A decorative graphic in the top-left corner consisting of a network of interconnected nodes and lines. The nodes are represented by small circles, some of which are blue and some are grey. The lines are thin and grey, forming a complex web-like structure.

March 23, 2021

# **Continued Transition to Full In-Person Learning**

A decorative graphic in the bottom-right corner, similar to the one in the top-left, showing a network of interconnected nodes and lines. The nodes are small circles, some blue and some grey, connected by thin grey lines.

# Changing once again

On March 9, 2021 Commissioner Riley outlined new regulatory changes for returning students to five day a week in person education, with a remote option. All students in our hybrid model (and any family from our remote model who would like to change to all in person) will begin coming to school five days a week in person according to the timeline created by the Commissioner.

Elementary Schools return to five day in person learning no later than April 5, 2021

Middle Schools return to five day in person learning no later than April 28, 2021

High Schools return to five day in person learning is to be determined

# Our Pillars of Safety have been

- ◎ Social Distancing
- ◎ Mask Wearing for all
- ◎ Hand washing and hand sanitizing emphasis
- ◎ HEPA filtration added
- ◎ Increased HVAC air flow and filtration
- ◎ Disinfecting nightly
- ◎ Pool testing

# From the CDC on Friday, March 19, 2021

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-child-care/operation-strategy.html>

## School in-person learning and prevention


When prevention strategies – especially mask use and physical distancing – are consistently and correctly used, the risk of transmission in the school environment is decreased.<sup>50</sup>

CDC's school guidance for COVID-19 emphasizes 5 key prevention strategies: consistent and correct use of masks, physical distancing, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, cleaning and ventilation, and contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine.



## More from the CDC

Use of multiple strategies – sometimes called layered prevention – provides greater protection in breaking transmission chains than implementing a single strategy.<sup>51</sup> The guidance recommends layering two or more prevention strategies, with particular emphasis on universal use of masks and physical distancing.



# Summary of recent US COVID-19 Studies (CDC 3/19/2021)

In summary, the preponderance of the available evidence from U.S. schools indicates that even when students were placed less than 6 feet apart in classrooms, there was limited SARS-CoV-2 transmission when other layered prevention strategies were consistently maintained; notably, masking and student cohorts.<sup>7,42,52,67,72</sup>

# Study of Massachusetts schools accepted for publication by the Infectious Diseases Society of America

**Effectiveness of three versus six feet of physical distancing for controlling spread of COVID-19 among primary and secondary students and staff: A retrospective, state-wide cohort study**

<https://academic.oup.com/cid/advance-article/doi/10.1093/cid/ciab230/6167856>

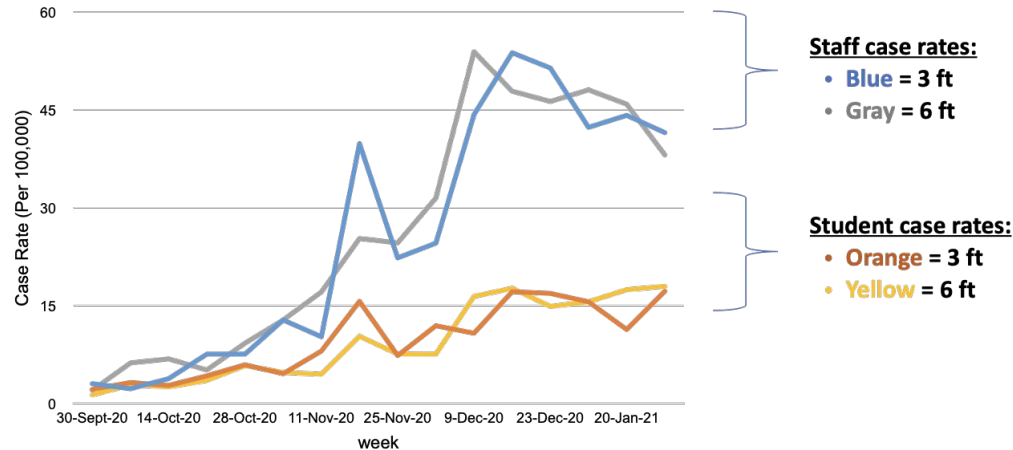
## **Abstract Conclusions:**

Lower physical distancing policies can be adopted in school settings with masking mandates without negatively impacting student or staff safety.

