



# Harrison Central School District

## The Road All the Way Back to School



Harrison Central School District  
Board of Education Meeting  
**Next Steps in Our Advocacy**  
January 12, 2022

## **HCS D Board of Education Advocacy**

- Provide a path forward to a normalized school experience for students.
- Seek metrics-based standards to reduce restrictions.
- Limit the loss of in-person learning.
- Allow Districts to focus resources on students' learning and mental health needs.
- Enhance health and safety of students, faculty, and staff.



## American Academy of Pediatrics Goals for Schools

**American Academy of Pediatrics** emphasizes schools use science and data to guide decisions, understanding that policies are intended to lessen – but cannot completely eliminate – risk.

1. Adequate and timely COVID-19 testing resources must be available and accessible.
2. Strategies revised and adapted depending on the level of viral transmission and test positivity rate throughout the community and schools.
3. Policies adjusted to align and approaches refined as information/resources emerge about the pandemic.
4. Districts closely communicate/coordinate with state and local public health officials, and medical experts.
5. Provide mental health support to students.
6. Recommend COVID-19 vaccination for all children/adolescents 5 years of age and older who do not have contraindications.

## **HCSD Recommended COVID 19 Reforms: Governor, NY Commissioners of Health & Education**

- 1. Weekly PCR Testing**
- 2. Eliminate Contact Tracing**
- 3. Easing of Restrictions & Masking based on Metrics**
- 4. Increase Funding for Mental Health Support for Students**
- 5. NYSDOH Regulations/Guidelines Applicable to All School Districts**
- 6. Increased Vaccination and Booster Access**

**District goals align with American Academy of Pediatrics'  
Recommendations for Schools**



# HCSD Recommended COVID 19 Reforms: Governor, NY Commissioners of Health & Education

## Weekly PCR testing

Aligned with **AAP** Goal:

- **Adequate and timely COVID-19 testing resources must be available and accessible.**

### ***Recommended action aligned with AAP Goals***

- PCR testing should be provided weekly to school districts by utilizing federal and state funds. Weekly testing is a comprehensive method for early identification and isolation of students and adults infected with COVID-19.
- A clinically-based approach is highly effective and more valuable than contact tracing in the current environment.
- NYSDOH shall establish a participation rate for students, faculty, and staff. Reaching the standard shall permit the elimination of contact tracing. It is also a recommended criterion linked to the flexibility of other school restrictions including mask mandates in schools.

## HCSD Recommended COVID 19 Reforms: Governor, NY Commissioners of Health & Education

### Eliminate Contact Tracing

Aligned with **2 AAP** Goals:

- **Policies adjusted to align and approaches refined as information/resources emerge about the pandemic.**
- **Provide mental health support to students.**
  - Eliminating contact tracing allows school leaders to focus more effectively on identifying/isolating symptomatic individuals.
  - Districts can **redeploy** administrators to oversee the critical academic and mental health needs of students.

### Eliminate Contact Tracing

- Eliminating contact tracing allows school leaders to focus more effectively on identifying/isolating symptomatic individuals.
- Districts can redeploy human resources to support critical student mental health and academic needs.

#### *Recommended action aligned with AAP Goals*

**We recommend the elimination of contact tracing.**

**To eliminate contact tracing school district would be required to:**

- Maintain multi-layered mitigation strategies in all PreK-12 schools.
- Maintain contact tracing for at-risk student and staff populations that have close contact at school.
- Notify staff and parents/guardians of students regarding positive cases occurring in the school population.

