

Student Support Services

COVID-19 Health Guidance Updates

*Wake County Board of Education Meeting
August 3, 2021*



Priorities for the Board

Need to balance between our top 2 priorities:

1. Keep schools open for all daily in-person instruction
2. Keep students and staff healthy by minimizing exposures and quarantines



Desired Outcomes

- Understanding of NCDHHS and CDC health guidance updates
- Knowledge of current vaccination data and COVID-19 trends in NC and Wake County
- Shared insights from Wake County Public Health and ABC Science Collaborative
- Preparation for board action on staff recommendation for PK-12 face covering requirement for school district



Context

- COVID-19 transmission and variant trends
- NCDHHS guidance only says what health measures school systems SHOULD or COULD follow.
- NCDHHS no longer provides explicit statewide requirements.



Considerations for Decision Making

Vaccination Rates

Positivity Rates

Cases per 100,000
per 7 days

Clusters in child care
and school settings

Hospitalization Rates

Number of Deaths

- Data leading us to our recommendation
- Review monthly to monitor COVID-19 metrics

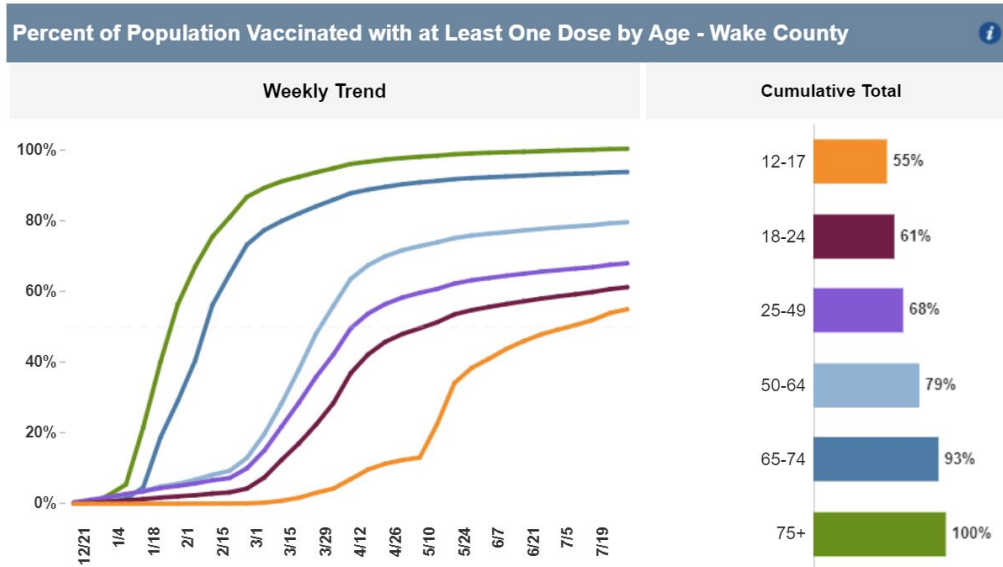


Public Health Experts

- Dr. Nicole Mushonga - Wake County Public Health
- Dr. Danny Benjamin - ABC Science Collaborative



Considerations for Decision Making - Wake County Vaccination Rates



Vaccines are currently available for students 12 years or older

As of July 26, 2021:

