



Pandemic Response Update

March 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 = 6

Cumulative cases since start of school = 392

Cases traced to possible exposure in school = 7

Cases in Remote Program

Cases this week to date = 1

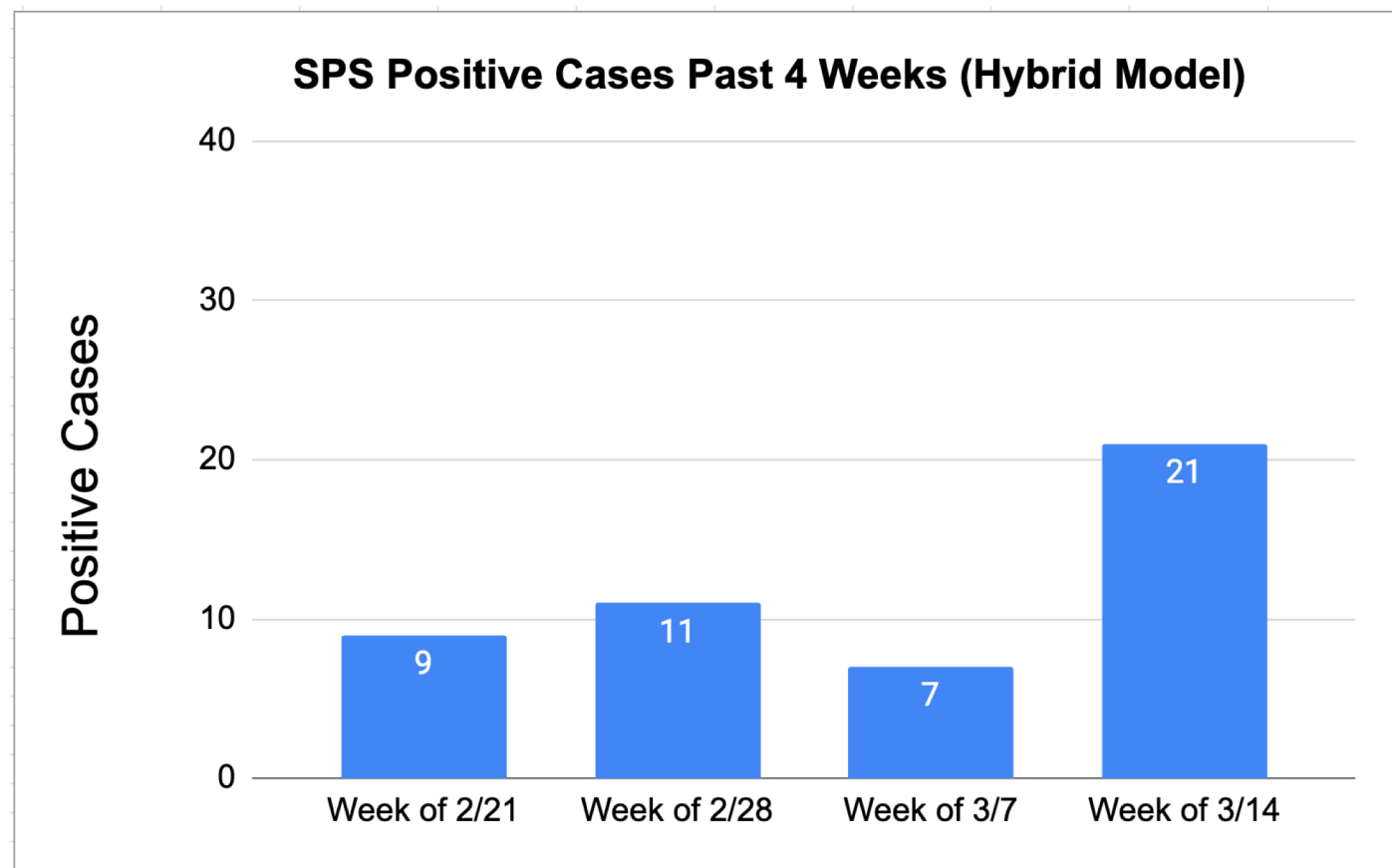
Cumulative cases since start of school = 33



