

# K-12 COVID-19 Response

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Consultant*



## State Board of Education Meeting

September 2, 2021



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**

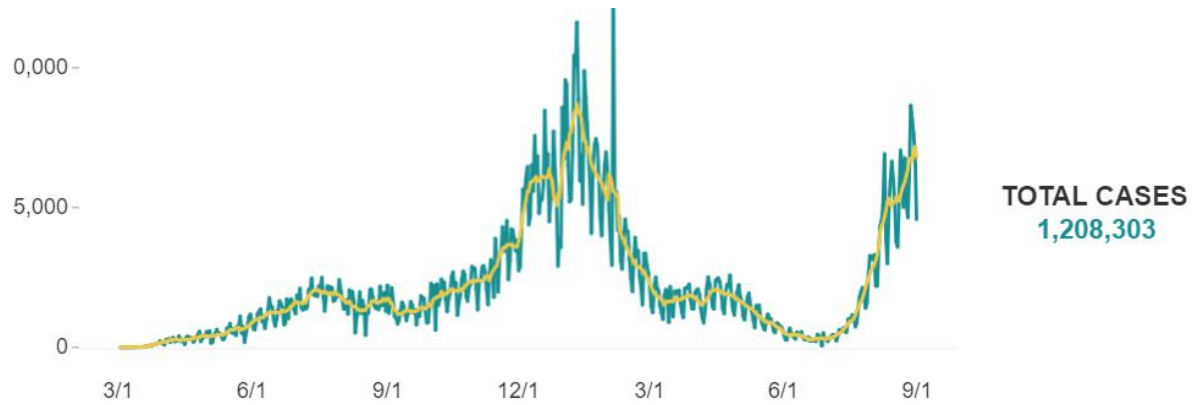
# Agenda

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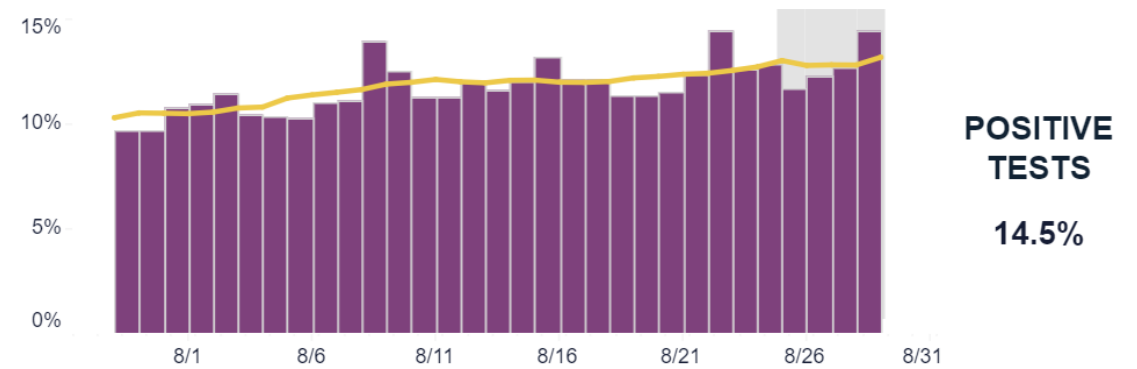
- **Statewide COVID-19 Updates & Data Trends**
- **StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit Changes and Testing Program Updates**

# Four Key Metrics – All Quickly Rising

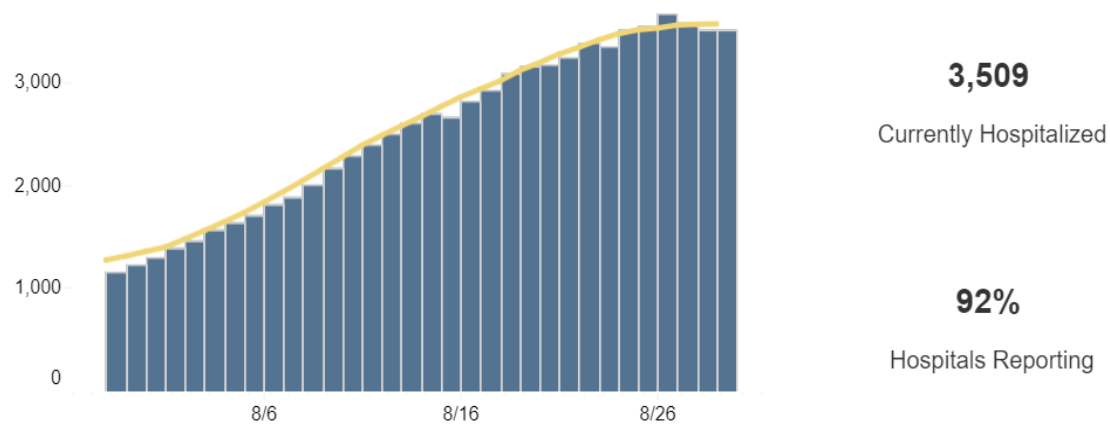
## Daily Cases by Date Reported



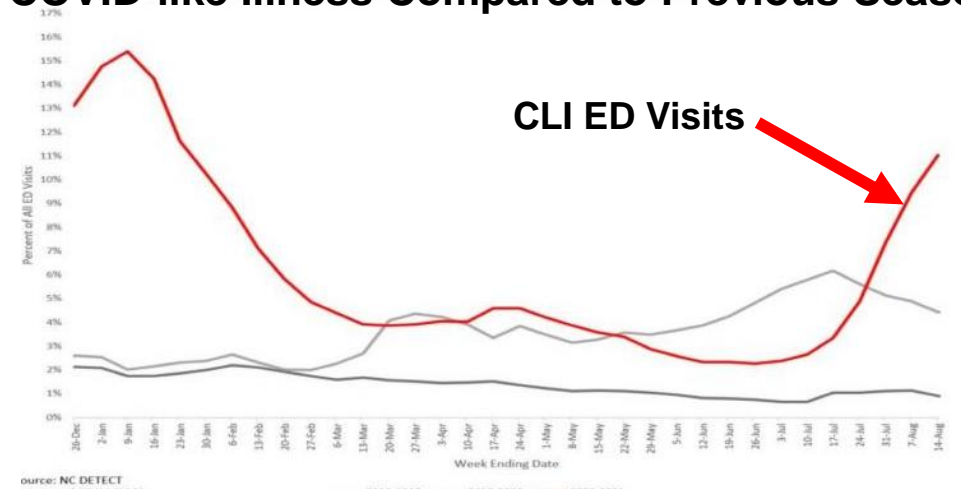
## Positive Tests as a Percent of Total Tests