55% of ages 12-17 in Wake County received at least one dose of the vaccine

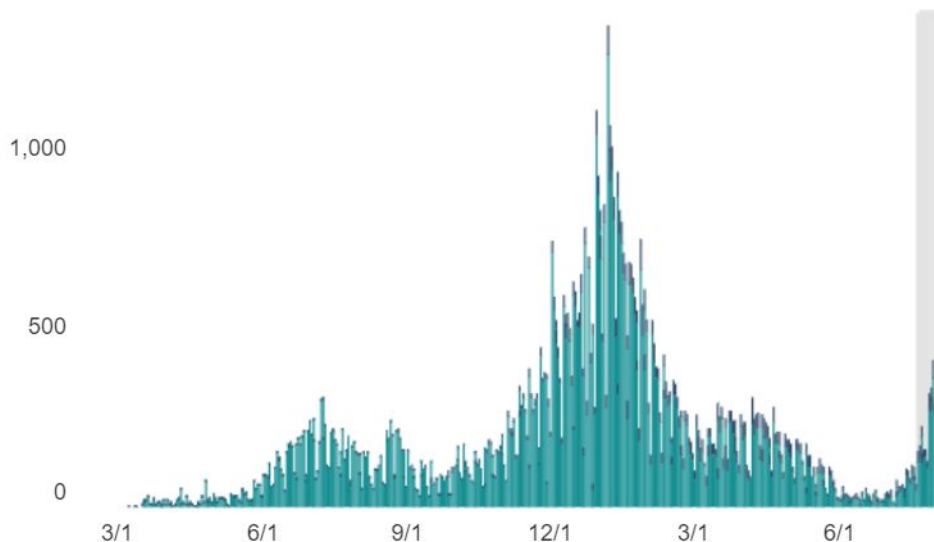
Guidepost

*70-90% of school-age population vaccinated

**an approximate range that is a starting point for revisiting face covering requirement*

Considerations for Decision Making - Positivity Rates

Cases by Date of Specimen Collection - Wake County



TOTAL CASES
Wake County

93,608

MOLECULAR (PCR)
POSITIVE CASES

85,836

ANTIGEN POSITIVE
CASES

7,772

Specimen collection date
missing for 0 cases.

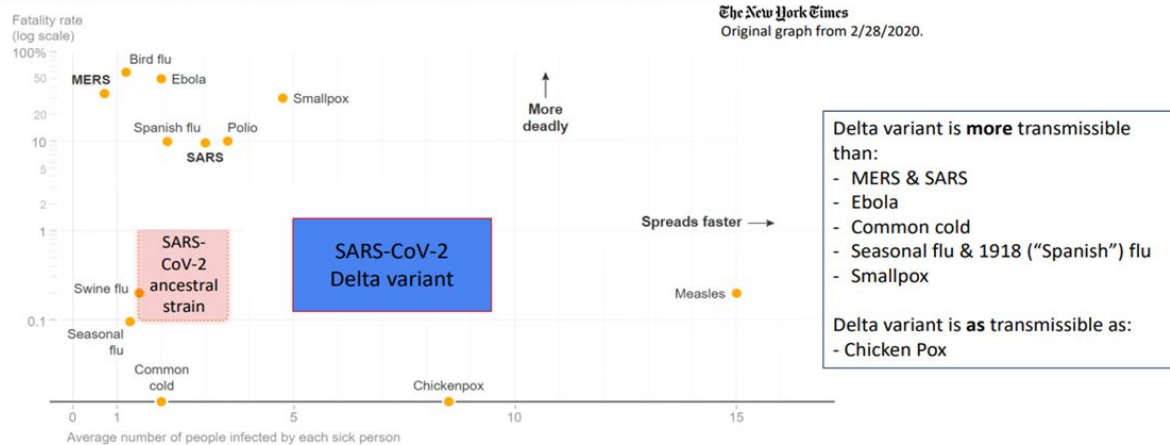
**March 1, 2020 to
July 29, 2021:**
91,943 total cases in
Wake County

Guidepost
Significant decrease
in positive cases
over two incubation
periods (28 days)

Transmission of Delta Variant vs. Ancestral Strain and Other Infectious Diseases



Transmission of Delta variant vs. ancestral strain and other infectious diseases



Note: Average case-fatality rates and transmission numbers are shown. Estimates of case-fatality rates can vary, and numbers for the new coronavirus are preliminary estimates.

ABC Track Record

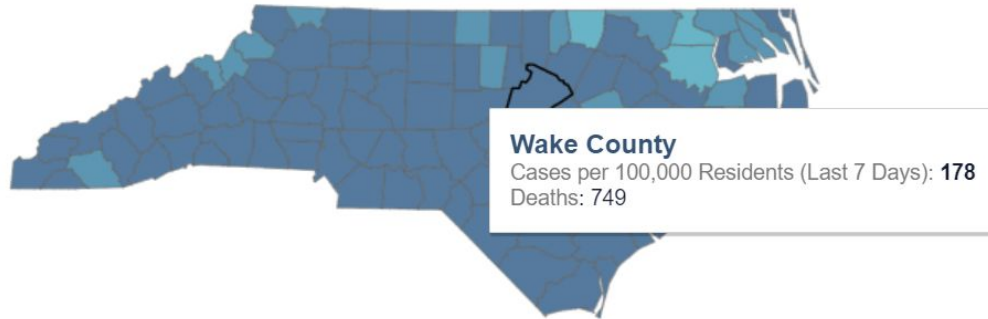
Date	ABC Position	Accepted as Guidance	Published
8/15/2020	Children can attend safely if masked	Yes: CDC, AAP	NC, Utah, Mo, Wi, Ga
8/31/2020	Ventilation overhaul not needed if masked	Yes: CDC, AAP	NC, Utah, Mo, Wi, Ga
8/31/2020	Routine testing not needed if masked	Yes: CDC, AAP	NC, Wi
8/31/2020	Sports are safe if masked	Yes: CDC, AAP	NC*
10/1/2020	In person instruction is safer for children and adults than being at home	Yes: CDC, AAP	NC, Utah, Mo, Wi, Ga, Ne
10/15/2020	Plan A (no distancing) is safe	Yes: CDC, AAP	NC, Utah, Mo, Wi, Ga, Ne
1/31/2021	Busing is safe if masked	Yes: CDC, AAP	NC
1/31/2021	Sports safe (if masked) but higher risk	Yes: CDC	NC, Utah, Mo, Wi, Ga

