



Steve Barnette
Superintendent

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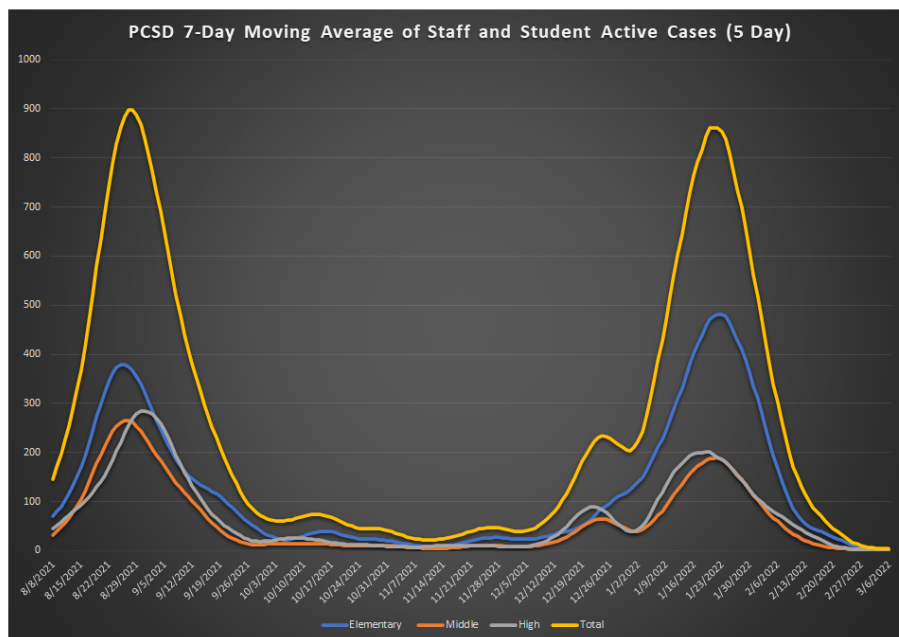
March 8, 2022

Dear PCSD Community,

The Paulding County School District continues to assess the evolving environment related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the school year began, we shared our School Operations (Opening) Plan, which contains specific protocols and general expectations regarding school operations. These expectations were designed with the flexibility to react to current conditions and evolving guidance. Current data from our schools indicates a significant drop in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and serious effects from the disease over the last several weeks, which is a very encouraging development. Our COVID-19 Task Force has been monitoring our community data and the latest guidance published by the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH). Based on that assessment, **effective Monday, March 14, 2022, all PCSD schools will shift to Green Operating Status (Resilient Practices)** from Yellow Operating Status.



The chart below shows the trendline of the 7-day moving average of active student and staff cases in Paulding County schools. Over the last several weeks we have seen just a handful of cases down from highs of more than 900 cases near the start of the school year, and more than 850 at the peak of the recent Omicron variant. Additional data regarding COVID-19 in schools is available here: <https://www.paulding.k12.ga.us/Page/45777>



Prior 7 Days (Actual):

2/28/2022	3/1/2022	3/2/2022	3/3/2022	3/4/2022	3/5/2022	3/6/2022
2	4	4	3	2	3	3

What Does Green Operating Status Mean?

The shift to Green Operating Status means the following:

- Restrictions on visitors to schools will be lifted (except for non-COVID protocols* individual schools maintain for logistical efficiency).
- Restrictions on field trips, classroom instruction, recess, and food delivery will be lifted.
- Restrictions on large gatherings will be lifted (and will continue to follow GHSA requirements for athletics).
- Restrictions on facility rentals will be lifted.

The following practices will remain in place:

- The district will continue to follow state-mandated guidance for positive cases, close contacts, and quarantines (see [COVID-19 web site](#)).
- Students will be encouraged to continue using water bottles at water fountains.
- Masks will be permitted but not required (unless adhering to quarantine guidance as mandated by state DPH).
- Social distancing will continue where appropriate and feasible.

**Practices may vary as schools implement protocols based on capacity considerations, parking limitations, student and staff safety and security, and other non-COVID-related needs. Your school principal will notify you of these localized protocols in the coming days.*

Our School Operations (Opening) Plan was designed with four color-coded escalating practices to adjust and adapt to evolving pandemic-related challenges. This system allows the flexibility to address where we are today based on the available data. The shift to Green Operating Status does not mean a return to pre-pandemic conditions, but instead emphasizes maintaining specific resilient practices. Along with the commonsense steps listed above, the district remains under DPH guidance, maintains a COVID-19 Task Force to monitor conditions daily, and is prepared to shift back to Yellow should conditions change. Additionally, the Infectious Diseases Policy ([GANA](#)) outlines the district's comprehensive approach to communicable diseases in schools.

During the pandemic, the Paulding County School District was one of the first school systems in the nation to offer students and parents a choice of in-person or virtual instruction, and that option will continue to be available. [Registration](#) for the Paulding Virtual Academy for the 2022-2023 school year remains open through this Friday, March 11, 2022.

Our goal continues to be managing COVID-19 as a community. We are challenged to balance a wide variety of needs, opinions, and expectations among the approximately 18,000 families and 30,000 students we serve. Ultimately, our goal is to keep students in the classroom as much as possible, while maintaining a safe and effective learning environment. The district's [COVID-19 web site](#) provides a link where stakeholders may provide feedback and suggestions, and all input is reviewed by the COVID-19 Task Force. Additionally, the district will continue to post COVID-19 positive case counts to the web site on a weekly basis.

The shift to Green Operating Status is good news for students, staff, and for the entire community as it is a direct reflection of the encouraging trend line for COVID-19 data in our schools. Thank you for your support as we continue to work together as a community to provide a safe and healthy educational environment for all Paulding County students.