



Pearl River School District

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Marco F. Pochintesta, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

August 18, 2021

Dear Pearl River School Community,

I hope this letter finds you well as we excitedly anticipate and prepare for the first day of school on September 1st.

During the past week, our School Health Committee met several times to review the logistics of our return to five-day, in-person instruction. The committee carefully reviewed the health and safety guidance issued by the CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the New York State Education Department. These federal and state recommendations and mandates provide mitigation strategies to minimize the threat of COVID-19 in our schools.

It is strongly recommended that all parents of children ages 12 and over speak to their health care provider to determine if a vaccine against COVID-19 is right for your child. If so, local pediatricians and the [Rockland County Department of Health](#) offer vaccines for those 12 and over. If your child was vaccinated over the summer or you have a vaccination appointment scheduled for your child, please contact your child's school nurse.

The recommendations made by the School Health Committee can be found on our webpage [Planning for Re-Opening of Schools 2021-22](#)

The School Health Committee discussed mask usage at length but did not achieve consensus on the matter of indoor mask usage. The committee agreed that despite rising cases in the state and nation, our focus remains on local community data.

The committee developed two options for consideration. One option calls for universal masking and a second option allows masks to be optional when supportive conditions have been met. We are interested in the community's feedback on each of these options. Please provide your feedback on the options described below:

Option 1 - Universal Indoor Masking*

- All students and staff wear masks indoors and on school transportation regardless of vaccination status.

Note: Unvaccinated students seated three or more feet apart and wearing masks properly and consistently will not be required to quarantine if exposed to COVID-19. Unvaccinated students exposed to a COVID-19 case seated six feet or less apart during indoor lunch will be required to quarantine. Students and staff who

are vaccinated will not be required to quarantine, but will be required to test for COVID-19 three to five days after exposure and negative results are received.

Option 2 - Flexible Masking Approach Using [CDC Data Tracker](#)*

- Masks are not required indoors when the county is at a Low (Blue) or Moderate (Yellow) transmission level, as identified by the CDC. However, if a positive case occurs in the school, everyone in that school will be required to mask for 14 days. If there are no new cases during the 14 day period and the county levels remain within the Low or Moderate range, masks will not be required.
- When the county is experiencing Substantial (Orange) or High (Red) transmission rates, all faculty, staff and students will wear masks indoors regardless of vaccination status.
- Should the county transmission rate fall from a Substantial (Orange) or High (Red) to Moderate (Yellow) or Low (Blue) transmission rate, masks will not be required after five consecutive days in the Moderate (Yellow) or Low (Blue) range.
- Masks are required to be worn on all school transportation at all times.

Note: Unvaccinated students and staff who were not wearing masks will be required to quarantine if they were within six feet of an infected individual for ten minutes or more. Verified vaccinated students and staff who were exposed will not have to quarantine, but will be required to wear a mask until they test for COVID-19 three to five days after exposure and negative results are received.

*Accommodations can be made for students with disabilities who cannot tolerate a mask.

Please click on the following link to provide us feedback with the two options above and **complete the feedback form by 1 PM on Monday, August 23rd:**

[Feedback Regarding Masking Options](#)

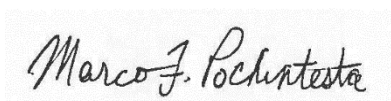
As I stated in my previous communication, our top priority is to ensure that the Pearl River School District provides in-person learning to all students in a safe and healthy environment. By implementing these recommended health strategies, we will greatly reduce the threat of COVID-19 in our school community and keep our students in school and learning.

I would like to thank the members of the School Health Committee for their time and input in our discussions, as well as for providing recommendations for the new school year.

Local health data and information will continue to inform decisions impacting our schools. We will continue to prioritize our students' educational experiences, as well as making certain that our students, families and staff remain united. We are committed to providing our students an excellent school year.

I look forward to the start of the 2021-22 school year and can't wait to welcome everyone back soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marco J. Rochiata". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a light gray rectangular background.