



Pandemic Response Update

February 24, 2021



Key Messages

- 1) The health & well-being of students, families, & staff is priority #1.
- 2) Our focus for this school year is to develop a safe school environment for our students and staff that prioritizes everyone's well-being and enables high levels of learning for all.
- 3) We are operating based on guidance from public health authorities and the MA Department of Elementary & Secondary Education while closely monitoring the latest information from medical experts and the evolving data regarding the pandemic both in Massachusetts and in Shrewsbury.



Current Case Count in District

In-School Hybrid Model Cases

Cases this week to date = 7

Cumulative cases since start of school = 345

Cases traced to possible exposure in school = 7

Cases in Remote Program

Cases this week to date = 1

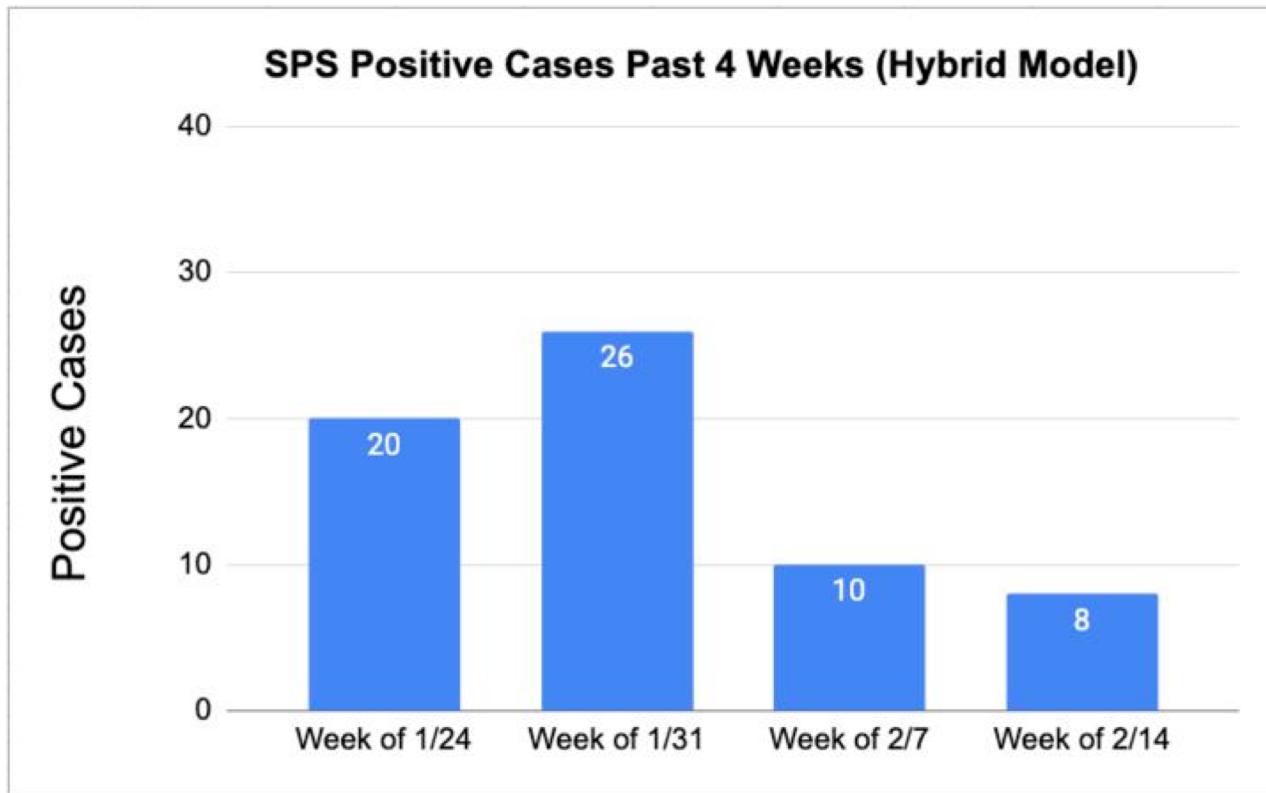
Cumulative cases since start of school = 25