Today	
Aug 2021	Delta variant
Aug 2021	Mask K-12
Aug 2021	Mask K-8
Aug 2021	Sports Vaccinate or mask/test

Considerations for Decision Making - Wake County Cases per 100,000

County Map by Cases per 100,000 Residents (Molecular (PCR) and Antigen)

(Click to highlight map, unclick to revert map)



July 26, 2021-August 1, 2021:

178 cases per 100,000

Guidepost:

Less than 10 cases per 100,000 per 7 days



Considerations for Decision Making - Clusters in Child Care and School Settings

July 27, 2021 Update

K-12 Schools

- NC: 15*

*WCPSS:

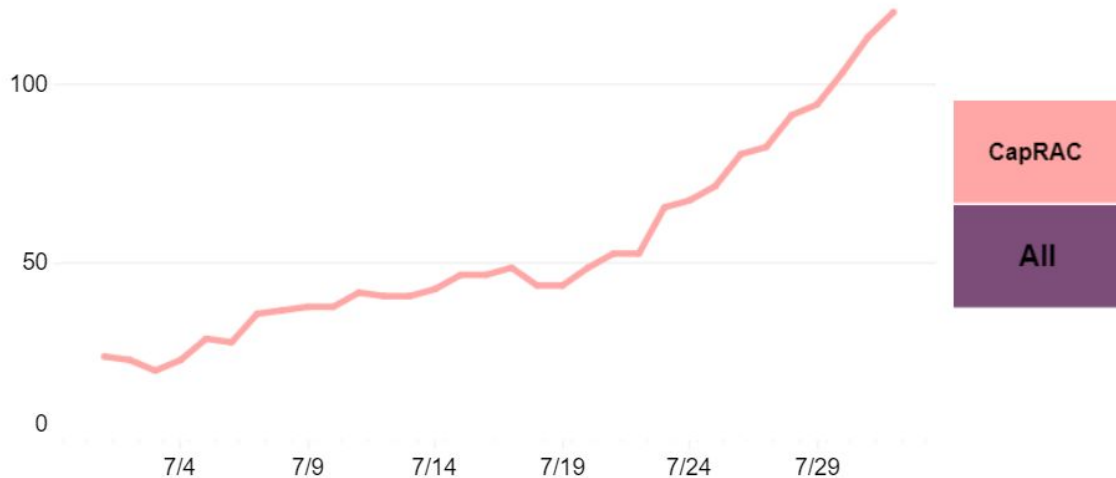
- 3 Clusters in month of July 2021
- 1 Cluster as of 8/2/21

Child Care Centers

- NC: 9
- Wake County: 3

Considerations for Decision Making - Hospitalizations All Age Groups

Currently Hospitalized COVID-19 Patients | Region View



Capital Region Healthcare Preparedness Coalition (CapRAC)