SPS COVID-19 Data Dashboard

Daily cases on weekdays with weekly count on Mondays

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





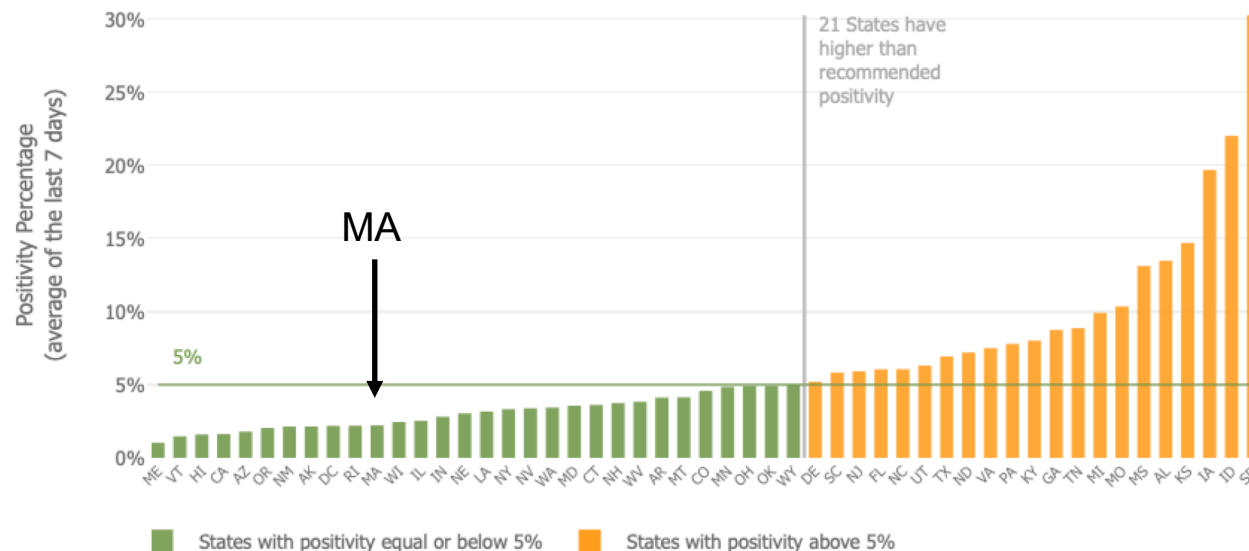
Current Public Health Data

MA 7-Day Positivity Rate = 2.23%

(Up from 1.62% from last report on 3/10)

Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center

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



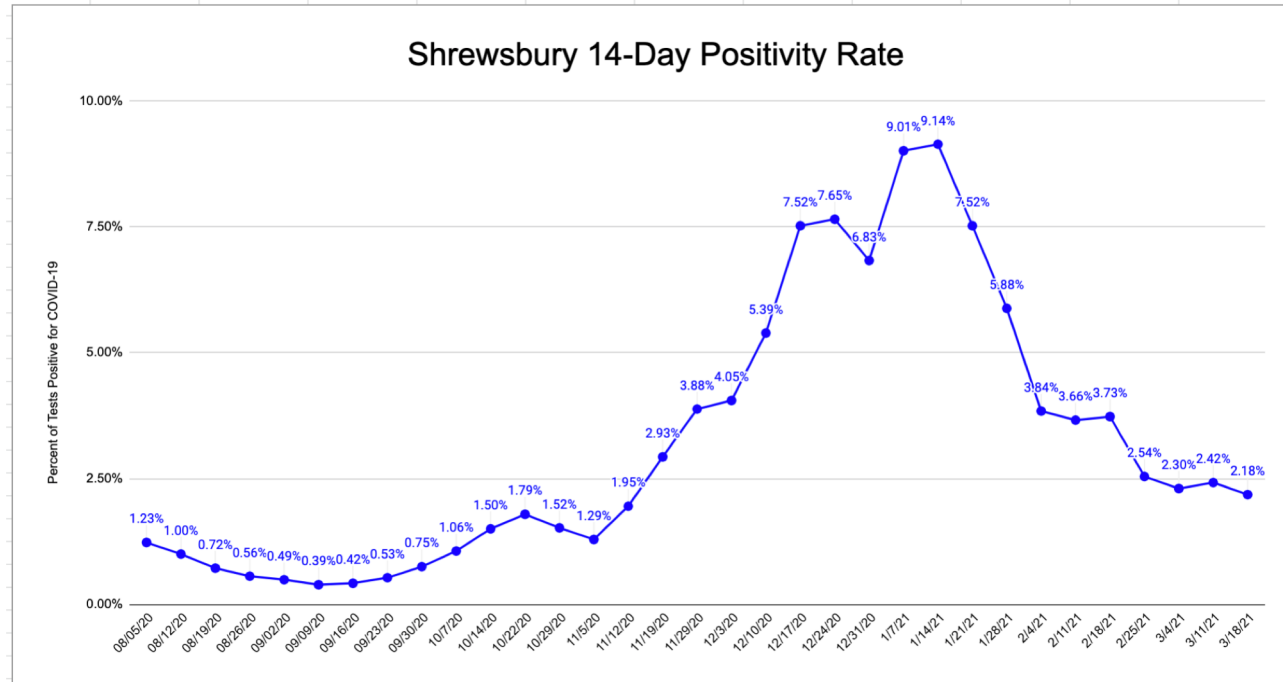


Current Public Health Data

Shrewsbury 14-Day Positive Test Rate

(2.18% vs. 5.0% Benchmark)

As of March 18 (Last Published)