SPS COVID-19 Data Dashboard

Now published DAILY with weekly count on Mondays

<https://schools.shrewsburyma.gov/district/sps-weekly-covid-19-data-dashboard>





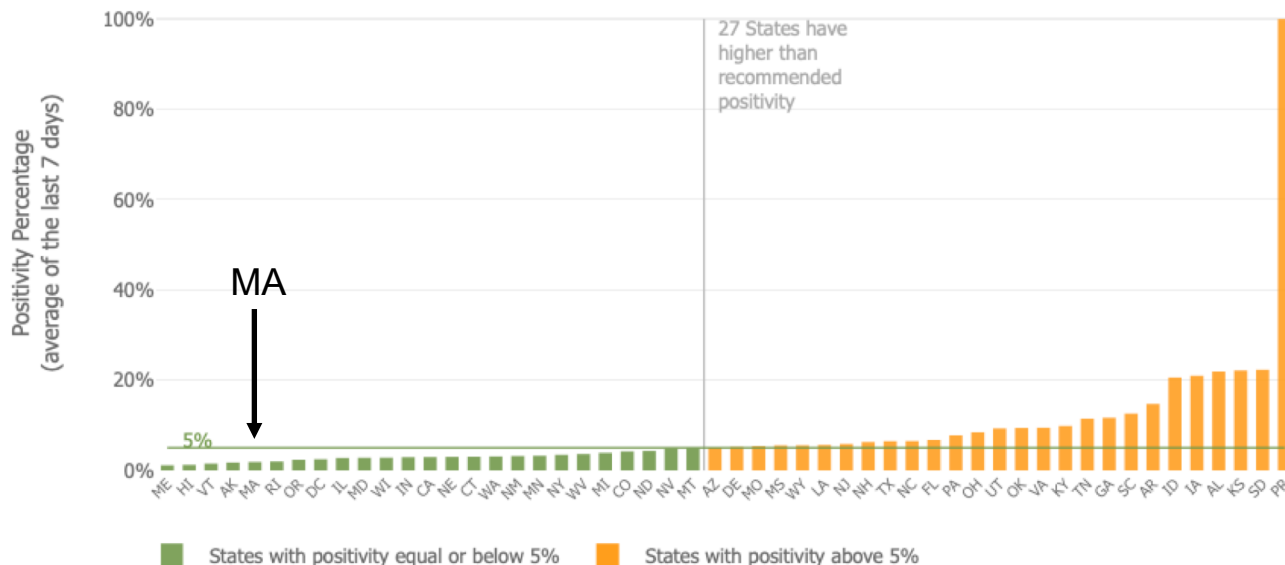
Current Public Health Data

MA 7-Day Positivity Rate = 1.85%

(Down from 2.86% from last report on 2/10)

Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center

<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/testing/testing-positivity>