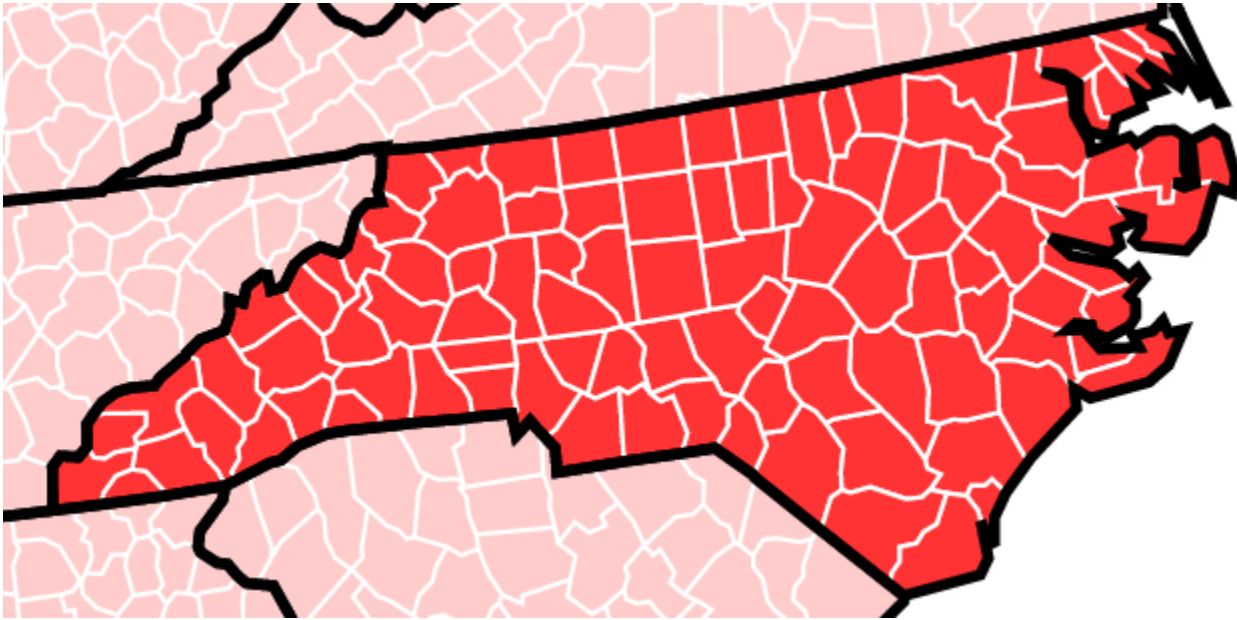
## Daily Number of People Currently Hospitalized



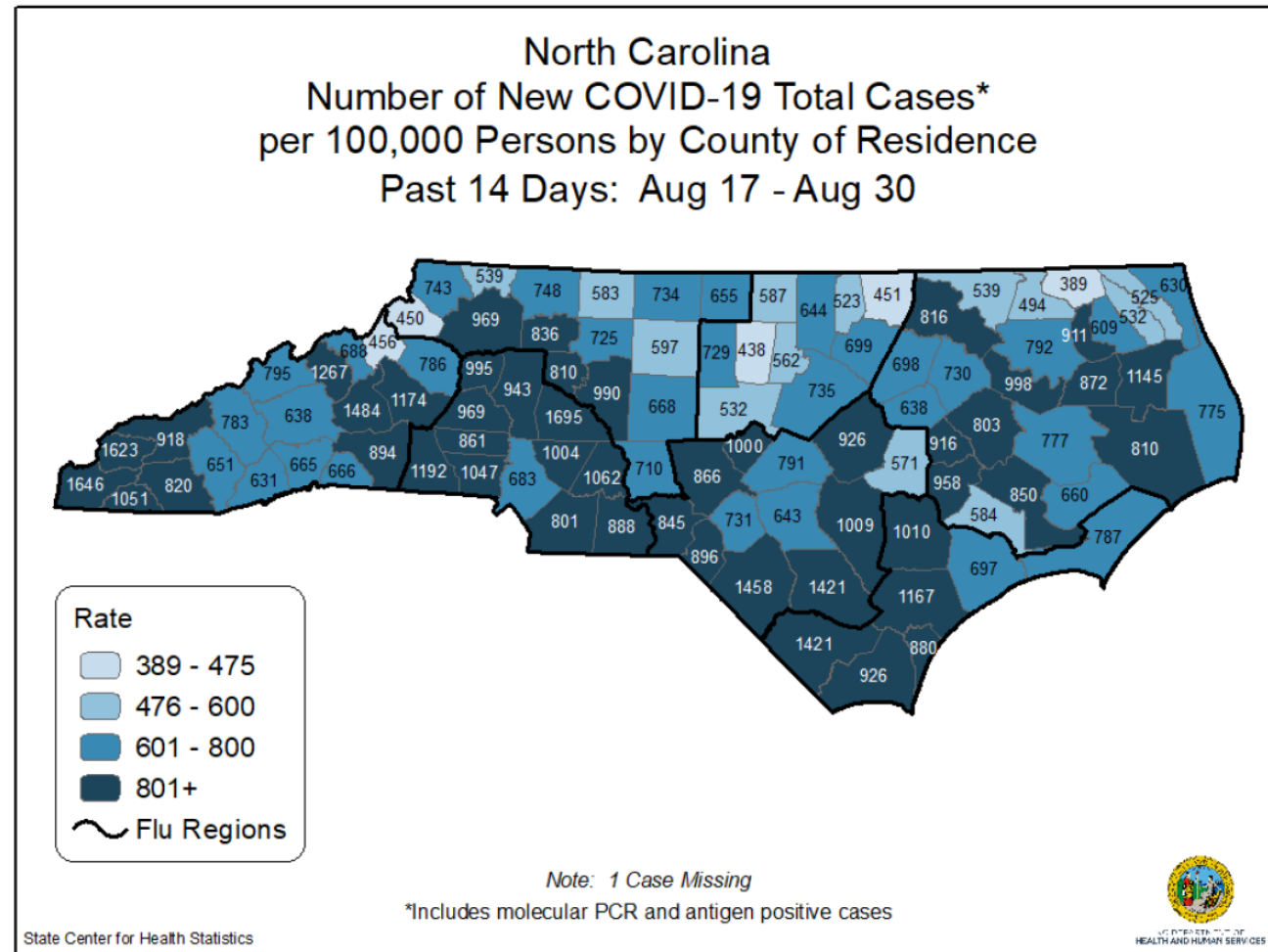
## What Percentage of ED Visits this Season are for COVID-like Illness Compared to Previous Seasons?