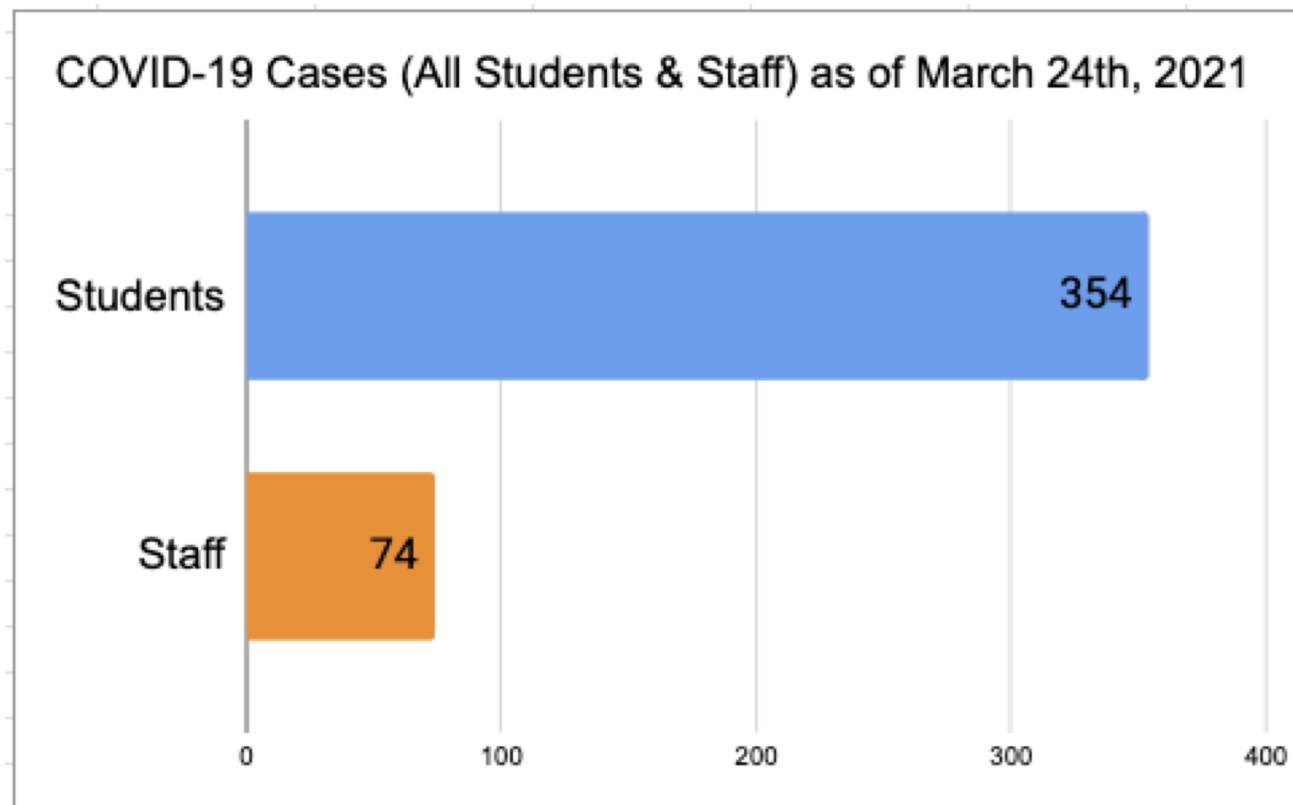


<https://www.mass.gov/doc/weekly-covid-19-public-health-report-march-18-2021/download>