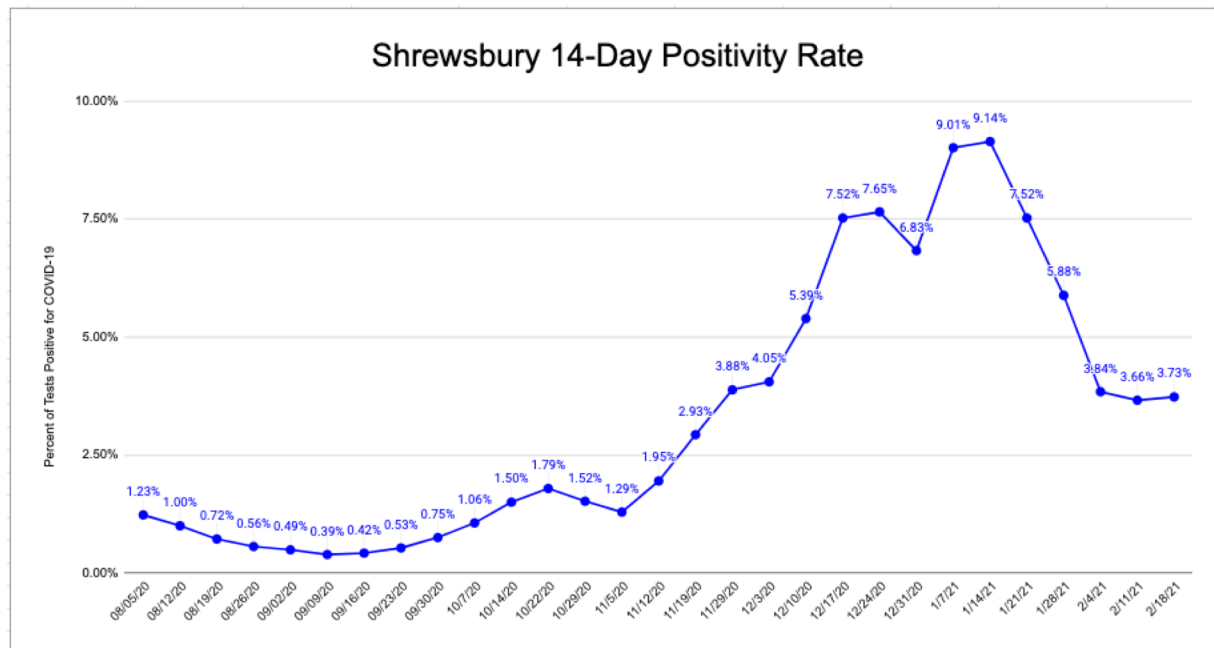


Current Public Health Data

Shrewsbury 14-Day Positive Test Rate

(3.73% vs. 5.0% Benchmark)

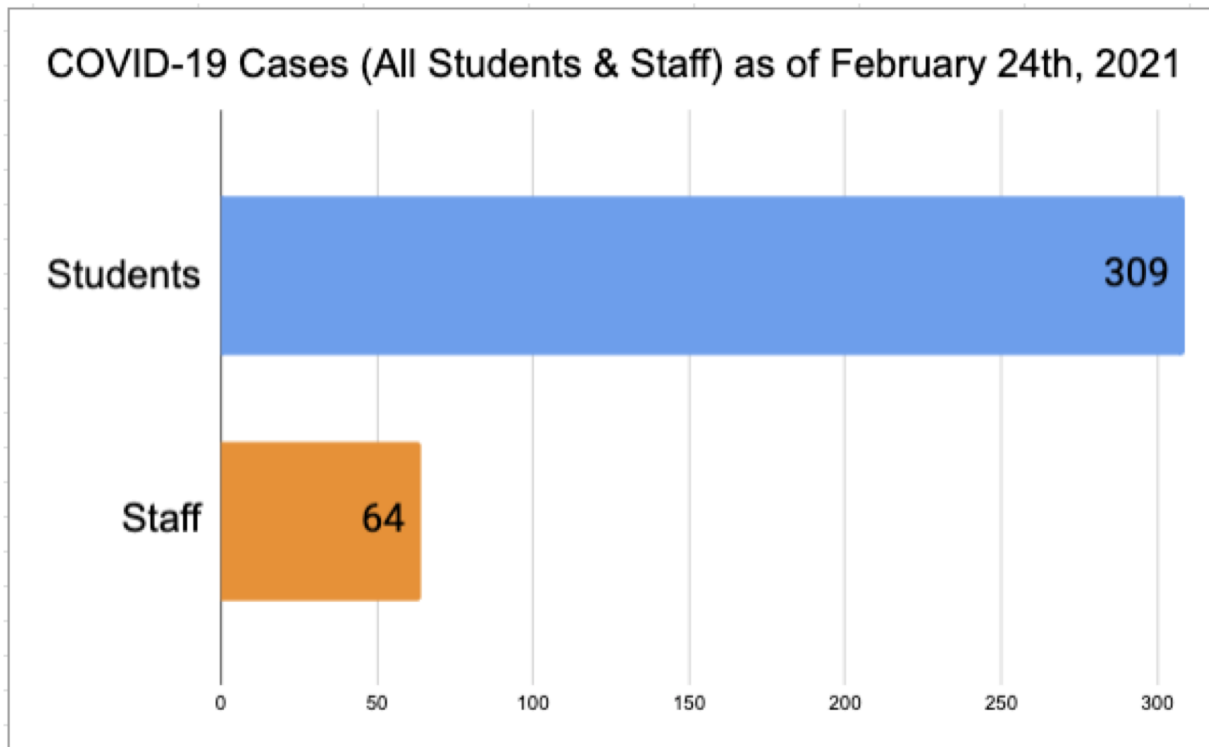
As of February 18 (Last Published)





