



Pelham Public Schools

2021-22 School Year Opening Update

Dr. Cheryl Champ,
Superintendent of Schools
August 31, 2021

*Developing empowered, adaptable, well-balanced individuals who are
equipped to meaningfully contribute to society*



Priorities for 2021-22

- Prioritize the highest quality full time in-person education possible for all Pelham students, supporting their physical and emotional health, while balancing the safety needs of students and staff as we continue to work within the context of the pandemic.
- Continue proactive COVID-19 mitigation measures to keep students, staff and school community healthy
- Keep schools open and limit disruptions caused by illness and quarantine



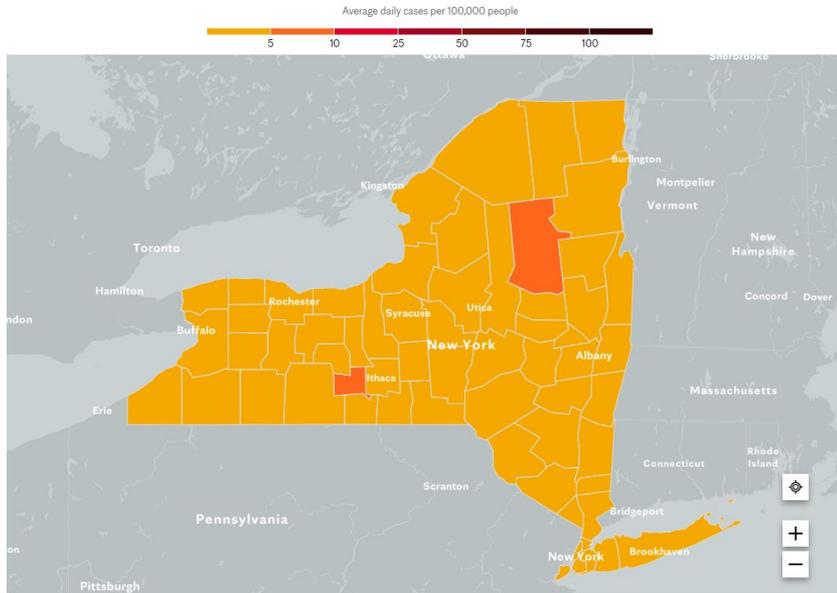
State of COVID-19 Pandemic

- We all thought that we had turned the page in the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Westchester Positivity Rate as of June 14: **.27%**
 - Vaccinations were increasing
 - Positive cases in schools May-June: **2**
- Delta Variant has changed the equation
 - Westchester Positivity Rate as of August 30: **3.15%**
 - Reports of more pediatric cases
 - Westchester County once again “High Risk”



Westchester County Comparison

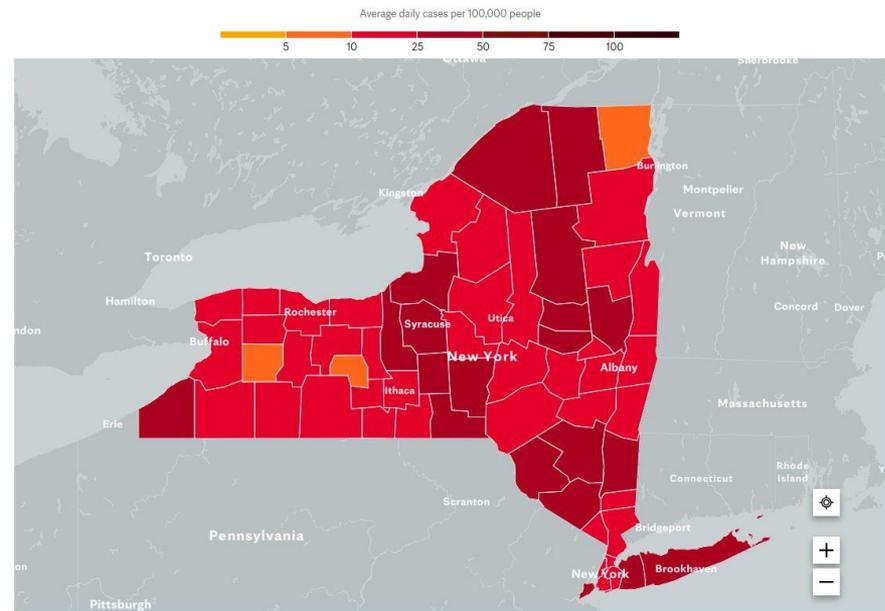
(Source - They Mayo Clinic)



June 18, 2021

Avg. Daily Cases per day - 14

Avg. Daily Cases per 100,000 residents - 1



August 30, 2021

Avg. Daily Cases per day - 199

Avg. Daily Cases per 100,000 residents - 20



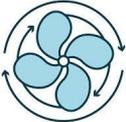
Guidance Documents

- [CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Schools](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools](#)
- [New York State Education Department Back to School Recommendations](#)





