School Reopening Update

December 16, 2020

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 = 20

Cumulative cases since start of school = 137

Cases traced to possible exposure in school = 1

(Identified this afternoon with public health authorities)

Cases in Remote Program

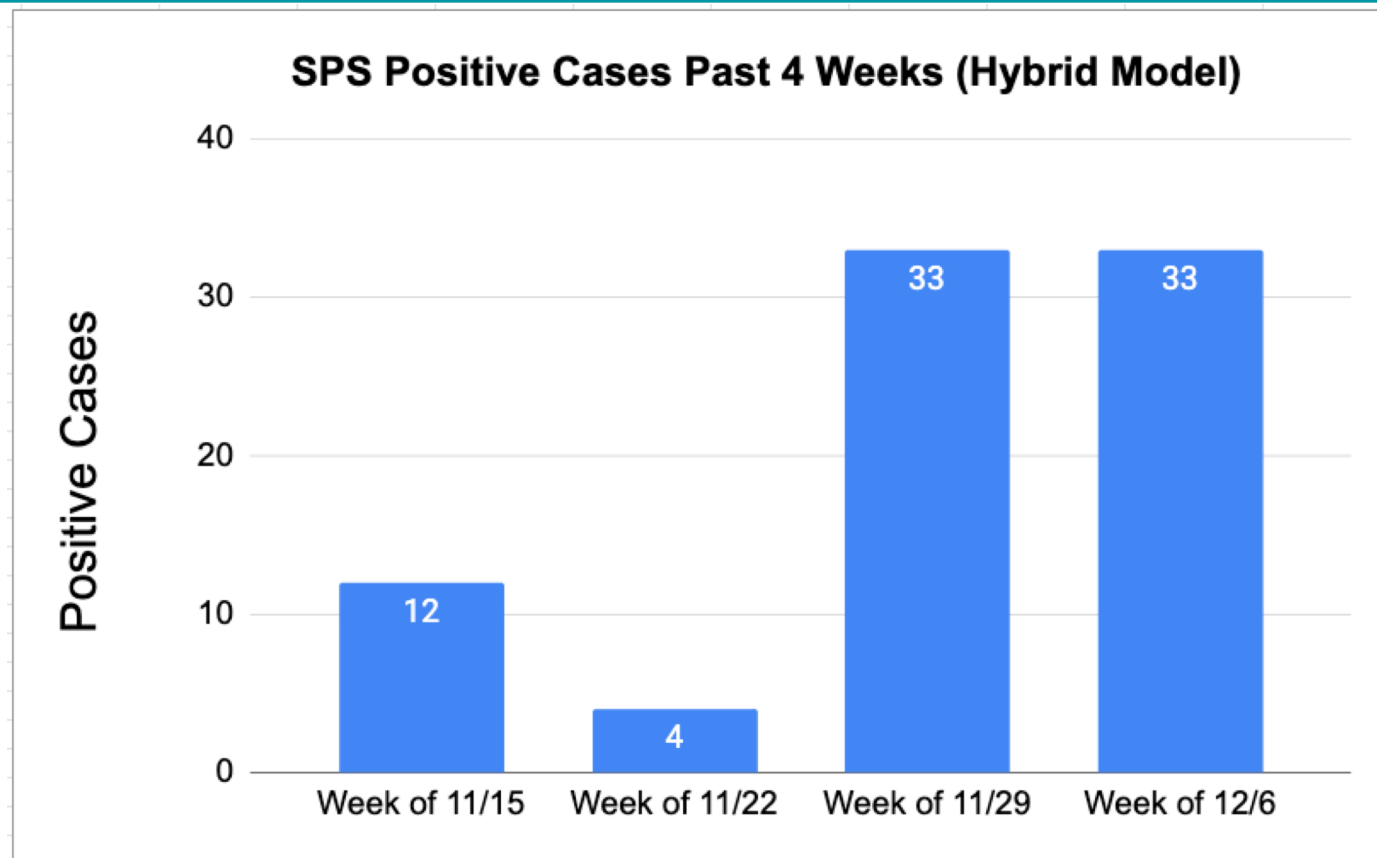Cases this calendar week = 0 (4 previous week)

