

Henrico County Public Schools

HEALTH COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

11/8/2021

1. **Welcome** – committee members who were present were welcomed.
2. **Review of Data**- Data was reviewed and presented. Using the updated VDH metric dash board <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/key-measures/pandemic-metrics/school-metrics/> The most current data as of 11/8/2021 is as follows – 79.50 cases per 100,000 which is in the substantial category. The percentage of positive tests is 3.9%. This is in the low category. Both are down from last week. A question was brought up about how holiday travel and gathering indoors now that it is cold may affect COVID cases resulting in a spike again. Dr. Viray states that although unknown, other countries that have had cooler weather are seeing a rise in cases.
3. **COVID Vaccine update**- Data was updated on 11/7/2021. Total number of those 12-17 years old who are fully vaccinated is 64.5 %. Those who are 18 years old and over is 72.5 %. This has again increased slightly from last week.

The Pfizer COVID vaccine for children aged 5-11 years old has now been approved. The first wave of vaccines has been allotted and sent to pharmacies, clinicians, and community hubs.

RHHD is planning to host several COVID vaccine clinics for the 5–11-year-old population in the school community. Events are being held at Fairfield Middle on Saturday 11/13/2021 and on 12/4/2021. Elko Middle will be hosting clinics on 11/20/2021 and 12/11/2021. These are by appointment only.

Dr. Viray to investigate why VIIS is listing COVID vaccines as not valid under status for at least two students who received their vaccines last week.

Other childhood immunizations- Below is the immunization numbers as we approach the end of the HCPS grace period 1/3/22. These are students who will be excluded from instruction 1/3/22 if immunizations are not obtained or no appointment is scheduled for these to be obtained.

Elementary	174 students
Middle	607 students
High	870 students

Flu Vaccine clinics are being scheduled in each school and at HCPS Central Office.

4. Updates to COVID CDC guidance and Governors orders- No new executive orders have been announced.

5. Review of Preparedness-

- **Staffing- School Health:** There are currently 4 RN and 2 LPN positions open. Currently there is about 10% of the student population that does not have a full-time nurse. With FMLA and other absences this number rises to 16% of students. There are currently 12 clinic aide positions still open. With the VIISTA screening testing programs there are 13 positions that will be added. The VDH grant was approved to support screening testing. **Other school positions-** no updates given

-**Facilities-** Discussion about the use of desk shields determined that although they do not prevent the spread of COVID, they do serve as a barrier. This does not replace the need to contact trace and spread students out when possible.

-**PPE-** Cortney asked about the need for the disposable wipes to be used as frequently as they have been. This will be discussed next week.

- **Contact Tracing-** The new process for schools to enter positive COVID cases and any school related exposures directly to RHHD Red Cap continues and appears to be working well.

-**Doli-** Discussion about the directive that employers must follow about having either employees vaccinated or providing a negative COVID test is on hold. HCPS is planning for it to proceed. An email has been sent out to staff asking about providing their COVID vaccination status.

Volunteer and Visitor guidelines- With community transmission in the substantial category, volunteer and visitor activities have moved into level 2.

Discussion about whether concession sales will be allowed during the winter athletic events was had. Recommendation to move forward with bringing this to DLT for approval. Social distancing and providing a place outside to eat were suggestions from the group.

There was also discussion about whether spectators will be asked to wear masks during indoor athletic events. Due to the executive order in place, they are required in all K-12 buildings.

Performances such as chorus and theatre, participants should wear masks whenever possible.

James Upshaw gave the following information to help with these decisions.

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/182/2020/09/VDH-Guidance-for-Performing-Arts.pdf> and

https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/182/2021/08/K-12-Public-Health-Order-FAQs-8_17_21-1.pdf

Eileen Cox, Director of Communications states that her team is looking at providing information on best practices for preventing COVID during the holidays and what to do to be good spectators for sports and other activities.

Other-

Illness guidance- Currently, the 10-day letter is still in effect. With case counts declining, the illness guidance may change to 24 hours. The threshold for this is less than 50 cases per 100,000. Dr. Viray asked the committee to review the trends when making decisions about the illness policy.

COVID testing- The at home diagnostic testing kits are being handed out. This continues to go well.

HCPS has been paired with Aegis for the VIISTA COVID testing program. The plan is to test student athletes weekly who are participating in winter sports. If students are fully vaccinated, then they can opt out of the testing. The current timeline for the screening testing to start is November 15, 2021, for High Schools and November 29, 2021, for Middle Schools.

School Visits - Visits to Glen Allen High School and Highland Springs High School this past week, identified that most students and staff were wearing face masks appropriately. Spacing is close in classrooms. Contact tracing on busses also presents an issue for administrators in high school. Administrators have also stated that they are staying late due to late notification of a positive case. Isolation rooms in both schools are adequate. Lack of staff both in the clinic and among other school personnel continues to be a topic when asked what the biggest struggles schools are facing.

Glen Allen High School uses a QR code on the front doors and again in the office for staff. This allows visitors to answer the COVID questions. This is a process that should be used at other schools if possible.

The site visits will continue, and the School Directors will be invited to attend each week.

Next meeting will take place on Monday 11/15/2021.