# New scientific information regarding distancing

**Study of Massachusetts data indicates no substantial difference in cases among students or staff with 3 versus 6 feet of distance since schools re-opened**

**Cases of SARS-CoV-2 Among Students and Staff with 3 versus 6 feet of Physical Distancing Policies**



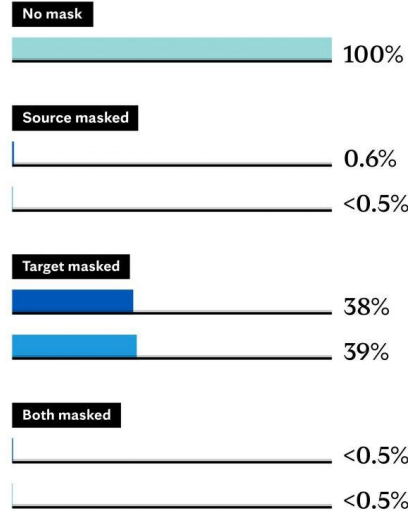
Source: Polly van den Berg, MD; Elissa M. Schechter-Perkins, MD, MPH; Rebecca S. Jack, MPP; Isabella Epshtein, MPP; Richard Nelson, PhD; Emily Oster, PhD; Westyn Branch-Elliman, MD, MMSc. [SARS-CoV-2 Cases in Students and Staff in Massachusetts with Variable Distancing Policies](#). Infection control plans for Commonwealth school districts with any in person learning were collected, with universal masking for students in grade 3 and higher and universal masking for staff mandatory. 243 districts were included, comprising 520,129 students and 6,227,765 student learning weeks, and 97,679 staff and 1,313,532 staff learning weeks. SARS-CoV-2 cases in students and staff in districts with in-person learning with different distancing policies were compared.



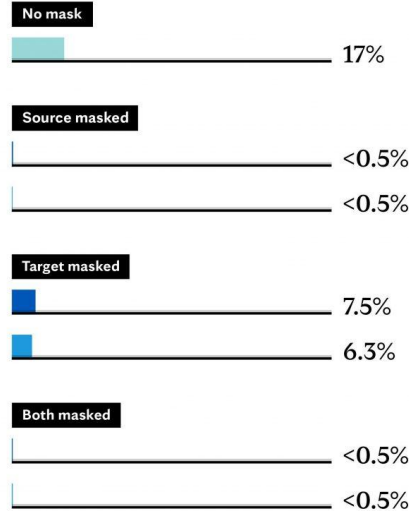
# Exposure Risk Based on Masking and Distance

NO MASK DISPOSABLE MASK FABRIC MASK

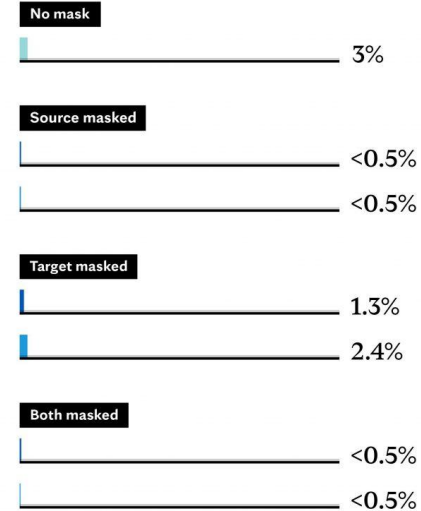
## 1-foot distance



## 3-foot distance



## 6-foot distance



Source = person with active COVID-19

The graph shows percentage of particle counts across various distances of 1 foot to 6 feet when the source, target and both are masked using disposable and cloth masks.