Layered Mitigation Strategies

- Vaccinations 
- Universal masking while indoors 
- 3-foot distancing to the extent possible (6-foot distancing during lunch) 
- Air purifiers and window exhaust fans in all learning spaces 
- Continued emphasis on hand-washing, monitoring symptoms and thorough cleaning 



Ventilation

- All school ventilation systems had filters changed, units inspected, cleaned and functioning properly
- Air currently recycles minimally 7-8 times per hour
- MERV-rated systems at PMS and Hutchinson
- Air purifiers and exhaust fans in all classrooms to improve air quality
- Encourage windows to be open whenever possible



Health Screening & Barriers

- Daily Health Screening Forms/EZScrn App **no longer required**
- Students and staff and staff **MUST** continue to **stay home and get tested** if experiencing symptoms of COVID-19
- Use of portable barriers has been discontinued



Masks

- Masks are required to be worn by all students, staff and visitors regardless of vaccination status
 - Not required outdoors
- Universal masking is required by New York State Department of Health and recommended by the CDC, AAP and NYSED
- Experience in 2020-21 showed that masks were effective in preventing spread
 - Little to no spread amongst students when in school



Masks

- This year, CDC and Westchester County Department of Health have updated quarantine guidance
 - Students who are between 3 and 6 ft. apart will not have to quarantine provided that both the student who is infected with COVID-19 and the students who would otherwise be a close contact were properly wearing masks



Quarantines

- District is **required** to quarantine students who meet the Westchester County Department of Health's definition of a close contact
- Definition: You are considered a close contact if you are within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes over 48 hours
 - Exception for students who are between 3-6 ft. and properly wearing a mask
 - Exception for vaccinated individuals who are not symptomatic



Quarantines Continued

- If an individual is considered to be a close contact needing to be quarantined, they must quarantine for 10 days from their last exposure (i.e. if they are exposed on Monday the 1st, they are quarantined through Thursday the 11th and can return to school (if asymptomatic) on Friday the 12th.
- Individuals can return from quarantine after 7 days if they have a negative PCR test.



Education While Quarantined

- Only for documented, mandated quarantine due to exposure (not travel) or with a positive test result
- Details being worked out at this time



Distancing & Personal Hygiene

- Students will be spaced 3-feet apart in the classroom, space permitting, arranged to facilitate instruction
- Schools should make use of available outdoor space for lunch, weather permitting
- Students and staff are encouraged to wash hands thoroughly and frequently
- Hand sanitizer will be available in all learning areas
- Supplies can be shared and science labs can be performed, with attention to hand hygiene
- No locker use for secondary students



Lunch/Snack

- K-5
 - Will be nut-free with only cold lunch option
 - Students can commingle during recess
 - Snack should be spaced and limited to under 15 minutes
- 6-12
 - Cafeteria will use card tables
 - Blue Gym will be used for lunch
 - PMS lunch and recess will alternate for half a period to reduce density
 - Open Campus for 9-12
 - Lunch options will still be individually wrapped, vending machines with hand sanitizer will be allowed



Vaccinations

- Best way to prevent infections and are extremely effective at preventing severe disease, hospitalizations and death
- All staff and teachers as well as students playing high risk sports are required to be vaccinated or undergo weekly testing
- Strongly encourage all eligible students ages 12+ to be vaccinated
- Added benefit: **Fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine after exposure if asymptomatic**



COVID-19 Testing Program

- Partnering with Westchester County/Mount Sinai Health System for COVID-19 Testing Program
- All unvaccinated staff as well as unvaccinated students participating in high risk sports are required to be tested weekly
- All other students and staff (particularly those 11 and under) are expected to participate in the testing program
- Additional details will be forthcoming



What to do if your child tests positive

- Isolate your child away from others in the home to the extent possible
- Complete the “Report a Positive COVID-19 Case” form on the District website
- You will be contacted by a District employee who will help you through the rest of the process
- You may return to school after 10 days, provided symptoms improve and your child is fever free for at least 24 hours



Additional Items

- Return to Full-Time In-Person instruction for all students following our regular schedule
 - Elementary Schools: 8:20am-3:05pm
 - MS/HS: 8:15am-2:51pm and following normal bell schedule
- Fully virtual option and hybrid model are discontinued
- Regular grading and assessment practices restored
- Music programs, theater programs and science labs restored (with COVID adjustments)
- Co-mingling during outdoor recess allowed
- School clubs and PTAs can meet virtually, hybrid, or in person



Other Logistical Concerns

- CSE/504 Meetings will be remote
- Faculty, Department, PTA meetings can be held in person with COVID protocols or virtual
- Back to School Night and Parent/Teacher Conferences will be virtual
- Outdoor PTA events do not need to follow classroom cohorting
- PCC, Junior Wonders and Rec Programs allowed
- Evening building use restricted due to cleaning
- Visitors restricted to school business



What if a child cannot attend due to their own severe health issues?

- Parents must provide documentation to substantiate need for homebound instruction
 - iTutor used for short term homebound instruction (individual remote tutoring on regular classwork 1-2 hours per day depending on grade level)
 - On-line classes through BOCES for long term homebound instruction at the secondary level
- Parents may choose to home school student



- Questions?