# Case Rates Increasing Statewide

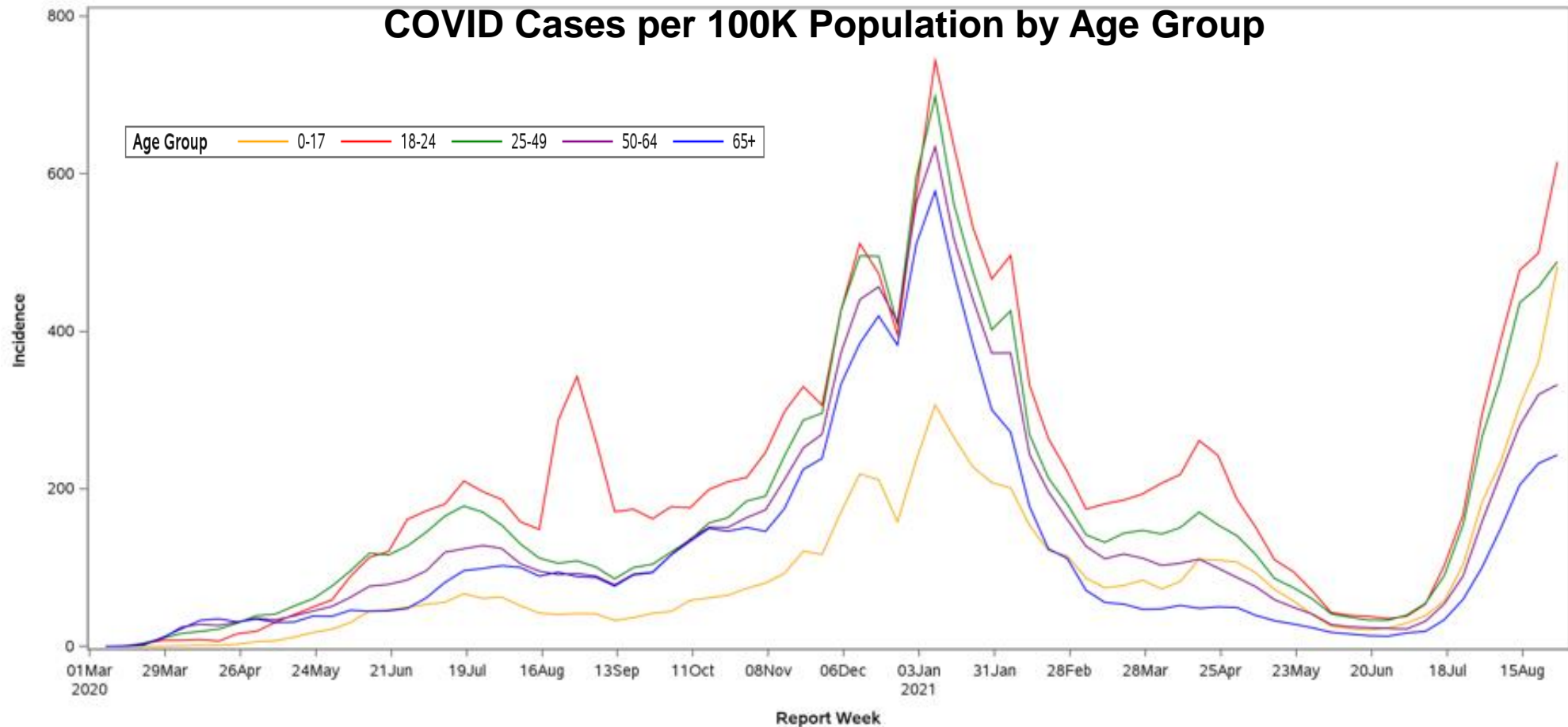


<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>



# Case Rates Increase Across All Age Groups

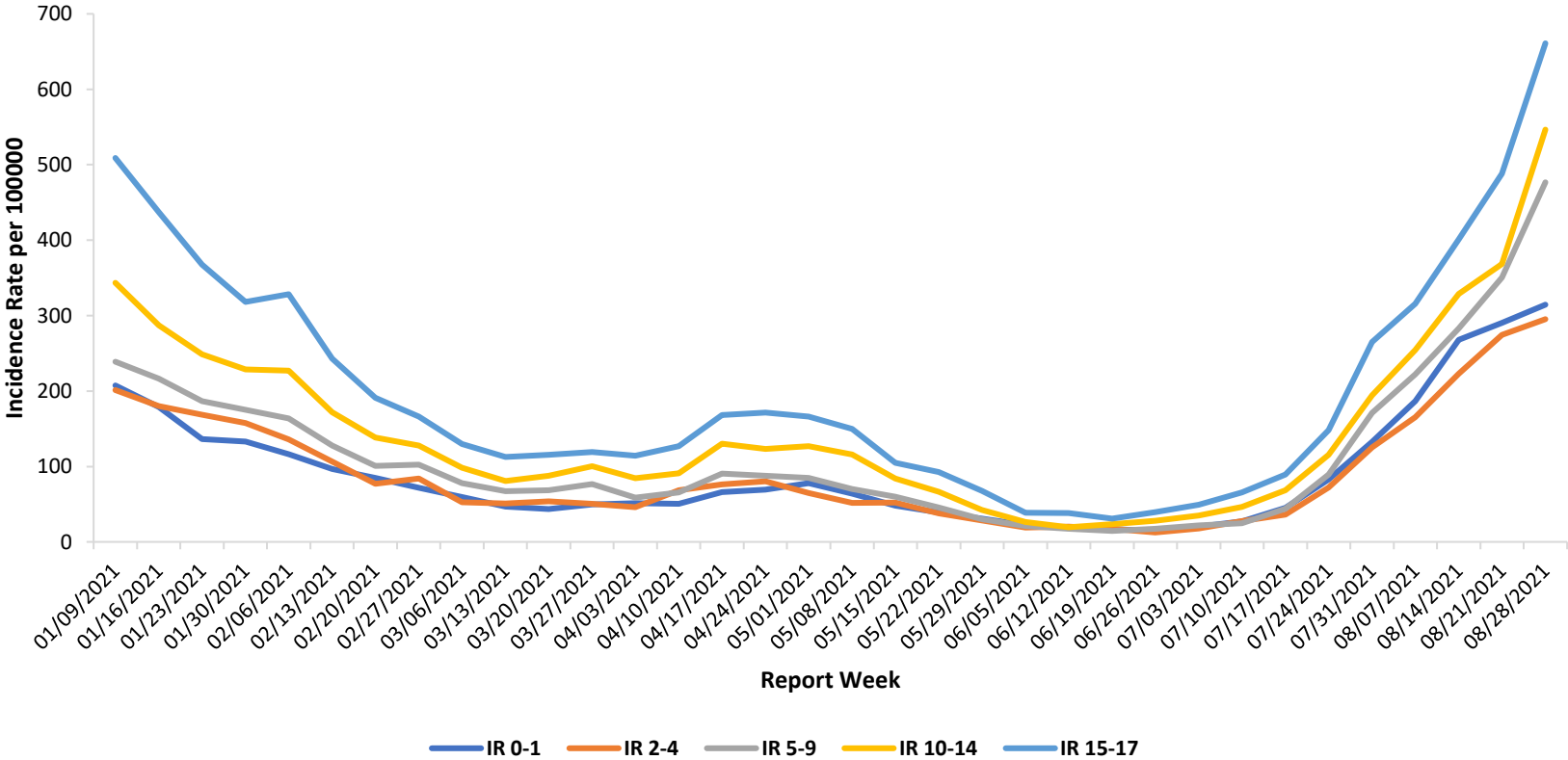
Case rates are increasing at the greatest rate among 