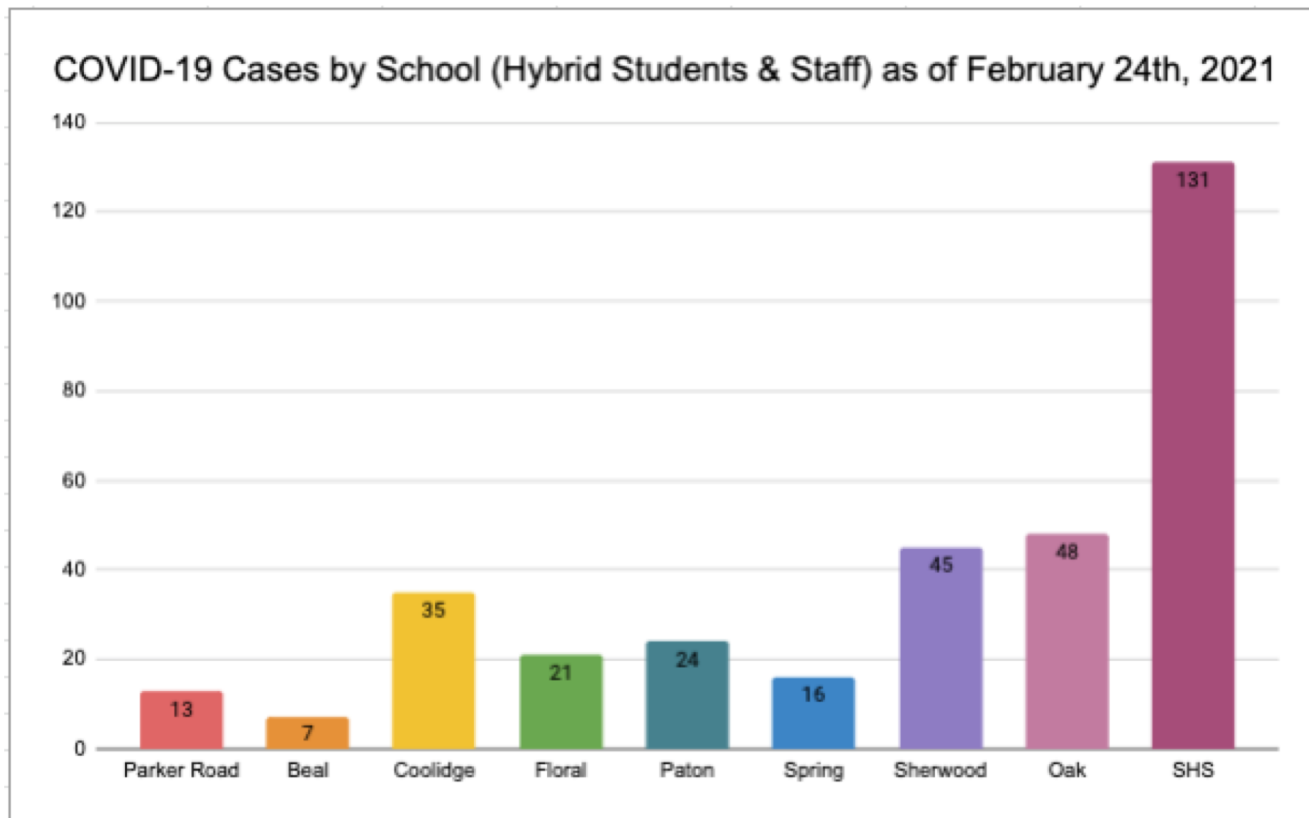
Student & Staff Case Ratio

Students = 83% of Positive Cases