Cumulative cases since start of school = 7

SPS COVID-19 Data Dashboard
## Published weekly on Mondays
https://schools.shrewsburyma.gov/district/sps-weekly-covid-19-data-dashboard

SPS Positive Cases Past 4 Weeks (Hybrid Model)

	Week of 11/15	Week of 11/22	Week of 11/29	Week of 12/6
Positive Cases	12	4	33	33

Current Public Health Data
MA 7-Day Positivity Rate = 5.66%
(Up from 3.92% two weeks ago)
Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center
https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/testing/testing-positivity
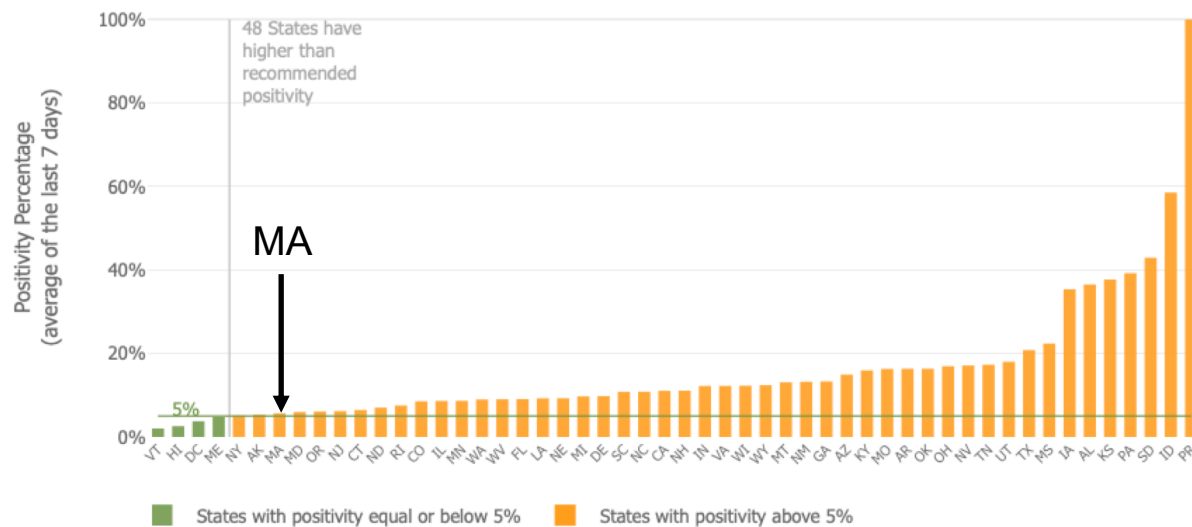
Current Public Health Data
Shrewsbury 14-Day Positive Test Rate
(5.39% vs. 5.0% Benchmark)
As of December 10 (Last Published)
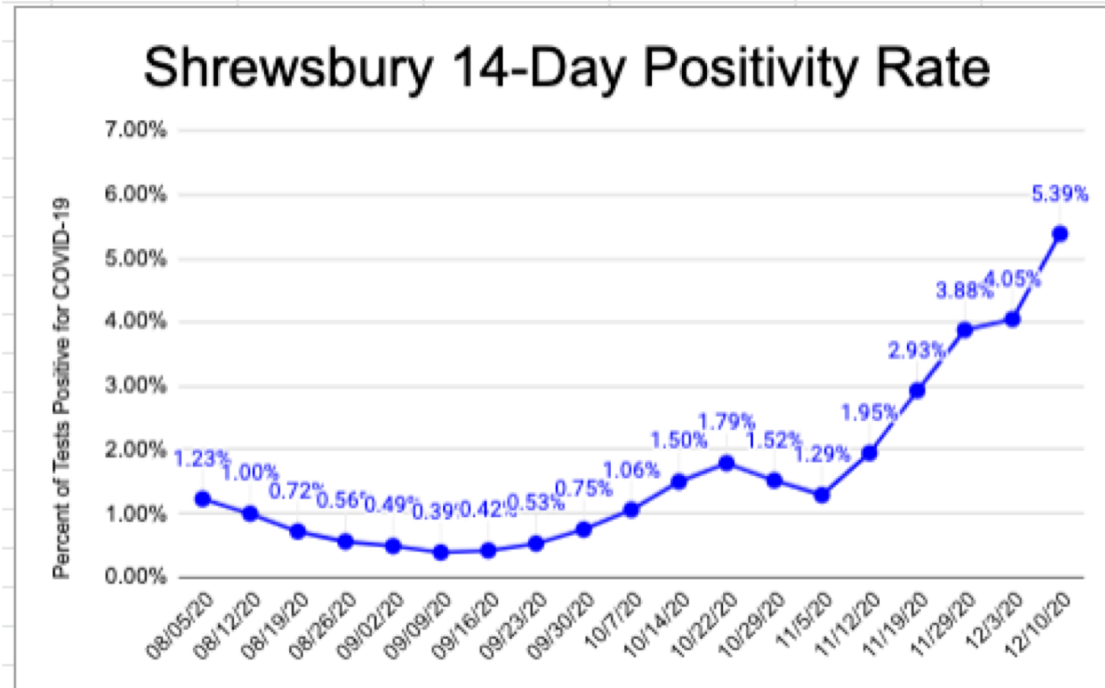
Shrewsbury Weekly Public Health Data
(As of last report of December 10)