Lee, Harnett, Johnston, Franklin, Wake Counties

July 1, 2021

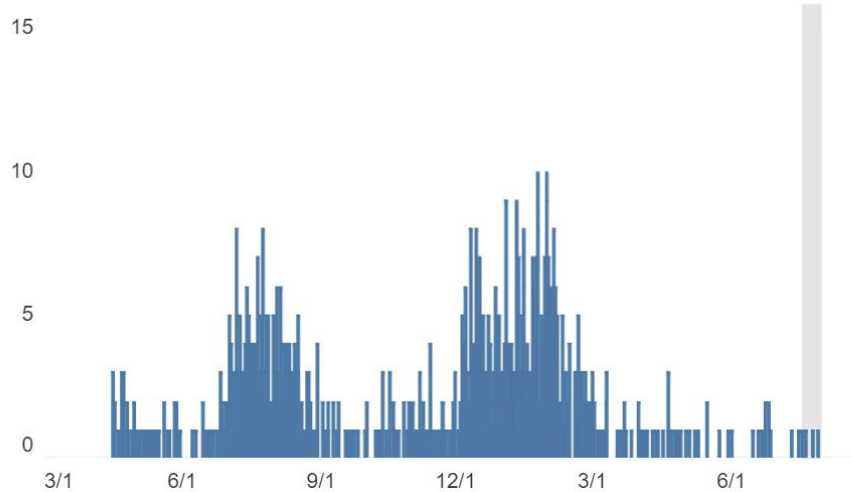
23 patients hospitalized

August 1, 2021

120 patients hospitalized

Considerations for Decision Making - Number of Deaths

Deaths by Date of Death - Wake County



TOTAL DEATHS
Wake County

749

MOLECULAR (PCR)
POSITIVE DEATHS
727

ANTIGEN POSITIVE
DEATHS
22

Date of death
missing for 0 deaths.

March 1, 2020 -
July 31, 2021:

749 deaths in Wake
County

2021:

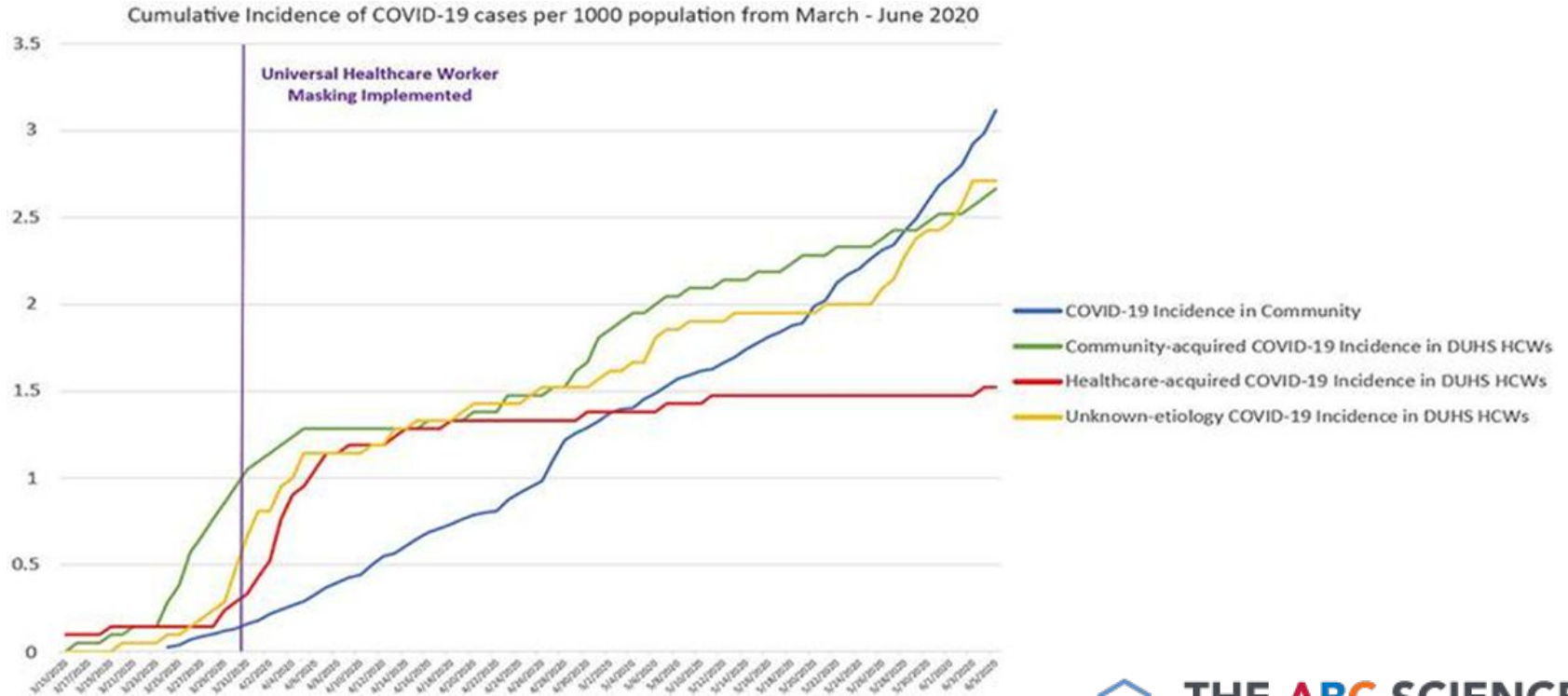
- April - 17
- May 2021 - 9
- June 2021 - 8
- July 2021 - 6