Staff = 17% of Positive Cases



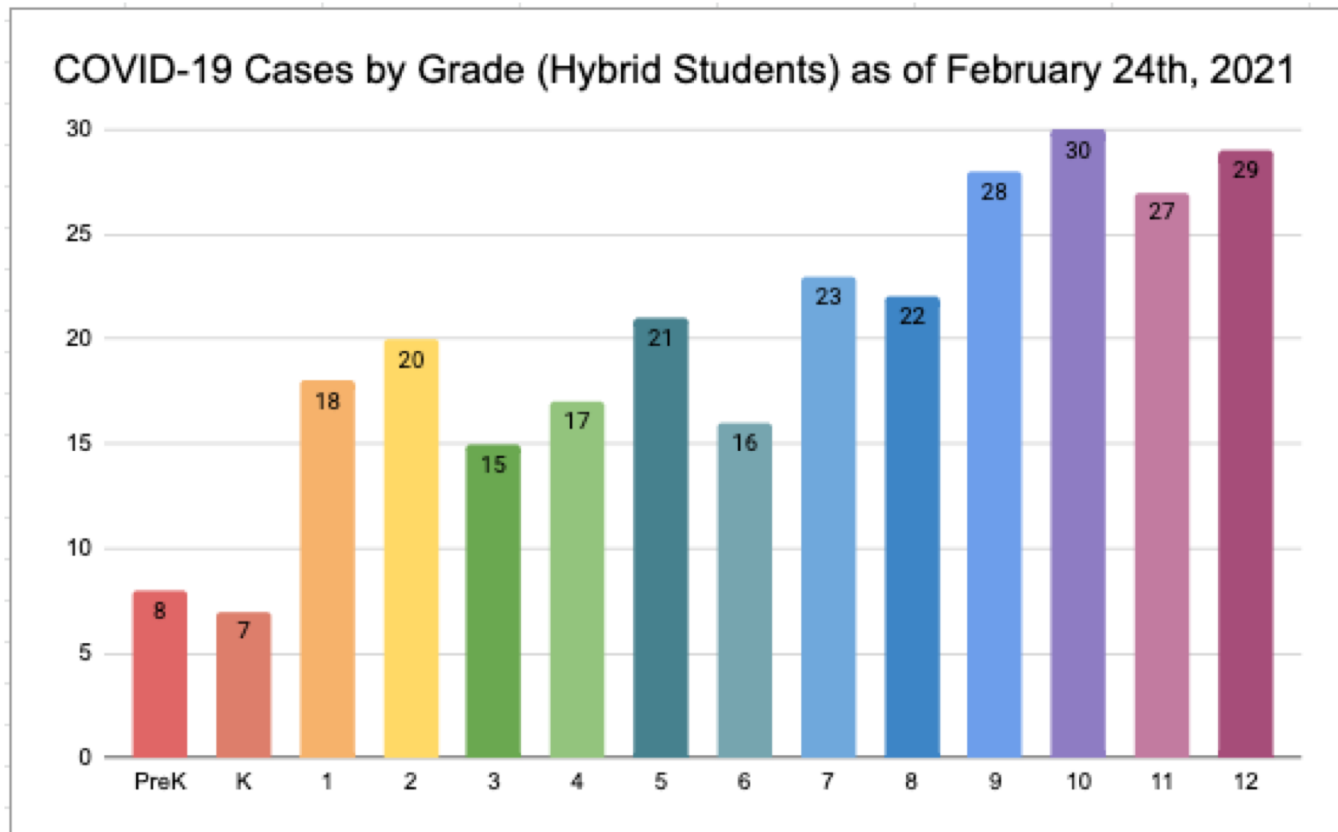


Cases by School (Hybrid Model)