18 to 24, followed by 0 to 17-year-olds. Case rates for children are higher than January peak levels.



# Rates are increasing in all age groups of children

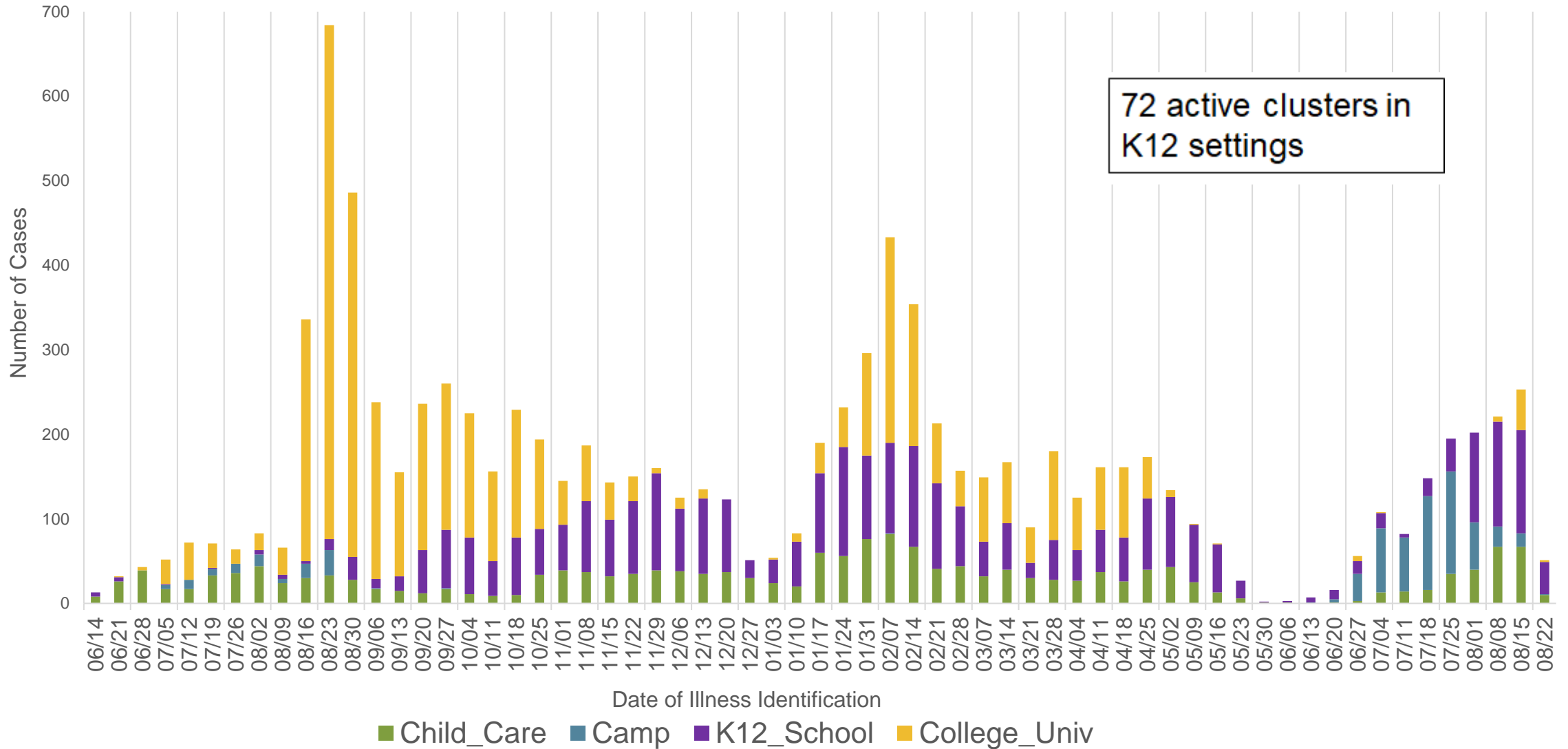
Highest rates in high school, middle, elementary school-aged children.

