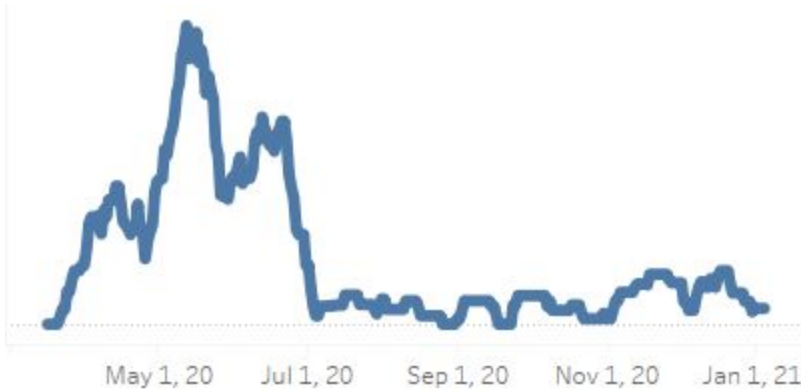


CHART: Rate of New Cases per 100,000 Population



New Hospitalizations per 100,000 Population



The increase in the last three days is likely the result of gatherings and travel during the holidays. We will continue to track this data moving forward.

Level of School Impact

The level of impact on the school continues to be strained but has stabilized. We are strained due to additional requests for leave as well as resignations and quarantines. We have stabilized staffing through several steps. We have added 15 additional substitutes to our roster since December 1. Staff have been reporting to work at school since Monday January 4. The Board approved the suspension of non-essential professional days and the payment, at the end of the school year, for certain unused personal days. We are in the process of hiring an additional classroom teacher for grade 2 and grade 3 to increase physical distancing in those grade levels.

The updated Staffing Capacity Data table lists the number of exclusions through 12/7 and since 12/7. An exclusion means a case where a person is told to not come to school for reasons related to COVID-19. The largest impact on students is not at the high school and for staff is at the elementary school.

TABLE: Staffing Capacity Data

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

We have had 27 positive students and 17 positive staff since we pivoted on 11/25. Because students were not in school, we avoided significant additional close contacts and exclusions. As a result, we likely have avoided transmission within the school, which is, ultimately, the purpose of the pivot.

TABLE: Level of School Impact

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

Source: Pelham School District data sources.

Conclusion

Our recommendation remains to reopen on January 11, Although community transmission has rebounded in the past three days, we have made further adjustments to our practices in school to reduce (but not eliminate) the impact of the pandemic. The reopening plan will require the whole district, families, staff, and students to remain committed to our universal practices and our culture of grace.

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.