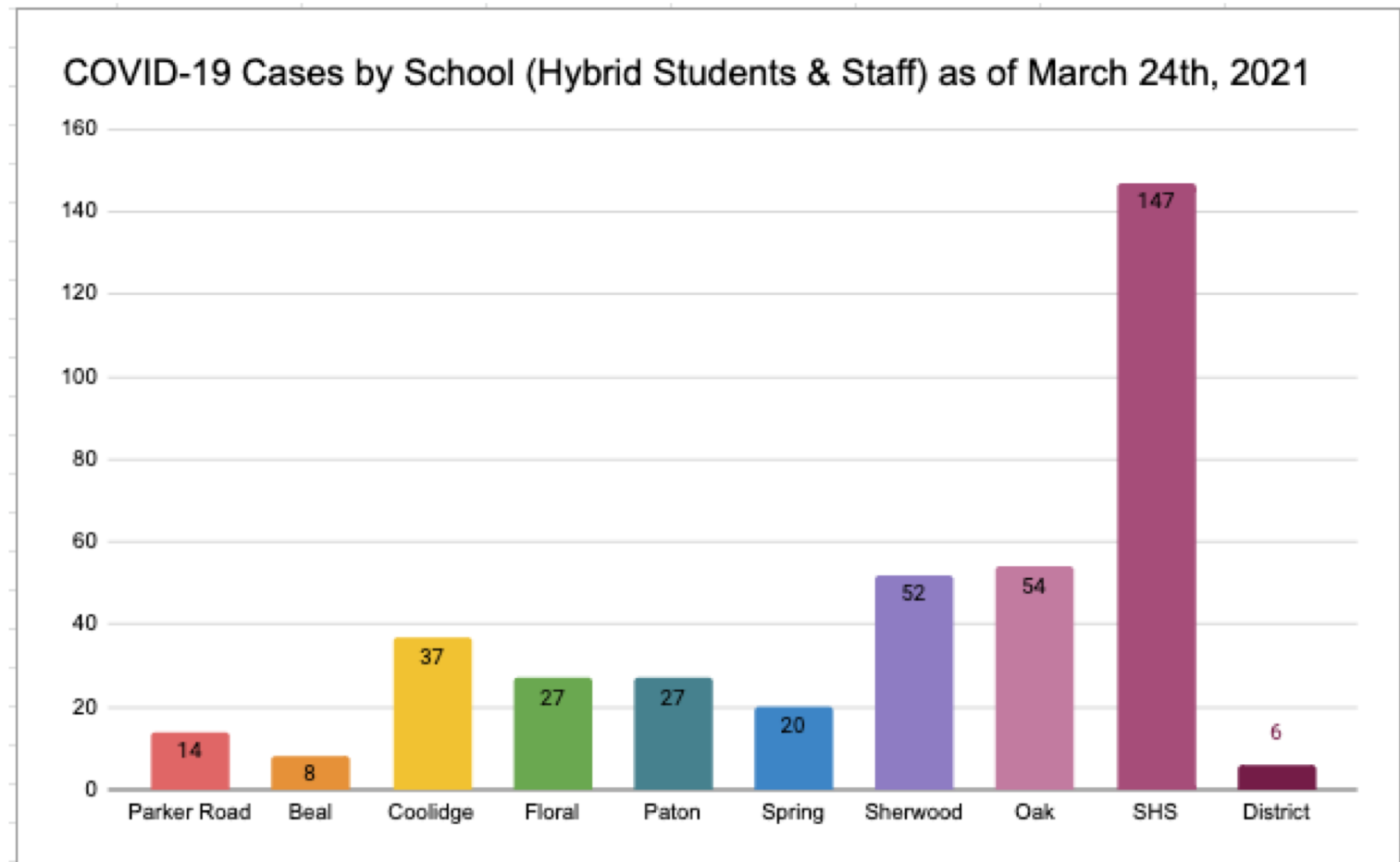
Student & Staff Case Ratio

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



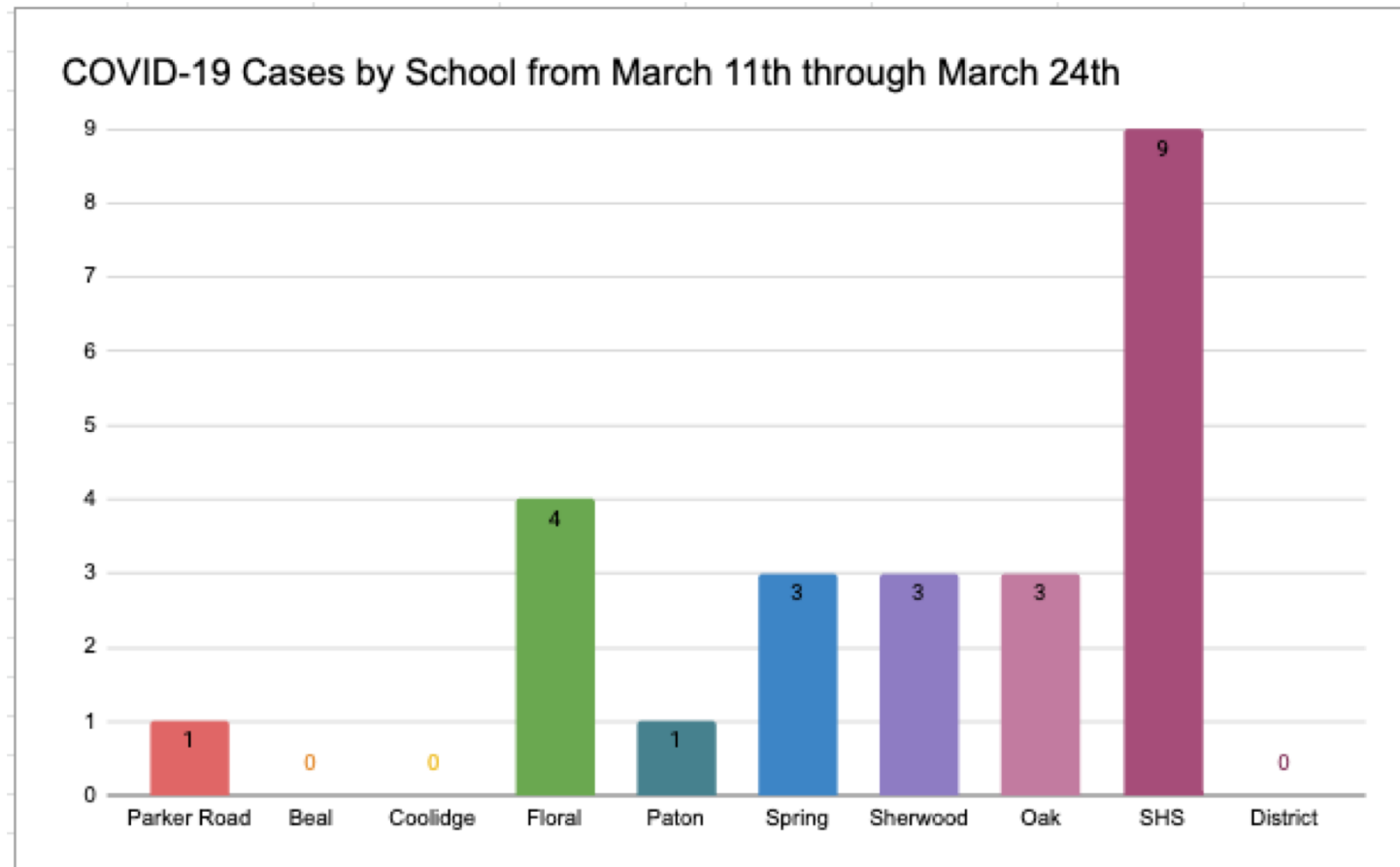


Cases by School (Hybrid Model) *Year to Date*



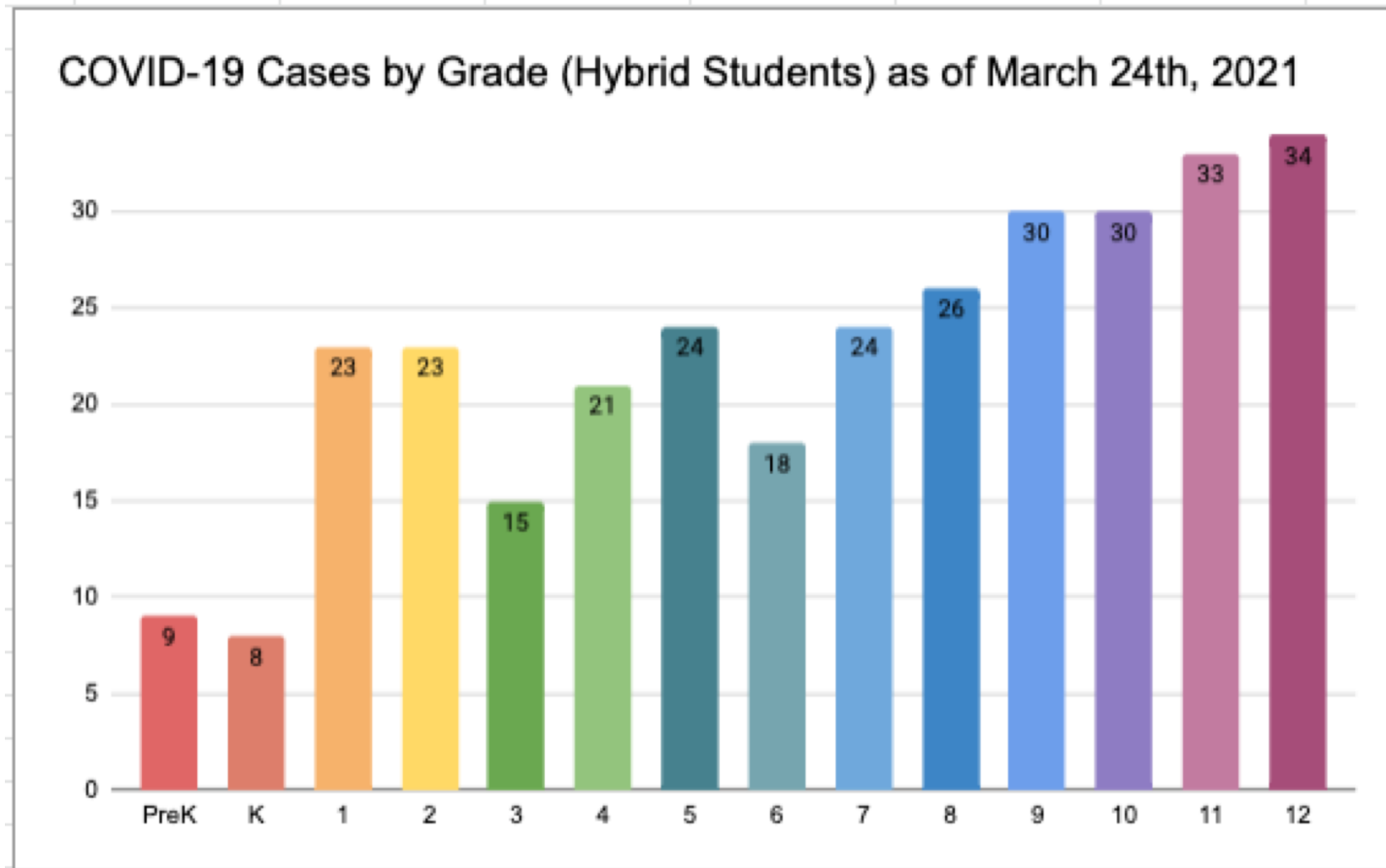


Cases by School (Hybrid Model) *Past Two Weeks*



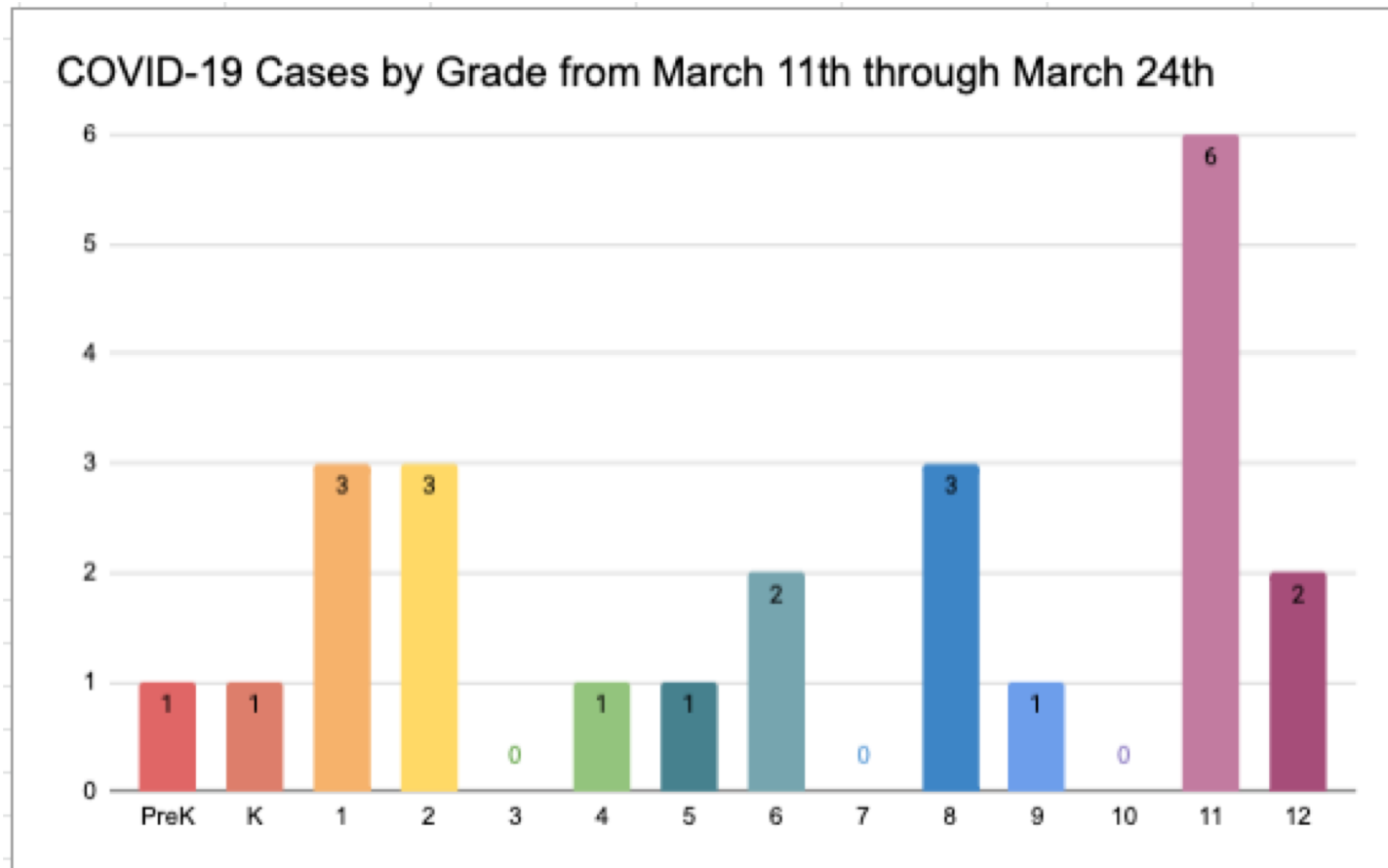


Student Cases by Grade (Hybrid Model) *Year to Date*



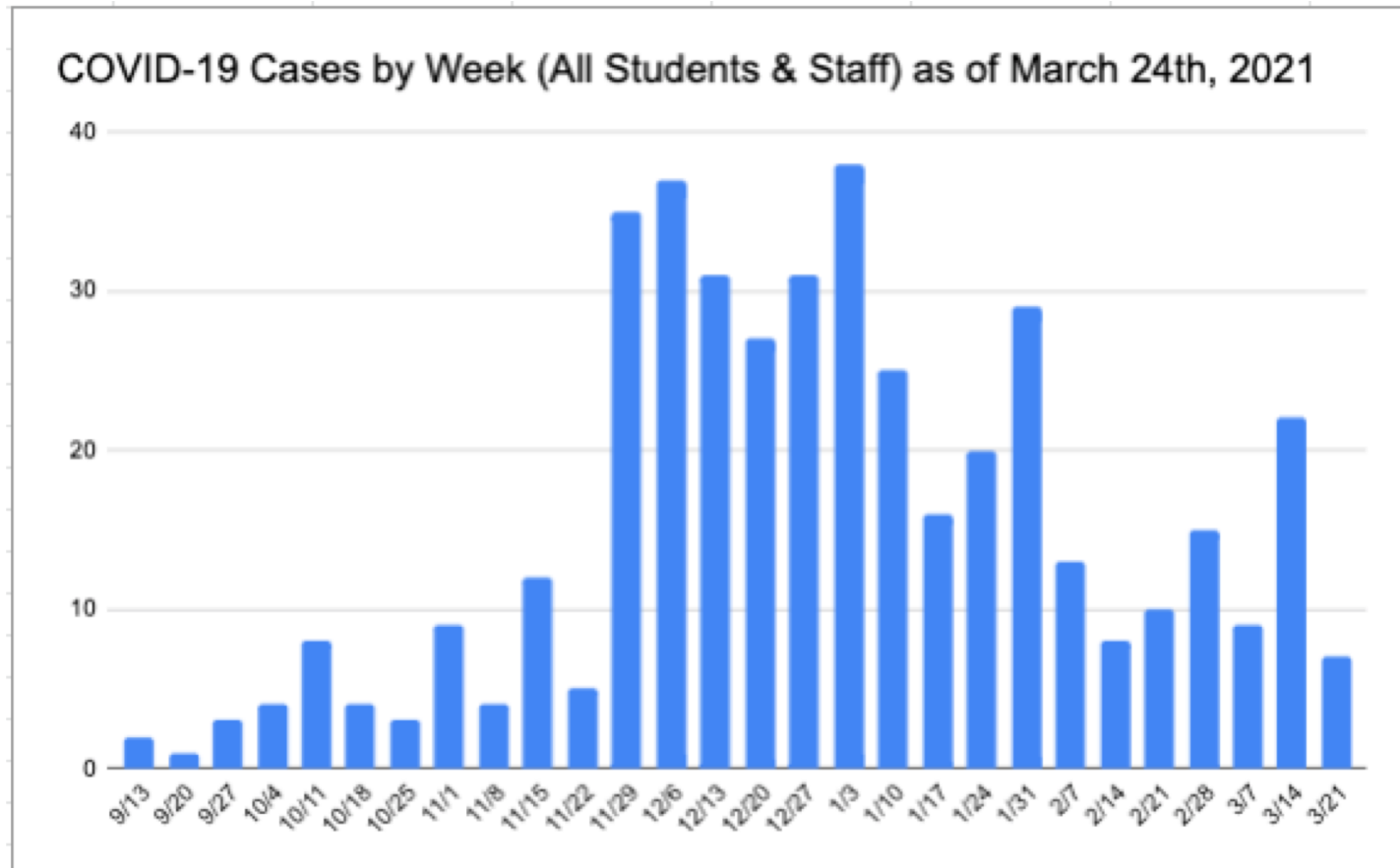


Student Cases by Grade (Hybrid Model) *Past Two Weeks*





Positive Cases by Week (Hybrid & Remote)





Shrewsbury Weekly Public Health Data

(As of last report of March 18)

Case Count **2/28-3/13** = 88 (6.29 cases/day)

14-Day Cases per 100,000 = 15.9

14-Day Positivity Rate 2.18%

Yellow Zone

Group	Population		
	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 still remain 7 suspected cases of in-school transmission (last was in late January)
- Suspected in-school transmission cases represent **1.8%** of positive cases among students and staff in the hybrid model; in other words, **98.2%** of positive cases in the hybrid model are not due to in-school transmission
- **Only 1 case of these 7 cases was suspected student-to-staff transmission.** The others were suspected staff-to-student, staff-to-staff, or student-to-student. 99.8% of in-school cases were not student-to-staff spread