Trend in Pediatric COVID Incidence Rate by Age group and Report date



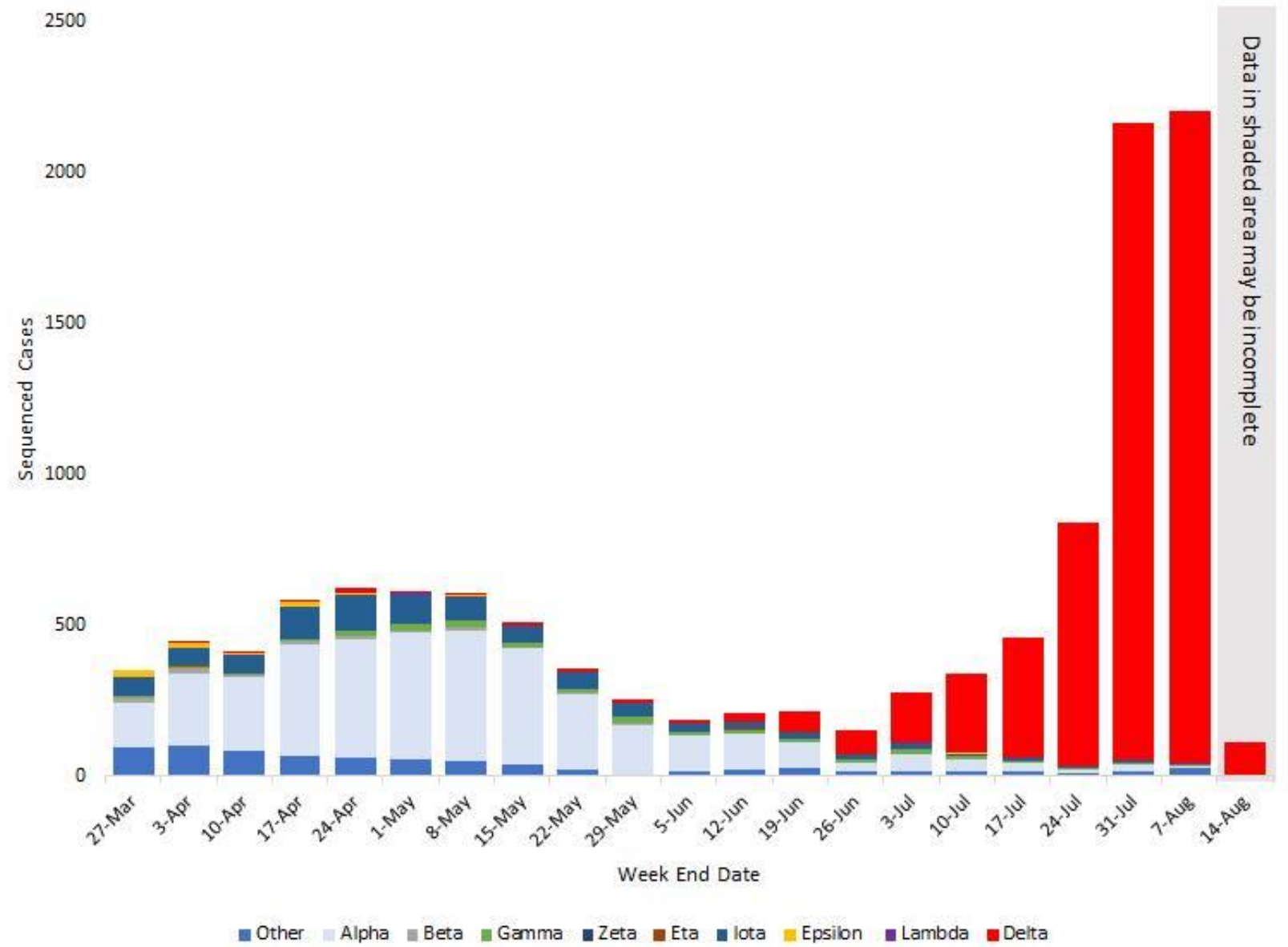
# K-12 Reported Clusters – as of 8/31/21

<https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard/outbreaks-and-clusters/>



**Delta variant is the most common variant in NC**

**Spreads easily because it's highly contagious**



# Outbreak Associated with SARS-CoV-2 B.1.617.2 (Delta) Variant in an Elementary School — Marin County, California, May–June 2021

## Summary

### What is already known about this topic?

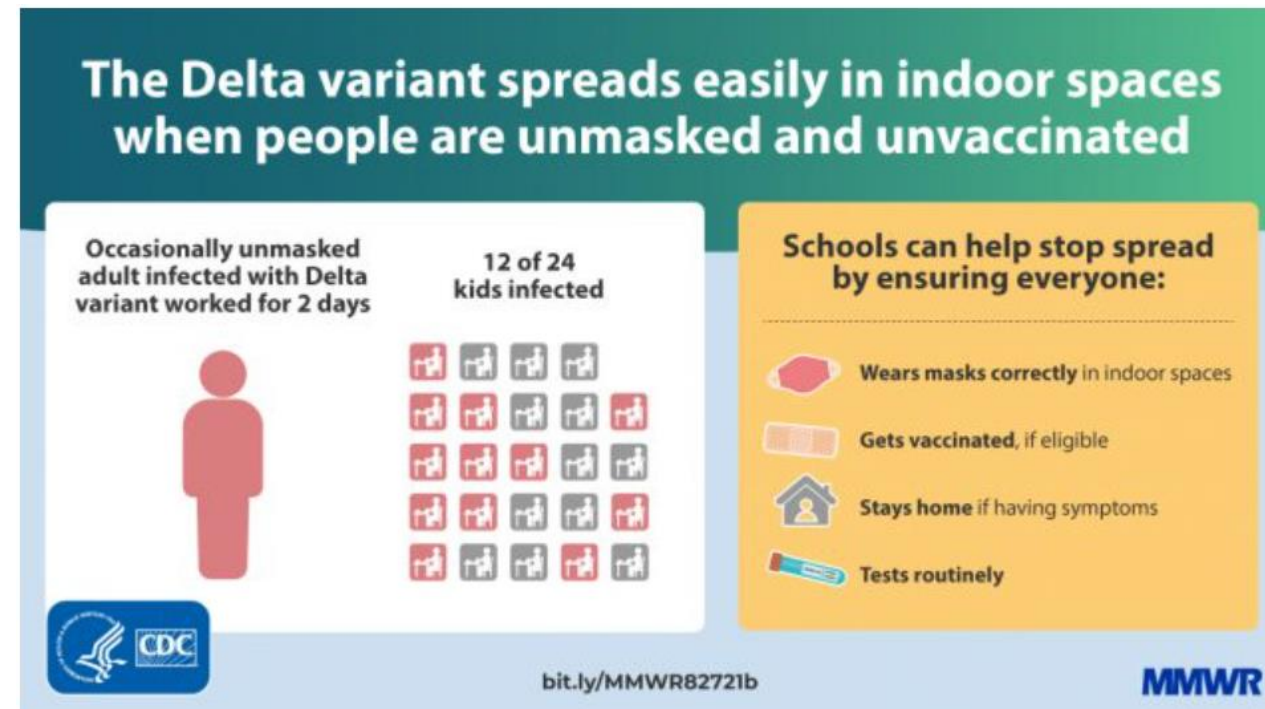
The SARS-CoV-2 B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant is highly transmissible. Prevention guidance in schools varies by jurisdiction.