Face Covering Considerations - Impacts of COVID on Health

- Mortality rate in school districts for COVID-19 is 2-5 deaths per 100,000 students (WCPSS ~ 160,000 students)
- Roughly 10% of students develop long COVID-19 (a wide range of new, returning, or ongoing health problems people can experience four or more weeks after first being infected with the virus that causes COVID-19)
- Hospitalization for students is about 1%

Masking limits healthcare-acquired infection in healthcare workers



How Effective is Masking in Schools?

Masking: best for preK-12

What happens when we don't mask

- Israel data 2020
- Missouri data 2021
- NC Charter school 2021 One school, one week, has similar secondary infections to all of WCPSS for 10 weeks of instruction: and consistent with SAR in Israel, with unmasked students for one week, published in 2020

In masked environments in NC, secondary attack rate:

- 1% in the fall, 32 cases from >3,000 quarantined
- <1% in the winter, 209 cases with 26,619 quarantined
- <1% in the spring (Plan A report), 362 infections with >40,000 quarantined

In masked environments nationally, secondary attack rate:

- <1% in data from Utah, 5 cases from 1,041 close contacts
- <1% in data from Wisconsin, 7 cases, 5,530 students and staff
- <1% in data from Nebraska, 2 cases with >4,000 quarantined [submitted for publication]

Extra-curricular activities in middle school and high school

Overarching goal: ensure the health and safety of students and staff while providing opportunities.

Background: COVID transmission is higher for extracurricular activities than classroom activities. Additionally, transmission is higher in student athletes than any other group at school.

ABC research has shown that 50-75% of within school transmission in high school occurs during athletics. Indoors it is ~75% (published in July 2021) and outdoors ~50% (44/75; Plan A data for NC 2021).

Several states (e.g., NC) required masking during athletics/extracurricular activities in 2020-21. Several states (e.g., Utah) required twice weekly testing in 2020-21. With the availability of a safe and effective vaccine, we now have a 3rd option for extra-curricular activities.

ABC Suggests:

- **Students mask indoors (regardless of vaccination status);**
- **All students in extra-curricular activities (e.g., sports, theater, band) to wear a mask at all times**
- **unless they are vaccinated (vaccinated student athletes do not have to wear a mask for outdoor sports); and,**
- **Unvaccinated participants in extracurricular activities (e.g., student athletes, coaches, band) will be required to participate in twice weekly COVID tests if proof of a COVID vaccination is not provided.**
- **The weekly tests will be facilitated during school and the results will be confidential.**

Two solutions for schools: Vaccination & Masking

- Vaccinations

- Safe and effective for children and adults 12 years of age and older (Pfizer)
- Limits risk of hospitalization and death in COVID-19 infection
- Your community is not:
 - Adults who are eligible nationally (70%)
 - Eligible citizens in Vermont (>80%)
- **Your community is:**
 - The children and adults in WCPSS preK-12 environment
- Unfortunately, **most of your community does not have access to vaccines** (preK-6)
- Approximately **½ of your community that has access to vaccines is unvaccinated**

- Vaccine effectiveness

	Alpha	Delta
	Vaccine effectiveness vs hospitalization	Vaccine effectiveness vs hospitalization
Any vaccine		
One dose	78% (65-86)	75% (57-85)
Two doses	92% (78-97)	94% (85-98)
Pfizer		
One dose	83% (62-93)	94% (46-99)
Two doses	95% (75-99)	96% (86-99)

Face Covering Staff Recommendation

Universal Face Covering Requirement PK-12

- Most protective
- Minimizes quarantines

Aligns with our top two priorities:

- Keep schools open for all daily in-person students
- Keep students and staff healthy by minimizing exposures and quarantines

Next Steps

- Continue partnering with Wake County Public Health and ABC Science Collaborative
- Continue monitoring metrics regularly to assess face covering guidance requirement



Questions and Discussion