3 Feet Distancing in School

Effectiveness of three versus six feet of physical distancing for controlling spread of COVID- 19 among primary and secondary students and staff: A retrospective, state-wide cohort study

Van den Berg et al., *Clinical Infectious Disease*, 3/10/2021

- **Conclusions:**

Increasing physical distancing requirements from 3 to 6 feet in school settings is not associated with a reduction in SARS-CoV-2 cases among students or staff, provided other mitigation measures, such as universal masking, are implemented. These findings may be used to update guidelines about SARS-CoV-2 mitigation measures in school settings.



3 Feet Distancing in School

CDC Updates Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools to Reflect New Evidence on Physical Distance in Classrooms

(3/19/21)

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is updating K-12 school guidance to reflect the latest science on physical distance between students in classrooms.
- CDC now recommends that, with universal masking, students should maintain a distance of at least 3 feet in classroom settings.



3 Feet Distancing in School

- Definition of close contact has NOT changed
 - Being within 6 feet of a positive individual for 15 minutes or more
- This means there will be more close contacts requiring quarantine when we have positive individuals who are in school during their contact tracing period
 - 2 days before symptom onset or positive test result (whichever is first)



Mitigation Measures Still in Place

- Physical distancing – now at 3 feet
- Masks for all students and staff
 - Rare exceptions made for those students whose disability prevents them from tolerating a mask
- Frequent hand washing/sanitizing
- Staying home and testing if symptomatic
- Recent additions to our strategies:
 - Weekly pooled testing
 - Vaccine now available for all school staff



Weekly Pooled Testing

- Allows large numbers of people to be tested more economically
- Provides information about COVID prevalence in the school community
- Allows us to identify cases in asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic individuals and begin contact tracing and quarantine sooner, preventing possible spread



Weekly Pooled Testing

- Samples are pooled at the lab with individual samples preserved for reflex testing
 - This prevents an entire pool of people being quarantined if a pool is positive
- Quick and easy shallow nasal swab is done at home and dropped off at school
- Sign up involves electronic signature of informed consent on the PowerSchool parent portal



Vaccines for School Staff

- Staff surveyed today – over 700 responses
 - 77% have received at least one dose of vaccine
 - 13% of those are fully vaccinated
 - 17% are scheduled to receive their first dose
 - 5% do not plan to get the vaccine
 - 1% are having trouble finding an appointment



Vaccines for School Staff

- Thanks to our community partners!
 - Osco Pharmacy
 - Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance
 - St Vincent's Hospital-Worcester State University Regional Vaccination site



Challenges for Return to Full In-Person School

“For many districts, this will be a substantial programming shift mid-school year. Families should expect that districts may need to make challenging tradeoffs to accommodate the full in-person instructional mode. For instance, if students are currently learning in a hybrid model, the shift to more in-person days may require changes in classroom learning spaces and, in some cases, teacher-student assignments. If students are currently in a remote model or choose to learn remotely when these new requirements go into effect, the remote learning option may look different than the model offered prior to the implementation of these new requirements.”