### What is added by this report?

During May 23–June 12, 2021, 26 laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases occurred among Marin County, California, elementary school students and their contacts following exposure to an unvaccinated infected teacher. The attack rate in one affected classroom was 50%; risk correlated with seating proximity to the teacher.

### What are the implications for public health practice?

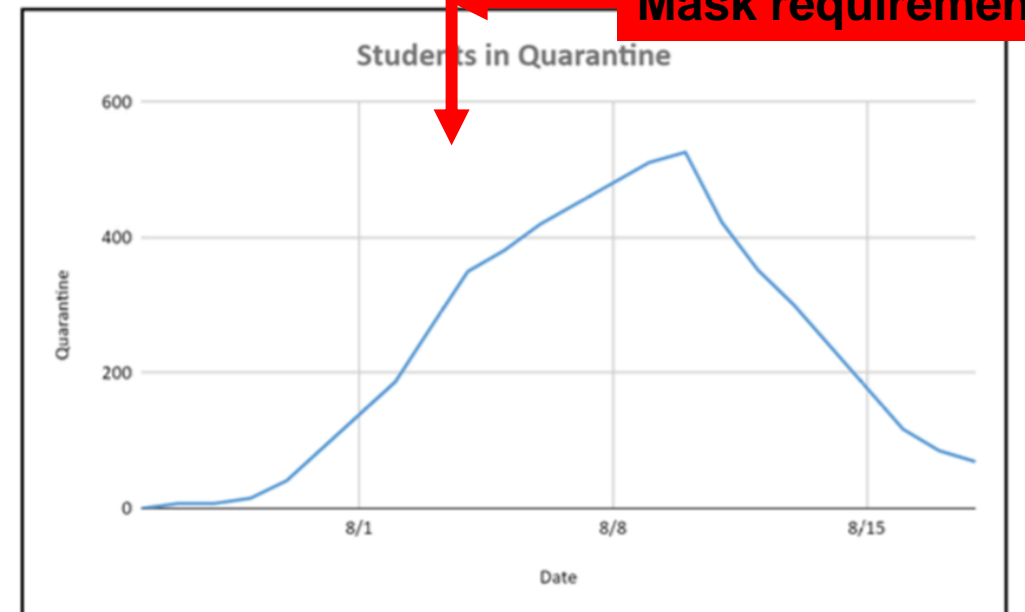
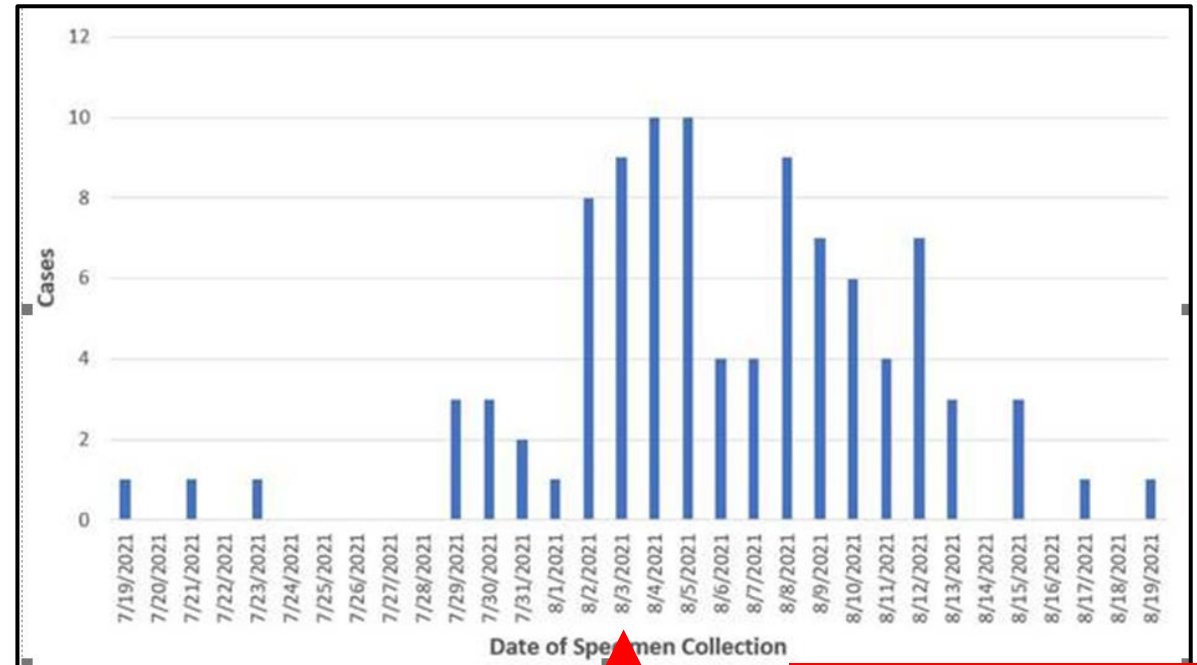
Vaccines are effective against the Delta variant, but transmission risk remains elevated among unvaccinated persons in schools. In addition to vaccination, strict adherence to multiple nonpharmaceutical prevention strategies, including masking, are important to ensure safe school instruction.