<https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/mayo-clinic-research-confirms-critical-role-of-masks-in-preventing-covid-19-infection/>

# Therefore...

I have instructed the principals, their leadership teams, and their transition teams to utilize this new information to bring middle and high school students back to in person learning with a minimum distance of three (3) feet while leaving a six (6) foot space at the front of the classroom for educators. Elementary school principals, leadership teams, and transition teams will continue to use a minimum distance of six (6) foot distancing between students.

# Steps being taken

## **Currently:**

Survey for all parents (in-person or remote)

Building based plans for five day a week in person learning

## **Next Steps:**

Finalize building based and district plans

Review those plans with the school committee

Set dates for the return of students to five day a week in person learning

# Collaboration with our Educators

The BEA has created a sub-committee The BTOC (BEA Transitional Oversight Committee) whom I have been meeting with. The BTOC did a member survey 3/2/21 - 3/5/21. 255 teachers responded to the survey. Please note the date of the survey.

- © Prior to DESE announcements of new scientific information
- © Prior to the general announcement elevation educators in the vaccination queue

# The survey results...

The BEA's member survey survey found that:

- ◎ 90% of teachers intend to be vaccinated against COVID-19
- ◎ More than 50% of teachers have taken advantage of the free testing program offered by the town of Bedford

## More survey results...

- ◎ 78% of JGMS educators are willing to come back at three (3) feet of social distance but asked that there be no increase in duties
- ◎ 73% of BHS educators are willing to come back at three (3) feet of social distance but asked that there be no increase in duties
- ◎ Less than ½ of the teachers with remote assignments are comfortable coming back even after being vaccinated

# DESE Guidance and Updates

Friday March 5, 2021 MA Board of E&S Education Vote: grants Commissioner authority to amend learning time regulations

Tuesday, March 9, 2021 Regulations and guidance announce that Hybrid & Remote Learning will not count toward Time on Learning effective:

4/5 Elementary Schools

4/28 - Middle School

TBD - High School

Districts are accountable to learning time regulations with only in person learning With the exception for students who remain in our B4B All Remote Program which is required of all districts through the end of the 2020-2021 academic year and is not expected to continue in the 2021-2022 school year.

# DESE Reminders

## **Social Distancing**

- ◎ Scientific evidence allows us to move from six (6) feet to three (3) feet between students with students facing same direction
- ◎ Tables may be used as long as students are three (3) feet from one another and facing in the same direction

## **Transportation**

- ◎ There are no limitations on bus capacity for riders in K through grade 6
- ◎ There is a maximum of two (2) students allowed per seat in grades seven (7) through twelve (12)



# More DESE Reminders

## Lunch and Recess

- © Students must be six (6) feet apart when unmasked

Key strategies:

- © Desks instead of cafe tables and/or students at tables six (6) feet apart
- © Outdoor options as much as possible (Tents will be erected at all four (4) schools
- © Stagger lunch and recess
- © Add additional lunch periods
- © Split lunch between multiple spaces including the cafe(s), LGI's, auditoriums, classrooms, and outside

# Reminder about the Secondary School Survey

**The survey gives JGMS & BHS parent/guardians the option to choose full in person or remote learning for their students**

## **From DESE:**

*“For many districts, this will be a substantial programming shift mid-school year. Families should expect that districts may need to make challenging tradeoffs to accommodate the full in-person instructional mode. For instance, if students are currently learning in a hybrid model, the shift to more in-person days may require changes in classroom learning spaces and, in some cases, teacher-student assignments. If students are currently in a remote model or choose to learn remotely when these new requirements go into effect, the remote learning option may look different than the model offered prior to the implementation of these new requirements.”*

A decorative network diagram in the top-left corner, featuring a complex web of interconnected nodes and lines. Some nodes are highlighted with blue circles, and others with blue dots.

**Questions?**

A decorative network diagram in the bottom-right corner, featuring a complex web of interconnected nodes and lines. Some nodes are highlighted with blue circles, and others with blue dots.