(from DESE Guidance Document – March 9, 2021)



Plan for Return to Full In-Person School

- Significant logistical challenges based on public health guidance (3 foot distancing in classrooms and 6 foot distancing for lunch/mask breaks, etc. chief among these)
- We have purchased approximately 1,600 desks and 300 tables to enable full return (using COVID grant funds)
- Phase-in approach is necessary for logistics to work



Plan to Return to Full In-Person School

Recommended Return Timeline for School Committee Vote

Grades K-4:	Monday, April 5
Grades 5-6:	Monday, April 12 (phase-in)
Grades 7-8:	Monday, April 26 (phase-in)
Grades 9-12:	Monday, May 3



Plan to Return to Full In-Person School

Recommended Return Timeline for School Committee Vote

Grades K-4: Monday, April 5

- All K-4 students opting for in-person learning will return on Monday, April 5
- Two all-remote days to implement furniture moves/installations on Thurs, March 25 & Fri, March 26



Plan to Return to Full In-Person School

Recommended Return Timeline for School Committee Vote

Grades K-4: Monday, April 5

- Early release days will be held on Wednesday, April 7 and Wednesday, April 14
- In order to meet state student learning time requirements, there will be no more Wednesday early release days for grades K-8 after April 14, and for grades 9-12 after April 28



Plan to Return to Full In-Person School

Recommended Return Timeline for School Committee Vote

Grades 5-6: Monday, April 12 (phase-in)

- “Overflow” spacing model used due to not enough space for some Grade 5 teams (using a third space to distribute students to avoid moving to new teams/changing teachers)
- Two all-remote days for all Sherwood students to implement furniture moves/installations on Monday, April 5 & Tuesday, April 6



Plan to Return to Full In-Person School

Recommended Return Timeline for School Committee Vote

Grades 5-6: Monday, April 12 (phase-in)

- All **Grade 6** students, including students previously in all-remote Cohort D who are returning, attend on **Monday, April 12**
- All **Grade 5** students, including students previously in all-remote Cohort D who are returning, attend on **Tuesday, April 13**



Plan to Return to Full In-Person School

Recommended Return Timeline for School Committee Vote

Grades 5-6: Monday, April 12 (phase-in)

- **All Sherwood students attend the morning of Wednesday, April 14 (early release day)**
- **All Sherwood students attend full days on Thursday, April 15 and Friday, April 16**



Plan to Return to Full In-Person School

Recommended Return Timeline for School Committee Vote

Grades 7-8: Monday, April 26 (phase-in)

- Two all-remote days for all Oak students to implement furniture moves/installations on Tuesday, April 13 & Thursday, April 15
- A new team will be created at each grade by decoupling the existing, in-person team that is split across both Grade 7 and Grade 8 (7/8 Teal)
- All-remote students who are returning to school will be placed with those 7 or 8 Teal students to form a new, in-person team in each grade



Plan to Return to Full In-Person School

Recommended Return Timeline for School Committee Vote

Grades 7-8: Monday, April 26 (phase-in)

- Too many students are returning from all-remote to distribute across all teams; two teachers from 7/8 Teal will go to each new team to minimize teacher change for those students as much as possible
- Remaining Cohort D all-remote students who are on the split Grade 7/8 all-remote team (7/8 Sapphire) will join the other all-remote students on the remaining remote team in their respective grades



Plan to Return to Full In-Person School

Recommended Return Timeline for School Committee Vote

Grades 7-8: Monday, April 26 (phase-in)

- All students in **Cohorts A, B, and returning from Cohort D** will attend school in person on **Monday, April 26**
- All students in **Cohorts A, C, and returning from Cohort D** will attend school in person **Tuesday, April 27**
- All Oak students attend school in person on **Wednesday, April 28** and going forward



Plan to Return to Full In-Person School

Recommended Return Timeline for School Committee Vote

Grades 9-12: Monday, May 3

- All 9-12 students opting for in-person learning will return on Monday, May 3
- Two all-remote days to implement furniture moves/installations on Tue, April 27 & Thurs, April 29 (may not require remote in mornings depending on work able to be completed over April Vacation)



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 for K-12 staff is bringing more peace of mind
- We continue to follow guidance from experts as we return to full, in-person learning in the safest way possible, while balancing risk
- We will experience major benefits with a phased-in return to full, in-person school; there will be some additional risk of quarantining more students due to close contact rules with students seated 3 feet apart