**A school district, to the extent possible, should:**

- Provide weekly PCR/NAAT testing and encourage participation

## **HCSD Recommended COVID 19 Reforms: Governor, NY Commissioners of Health & Education**

### **Easing of Restrictions & Masking based on Metrics**

Aligned with **4 AAP** Goals:

- **Strategies revised and adapted depending on the level of viral transmission and test positivity rate throughout the community and schools.**
- **Adequate and timely COVID-19 testing resources must be available and accessible.**
- **Policies adjusted to align and approaches refined as information/resources emerge about the pandemic.**
- **Recommends COVID-19 vaccination for all children/adolescents 5 years of age and older who do not have contraindications.**
  - New York State Department of Health should establish metrics for school vaccination/infection rates to permit eased restrictions and mask mandates.



# HCSD Recommended COVID 19 Reforms: Governor, NY Commissioners of Health & Education

## Easing of Restrictions & Masking based on Metrics

New York State Department of Health should establish metrics for school vaccination/infection rates to permit eased restrictions and mask mandates.

### ***Recommended action aligned with AAP Goals***

We recommend New York State Department of Health permit flexibility to ease restrictions and mask mandates by individual school districts and schools under the following conditions:

- If weekly PCR/NAAT testing is provided to all schools, NYSDOH will establish a weekly participation rate for students and staff in a school to ease restrictions.
- A school will have a vaccination rate established by NYSDOH of all students and staff in the school through an attestation form submitted to the New York State Department of Health.
  - Vaccination Rate Threshold: The threshold rate is calculated on a school-by-school basis, including students and staff regularly providing in-school services.
- The percentage PCR/NAAT testing positive during the past 7 days by the individual school must be within 0-4.99%. The positivity rate should be based on individual schools **since in-school transmission rates have been well below county and community averages**

## **HCSD Recommended COVID 19 Reforms: Governor, NY Commissioners of Health & Education**

### **Increase Funding for Mental Health Support for Students**

Aligned with **1 AAP** Goals:

- **Provide mental health support to students.**

#### ***Recommended action aligned with AAP Goals***

- Provide school districts with required ongoing resources to address the wide range of mental health needs of children and staff that have emerged or been exacerbated by the prolonged pandemic..
- Access to these critical school-based mental health services and support is essential for all students, but most especially for at risk populations and students living in poverty.

# HCSD Recommended COVID 19 Reforms: Governor, NY Commissioners of Health & Education

## NYSDOH Regulations/guidelines applicable to all school districts

Aligned with **AAP** 2 Goals:

- Districts closely communication/coordinate with state and local public health officials, and medical experts.
- Policies adjusted to align and approaches refined as information/resources emerge about the pandemic.
- **All local health departments implement NYSDOH guidelines.**
  - Aligning procedures statewide on student isolation, quarantine, and close contacts will minimize confusion and maximize the use of NYSDOH recommended best practices.
  - There are sixty-two counties with different approaches, leading to confusion among parents, medical professionals, and educational practitioners.

## **HCSD Recommended COVID 19 Reforms: Governor, NY Commissioners of Health & Education**

### **NYSDOH Regulations/guidelines applicable to all school districts**

#### ***Recommended action aligned with AAP Goals***

**All local health departments implement NYSDOH guidelines.**

- Aligning procedures statewide on student isolation, quarantine, and close contacts will minimize confusion and maximize the use of NYSDOH recommended best practices.
- NYSDOH establish a singular protocol for students and staff to return to school after a positive test for COVID-19. Local DOH's have approach this differently, some requiring medical clearance from a physician and others using information provided by the individual or parent.
- There are sixty-two counties with different approaches, leading to confusion among parents, medical professionals, and educational practitioners.

## HCSD Recommended COVID 19 Reforms: Governor, NY Commissioners of Health & Education

### Increase Vaccination and Booster Access

Aligned with **AAP** Goal:

- Recommends COVID-19 vaccination for all children/adolescents 5 years of age and older who do not have contraindication.

#### *Recommended action aligned with AAP Goals*

- **State-level mobilization of vaccine clinics and booster clinics to support local Departments of Health.**
  - Boosters for children ages 12-15, regional vaccination clinics, and booster clinics for school-aged children across the state should be expanded.
  - Priority should be given to communities of need.