



January 28, 2022

Pelham Family,

We've seen a decline in the number of students reporting positive COVID cases since last week. As of Thursday night we had 44 (1.3%) positive student cases and 119 students (3.4%) in isolation/quarantine. The number of positive cases is down significantly from the last two weeks when our positive cases were at 3.2% and 3.7%.

Based on the metrics we're using as our guidelines, we will now be moving out of Mitigation Level 3. Starting Monday, January 31 masks will be optional. Our greatest challenge will continue to be staffing, especially with bus drivers. We have very few substitute bus drivers, and even small numbers of bus driver absences may cause interrupted or delayed services.

I know there will be differences of opinion regarding the transition to optional masks, but please remember that the decisions being made are based upon the metrics that were adjusted and established for the Omicron variant. Let's all hope that we continue to see declining numbers of positive cases and that this latest round of the virus is behind us soon.

A note of appreciation and thanks to -

- All of our staff who have covered for each other and gone above and beyond in order to keep our schools open.
- Our parents and students who have been understanding and flexible in changing circumstances.
- Our Board of Education members who have listened to our local medical professionals while at the same time interjecting some common sense approaches. When we were told that Omicron was more contagious but less severe, the Board adjusted our metrics accordingly, and since then we have seen only one remote learning day and short-term masking for only 10 days.

We will continue to monitor our current situation closely. We will assess our mitigation efforts during this "Omicron stage" and continue to be open minded and understand that we do not know what is coming next. In regard to mitigation efforts and keeping schools open, determining what is "effective" is something that is likely to evolve. We understand that differences of opinion may continue, but know that the Pelham Family will continue to be respectful and kind and work together as a community.

Be safe and stay well,

Dr. Scott Coefield
Superintendent
Pelham City Schools