

Subject: How HCPS is deciding on more in-person learning

To the Henrico team,

I'm writing with heartfelt gratitude for all you've done throughout our first week of predominantly virtual learning — and to give you an update on how Henrico County Public Schools is monitoring health data in an effort to gradually return to in-person learning. [We are using a comprehensive, data-driven process and timeline](#) to guide our forthcoming recommendations and decisions.

How does the process work? The 16 members of the HCPS Health Committee meet every two weeks to look at the latest pandemic data provided by the Virginia Department of Health. They use the data to determine the current **"pandemic status,"** characterizing the severity and transmission trends in central Virginia. The pandemic status relies on several health indicators, including conditions during a 14-day window; the incidence rate; the percentage of people testing positive; and the number of outbreaks. **HCPS uses that status to determine what instructional approach, as illustrated on a continuum, we can safely use to conduct in-person classes.** (The HCPS "Continuum of Reopening" includes a total of four approaches and [can be viewed on our website](#).)

On Sept. 10, the group reported to the School Board that regional data from the previous week resulted in a pandemic status of **"Substantial/High Community Transmission."** That status is tied to HCPS' current instructional approach, "Approach 2", which calls for most students learning online with students seen in person on a limited basis.

The committee, made up of representatives from the Henrico Health District, Henrico County Public Schools, the HCPS Student Health Advisory Board and the larger community, will continue to make regular presentations to the School Board, and **the committee is expected to make a recommendation by Oct. 22 about the approach to learning for the second nine weeks of the school year.**

Upcoming dates for health-related presentations include:

- **Sept. 24:** Health Committee update to Henrico School Board.
- **Oct. 8:** Health Committee update to Henrico School Board.
- **Oct. 22 School Board meeting:** Target date for committee recommendation concerning which approach will be used for the second nine weeks (also called the second marking period) of the school year, which begins Nov. 16.

Please rest assured that while we are monitoring health data to determine when more students may return, we have been actively reimagining our programming to ensure an in-person experience that follows the [HCPS COVID-19 Health Plan](#). This includes securing PPE for staff and students, redesigning classroom and school bus seating arrangements to allow for physical distancing, rethinking daily cleaning protocols and equipping classrooms with hand sanitizer and additional disinfecting supplies.

Please check [out our new Health Update page](#) to keep up with the latest information, and we look forward to keeping you informed.

Sincerely,

Amy

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Amy E. Cashwell, Ed. D.
Superintendent