



Back to School

2021-2022 Opening Plan

**WHAT TO
EXPECT**

Dear PCSD Community,

We are excited to be approaching the start of another great school year, and we look forward to welcoming back all of our students, families, and staff. We hope you had a spectacular summer! As you hopefully know, the first day of school is **August 2, 2021**.

Coming off a pandemic school year where we united as a community to support students and continued to provide quality education through both virtual and in-person instruction, our theme heading into the new school year is **“Engaging, Inspiring, and Preparing Students – Together!”** We are continuing to offer virtual instruction for all K-12 students and more than 1,800 are currently enrolled. At the same time, for in-person instruction we hope to return to a sense of normalcy in our schools while acknowledging and responding to the reasonable concerns that remain. For the 2021-2022 school year, it is vital that we sustain the sense of unity and togetherness we built last year as a school community to continue providing PCSD students the best education possible.

WHERE WE ARE

Governor Brian Kemp issued an Executive Order ending the Public Health State of Emergency effective June 30, 2021. That means the Paulding County School District will follow state-mandated practices and Board of Education Policy (JGCC) which address the mitigation and prevention of any communicable or infectious disease. COVID-19 cases will be handled according to Board Policy [JGCC](#) for students and Board Policy [GANA](#) for staff.

In July 2021 we conducted surveys asking stakeholders and our staff about their expectations for the coming school year. Nearly 2,000 responses indicated that while a majority expects a return to pre-pandemic normalcy, a significant percentage believes it is still reasonable to take certain precautions to continue preventing the spread of COVID-19. Our Opening Plan for the 2021-2022 school year incorporates the input we received to provide balance as we move forward as a united school community made up of individual schools.

It is important to remember that the environment in individual schools may vary. At any given time, individual schools may need to adopt different schedules and/or shift to Digital Learning Days due to COVID-19 cases and exposures within that school. We believe the best approach is to give individual schools the flexibility to ramp up additional preventive measures as needed, and that is how the 2021-2022 Opening Plan will work.

The following provides a summary overview of what you can expect when the new school year begins. As we emphasized last year, the COVID-19 environment has been continuously evolving, so the strategies outlined here are subject to change. We will continue monitoring that environment and pledge to keep you informed.



WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

The Opening Plan is based on a four-tier color code that escalates practices should the COVID threat increase at the district or school level. Additionally, the plan recognizes that every elementary school, middle school and high school is unique.



The 2021-2022 school year will open in Preventive Practices, or Yellow. This level takes the district's normal operating mode of Resilient Practices (Green) and incorporates certain COVID-19 mitigation and prevention efforts.

The following provides an overview of what students, parents/guardians and district staff can expect in several key areas under Preventive Practices (Yellow) when the school year begins:

YELLOW	PREVENTIVE PRACTICES
Masks	Under Yellow, masks will be optional. Staff and students are <u>NOT</u> required to wear masks but may do so voluntarily. PCSD will continue to provide masks to individuals who request them.
Vaccinations	COVID-19 vaccinations are <u>NOT</u> required for students, staff, or visitors. While vaccinations are encouraged, the district recognizes that the decision is a personal choice.
Positive Cases	Students or staff who test positive for COVID-19 will continue to follow Department of Public Health (DPH) isolation guidelines, which currently require the infected person stay home for 10 days from the onset of symptoms and be fever-free, without use of fever-reducing medications, for 24 hours before returning to work or school.
Close-Contact Monitoring and Quarantines	While under Yellow, PCSD will <u>NOT</u> prohibit healthy students from attending school. In other words, schools will not mandate precautionary quarantines for healthy students. If, however, a parent/guardian should choose to quarantine their healthy child as a precaution due to potential close contact, absences will be excused with a parent or doctor's note. Students may receive instruction through digital learning throughout quarantine and isolation periods. Parents/guardians are encouraged to follow the recommendations of their health care provider regarding precautionary quarantines. Parents/guardians will be notified of their child's potential exposure to a confirmed positive and reminded of the importance of monitoring for symptoms. The Paulding County School District will assist the Department of Public Health (DPH) in its efforts to identify close contacts of confirmed cases. <u>This is the same State-mandated practice PCSD follows for any communicable or infectious disease.</u>



School Operations	Under Yellow, there will be consistent expectations regarding school operations. These expectations will include (as non-intrusive as possible) preventative practices to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The application of these practices may vary depending on the specific school or level, and the district and individual schools will strive to communicate these practices.
Open Houses	Parents/guardians and students are invited to participate in an in-person preview of the upcoming school year on Thursday, July 29, 2021. Students and families are welcome to visit schools according to the group times communicated and posted to our website at www.paulding.k12.ga.us. To manage crowd size, each open house has divided attendance into two groups alphabetically by last name. While we are not limiting the number of guests, we respectfully request that each student be accompanied by no more than 1-2 essential visitor(s). The Paulding Virtual Academy (PVA) and the Paulding College and Career Academy (PCCA) also will host virtual open houses on Thursday, July 29, 2021. Specific communication will be sent to those families with students enrolled.
Visitors	Parents/guardians and students can expect special events typically open to parents/guardians and families will resume, and volunteers will be permitted to work throughout the school in accordance with Board Policy and school safety protocols. When practical, upon check-in, visitors will have their temperature checked and will be provided hand sanitizer. Additionally, the district's Raptor visitor check-in kiosk will provide a COVID-19 screening. The number of visitors and their location will be managed to mitigate and prevent the spread of COVID-19, as we would for any communicable or infectious disease. The application of these practices may vary depending on the school.
Enhanced Cleaning	The school district and its custodial provider, HES Facilities Management (HES), maintain a comprehensive cleaning and disinfecting program for all PCSD schools, facilities, and school buses. The HES CleanCheck program includes: • Dedicated additional personnel to concentrate exclusively on cleaning high-touch areas with increased frequency daily at each school. • Certified Disinfection Specialists available to each school site. • Electrostatic sprayers will be in use by employees at each school site. • An HES Bioremediation team is available to address any areas in the District that would require specialized treatment and broader disinfection protocols in an area needing disinfection. • HES CleanCheck program managers will direct additional resources and personnel to the daily cleaning focus points at each facility. • Hospital grade EPA registered disinfectants will be used at each facility. As a supplement to the district's cleaning and disinfecting program, PCSD has supplied each classroom teacher, bus driver, and support staff an EPA approved multi-purpose



cleaner and disinfectant known to kill the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 for use at their individual discretion.

THANK YOU!

We appreciate everyone in the Paulding County School District community coming together to share in practicing preventive measures to reduce the risk of illness and to provide a safe learning environment for our students, staff, and entire community. We look forward to Engaging, Inspiring, and Preparing – Together – for the 2021-2022 school year!