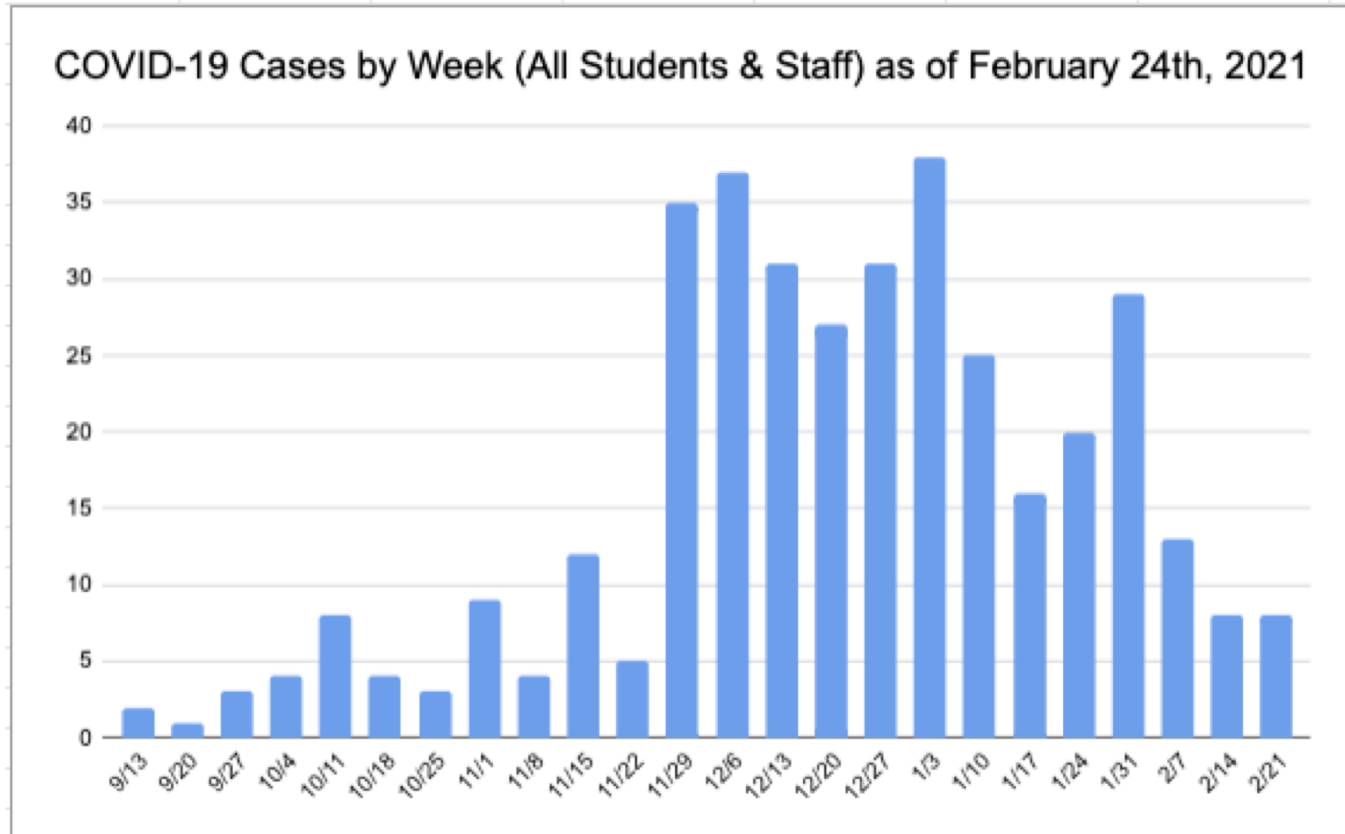


Student Cases by Grade (Hybrid Model)





Positive Cases by Week (Hybrid & Remote)





Shrewsbury Weekly Public Health Data

(As of last report of February 18)

Case Count **Jan 24-Feb 6** = 166 (11.9 cases/day)