# One school's experience

Initially, masks optional

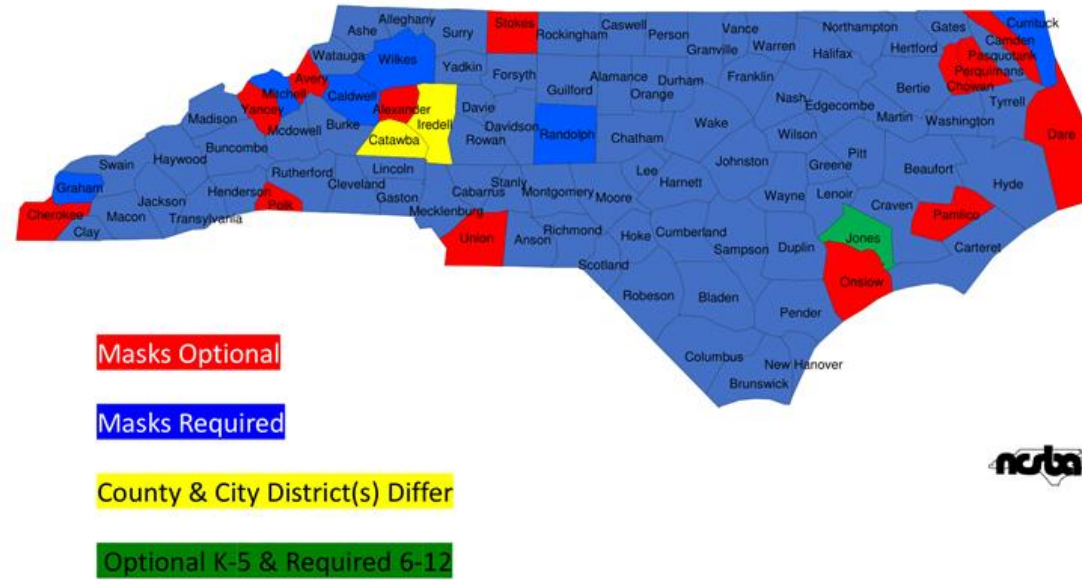
After opening and multiple cases and quarantine in first few days, changed to mask requirement



**Mask requirement**

# NORTH CAROLINA LEA FACE MASK POLICIES

(as of 8/31/21)



## Masking Mandates

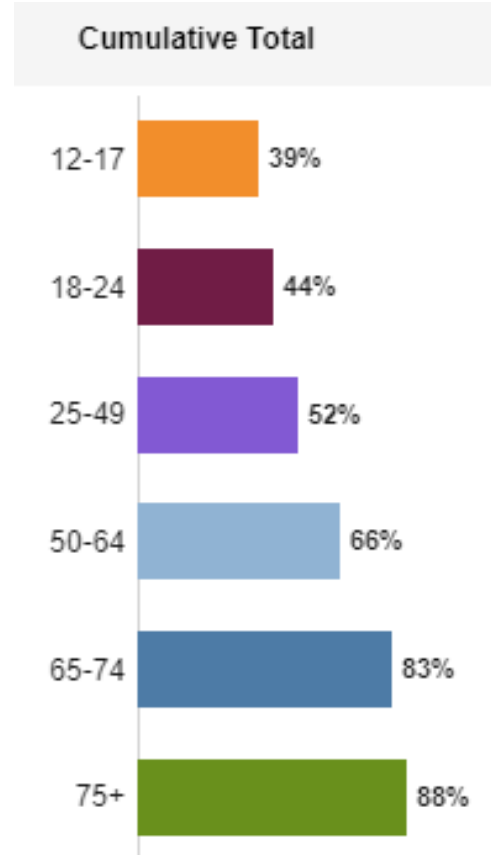
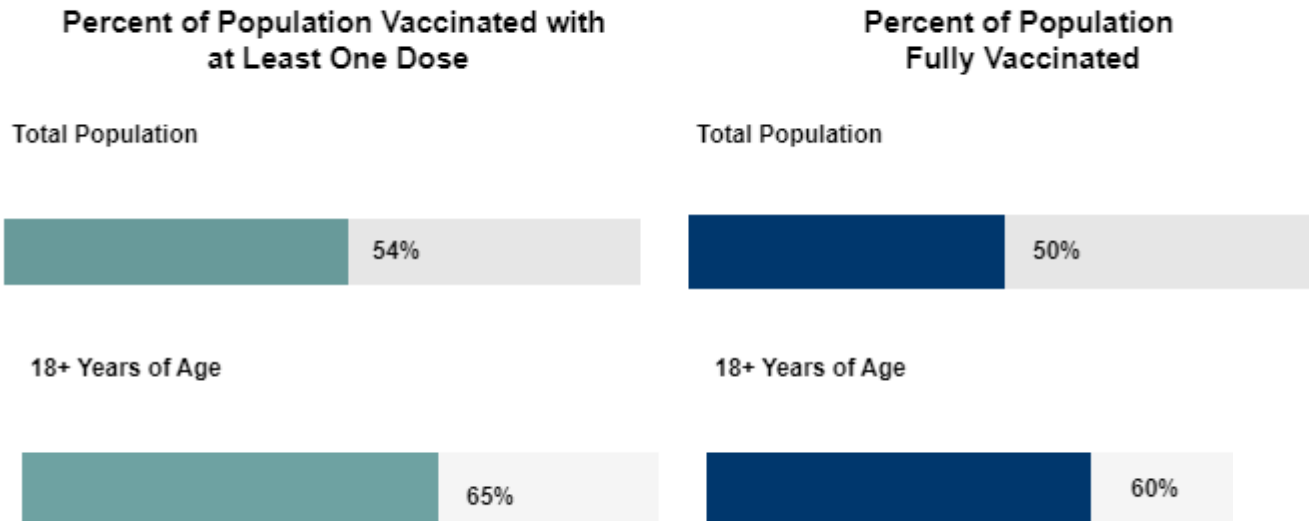
	Number of Districts	Percentage of Districts	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
<b>Districts requiring universal face coverings</b>	96	83.48%	1,203,067	89.72%
<b>Districts making face coverings optional</b>	16	13.91%	132,414	9.87%
<b>Districts requiring face coverings (partial)</b>	3	2.61%	5,491	0.41%
<b>Waiting on decision from districts</b>	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>1,340,972</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