Case Count Nov 22-Dec 5 = 210 (15.0 cases/day)
14-Day Cases per 100,000 = 37.98: Red Zone

Case Count Nov 15-Nov 28 = 149 (10.6 cases/day)
14-Day Cases per 100,000 = 26.9: 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: • 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.

Updated State Guidance to Decision-Making Process for Determining Change in Educational Program (i.e., Potential for Moving to Remote Learning): Determine Whether There is Transmission in Schools

From the MA COVID-19 Command Center & DESE (November 6, 2020):

"Districts are expected to prioritize in-person learning across all color-coded categories, unless there is suspected in-school transmission, in accordance with DESE's *Guidance on Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios*. **Transmission in schools is defined as spread of the virus between people during interactions in the school setting.**"

Updated State Guidance to Decision-Making Process for Determining Change in Educational Program (i.e., Potential for Moving to Remote Learning): <u>Expectations for In-Person Learning</u>

From the MA COVID-19 Command Center & DESE (November 6, 2020):

"...Districts and schools in communities designated gray, green, or yellow are expected to have students learning fully in-person, **if feasible**. A hybrid model should be used only if there is no other way to meet health and safety requirements. Parents and caregivers will continue to have the option to choose a district's remote learning program for their children.

Schools in red communities should implement hybrid models, while maximizing in-person learning time for high-needs students."

Maintaining stability

- Our current hybrid program minimizes close contacts needing to quarantine due to six-foot distancing and an alternating schedule

- Districts in Massachusetts and elsewhere have needed to move to full remote instruction because of staffing shortages due to quarantining

- Community case count and positivity rate increases are concerning; **we continue to follow guidance from public health and medical experts**

- One possible case of in-school transmission between two individuals is under investigation; classroom is going to be remote from now until the December vacation

Giving our best while being realistic

- Reopening schools and educating our students during the pandemic has challenged us like never before

- I am proud of how we've adapted, but I am worried because the level of effort required to do this work is difficult to sustain

- We must be clear about our priorities and realistic about our limits

- No easy answers, but we continue to seek ways to support students, staff, and families