14-Day Cases per 100,000 = 30.0

14-Day Positivity Rate 3.73%

Yellow Zone

Population			
Group	Under 10K	10K-50K	Over 50K
Grey	Less than or equal to 10 total cases	Less than or equal to 10 total cases	Less than or equal to 15 total cases
Green	Less than or equal to 15 total cases	<10 avg cases/100k AND >10 total cases	<10 avg cases/100k AND >15 total cases
Yellow	Less than or equal to 25 total cases	>=10 avg cases/100k OR >= 5% pos rate	>=10 avg cases/100k OR >= 4% pos rate
Red	More than 25 total cases	>=10 avg cases/100k AND >=5% pos rate	>=10 avg cases/100k AND >=4% pos rate



Medical Literature Focusing on In-School Transmission Risk

https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Risk-Assessment-and-Testing-Protocols-for-Reducing-SARS-CoV-2-Transmission-in-K-12-Schools_Final-10-14-2020.pdf

Table 1: Modified from “CDC indicators and thresholds for risk of introduction and transmission of COVID-19 in schools” (published September 2020).

Indicators	Lowest risk of transmission in schools	Lower risk of transmission in schools	Moderate risk of transmission in schools	Higher risk of transmission in schools	Highest risk of transmission in schools
Core Indicators					
Number of new county-level cases per 100,000 persons within the last 14 days	<5	5 to <20	20 to <50	50 to ≤ 200	>200
Percentage of county-level RT-PCR tests that are positive during the last 14 days	<3%	3% to <5%	5% to <8%	8% to ≤ 10%	>10%
Ability of the school to implement 5 key mitigation strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent and correct use of masks • Social distancing to the largest extent possible • Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette • Cleaning and disinfection • Contact tracing in collaboration with local health department 	Implemented all 5 strategies correctly and consistently	Implemented all 5 strategies correctly but inconsistently	Implemented 3-4 strategies correctly and consistently	Implemented 1-2 strategies correctly and consistently	Implemented no strategies

These are the core indicators CDC issued to inform risk assessment decisions for school reopening. Secondary indicators included hospital and ICU load and local indicators of outbreaks.



Suspected In-School Transmission

- There remain 7 suspected cases of in-school transmission
- Suspected in-school transmission cases represent **2.0%** of positive cases among students and staff in the hybrid model; in other words, **98.0%** of positive cases in the hybrid model are not due to in-school transmission



Pooled Surveillance Testing

- Began for staff on February 3; SHS students added this week, results expected to be available on Friday
- 469 staff voluntarily tested first week, 483 in second week
- 2 positive tests first week (both asymptomatic individuals); **zero** positive tests second week
- 99.99% negative tests first week, 100% negative second week



Planning for Potential Return to Full In-Person School

- SPS leadership has been reviewing various options for bringing more students back to in-person learning
- Case counts, positivity rates, and lack of in-school transmission are encouraging



Planning for Potential Return to Full In-Person School

- Significant logistical challenges based on public health guidance (distancing in classrooms and distancing for lunch chief among these)
- Every district has different circumstances (space available, student enrollment, funding and other resources)



Planning for Potential Return to Full In-Person School

- Yesterday, the Commissioner of Elementary & Secondary Education stated that he is seeking state Board of Education approval for regulation changes that would require districts to return to full, in-person school, starting with elementary school grades in April



Planning for Potential Return to Full In-Person School

Next steps:

- 1) Expanding return-to-school planning work to include wider staff representation, including union representation
- 2) Surveying of families to determine which families desire to change from all-remote to in-person (or vice versa); last opportunity for this school year
- 3) Determining resources needed to make the shift effectively



Focus on Health & Well-Being: Balancing Risks

- We must consider the issues of the health and well-being of our students, staff, and families relative to the risks of COVID-19 and the risks of not having students in school full time
- Community case count and positivity rate decreases are encouraging; **we will continue to follow guidance from public health and medical experts**



Maintaining Hope for Better Times Ahead; Viewing Our Current Situation with Candor

- Things are getting better and will eventually return to a more normal situation; vaccine availability will be a huge factor
- We must analyze our current circumstances and make decisions based on a balanced view of risk, after reviewing data and consulting with medical and public health experts