44 Districts have changed policies for this school year

# VACCINATION STATUS BY AGE

First of 2 Doses Administered	Second of 2 Doses Administered	Single Shot Doses Administered	Total Doses Administered
5,280,517	4,811,176	388,035	10,479,728

0-12 years – 0%  
Not currently eligible for vaccination



**FDA Extends Full Approval to Pfizer Vaccine for Ages 16+  
ACIP/CDC Recommendation 8-30-21**



**Vaccines provide a high level of protection for people**

**Unvaccinated individuals are about 4.5 times (450%) more likely to get COVID-19 as fully vaccinated individuals**

**Unvaccinated individuals are more than 15.6 times (1560%) more likely to die from COVID-19 as fully vaccinated individuals**

# Recent Changes to StrongSchools Toolkit

- Aligned COVID-19 symptom list with CDC guidance
- Added additional guidance on higher-risk instruction/extracurricular activities, such as exercising, playing wind instruments, or singing
  - Performance activities outside if possible. If held indoors, wear masks and space students 6ft apart.
- Clarified language that modified quarantine does not apply to extracurricular activities, including athletics

# STRONGSCHOOLSNC K-12 TESTING: 2021-22 PROGRAM OPTIONS

LEAs / Schools opt-in to testing through the online form shared with district/school leadership\*

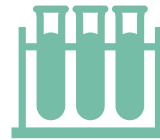


## State Contracted Vendor

NCDHHS vendor available to support testing program at school/district

Available to all schools

OR



## Independent Testing

NCDHHS provides free tests that schools may request to perform screening and/or diagnostic testing

Available to all schools

+



## Staffing Support\*\*

NC DHHS provides funds for LEAs/charters to hire clinical staff

Available to LEAs and charters who participate in screening testing

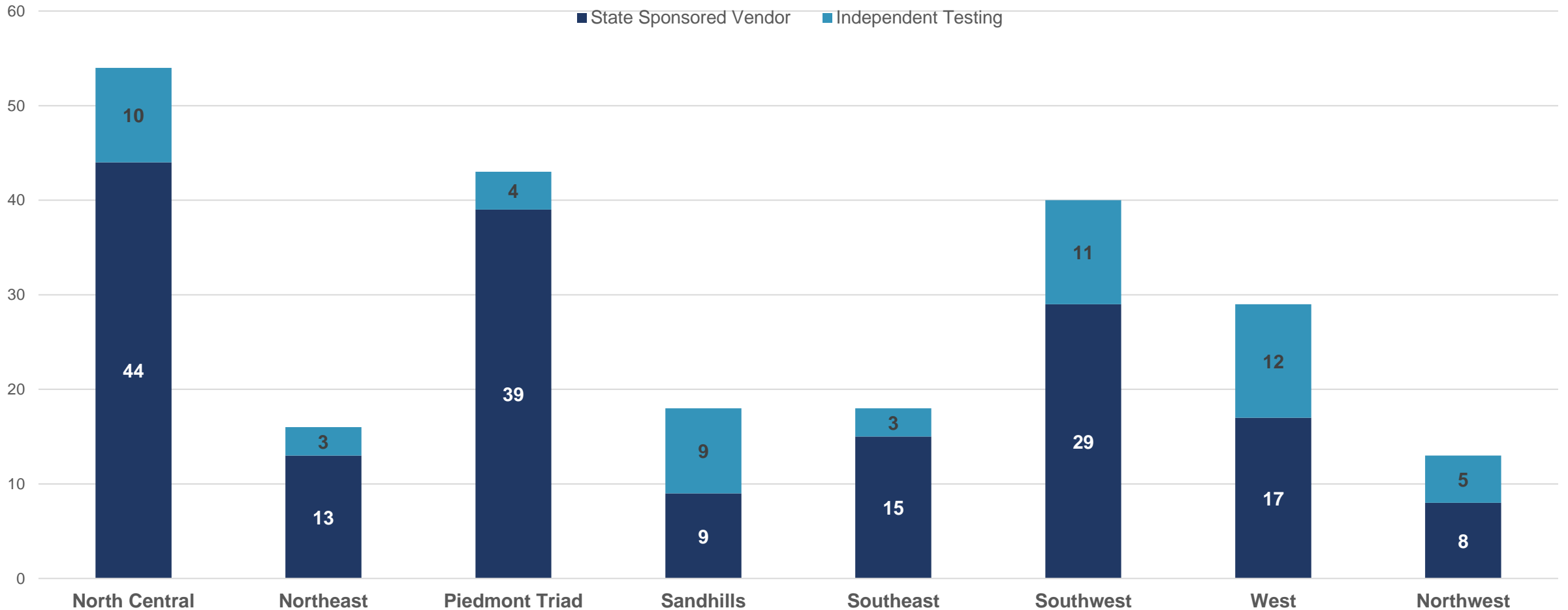
Districts collaborate on their own testing programs or may choose not to participate in testing.  
[StrongSchoolsNC K-12 Testing Program Guidance](#)

\* The opt-in form was released July 16th, along with additional guidance on vendor versus school/ district testing responsibilities

\*\*Staffing support is a program that LEAs and charters can take advantage of in addition to state contracted vendor or independent testing

# StrongSchoolsNC K-12 COVID-19 Testing: Opt-In Numbers by region

As of August 30, NC DHHS has received responses from 73 LEAs, 65 charter schools, 5 other public and 88 private schools.



## STRONGSCHOOLSNC K-12 COVID-19 TESTING: UPCOMING COMMUNICATIONS

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- Parent school testing web page live (**StrongSchools.nc.gov**)
  - List of participating schools regularly updated
- Update school testing FAQs are live
- Emails sent to school leaders and partners about vendor webinars happening week of 9/6.



- **Vendor informational webinars**
  - *Audience:* District and School Leadership and Health Staff
  - *Dates & Times:*
    - Wednesday, Sept. 8 @ 9am and Thursday, Sept. 9 @ 2pm
    - Each vendor will be presenting in separate meetings at both times
- Updated school communications toolkit live



- Opt-in form for LEAs, charter schools, and private schools closes

