



Mask Considerations

Information for Franklin School
Committee

February 16, 2022

Process Update - DESE Mandate and Local Policy

DESE – On the Desktop – February 9, 2022

*“After consulting with medical experts and state health officials, the Commissioner will **not renew the state mask requirement** after it expires on February 28, 2022. Effective Monday, February 28, the DESE mask requirement will be lifted statewide. The Commonwealth’s high vaccination rates and widespread availability of COVID-19 testing for school personnel and students support this decision. **Masking continues to be required on all school buses, per federal order.**”*

As always, any individual who wishes to continue to mask, including those who face higher risk from COVID-19, should be supported in that choice.

DESE and DPH strongly recommend unvaccinated individuals should continue to wear masks in school settings.”

Franklin Public
Schools Policy EBCFA

“A face covering that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in school buildings and on school transportation.”

“The District may modify its mask requirements in accordance with DESE guidance.”

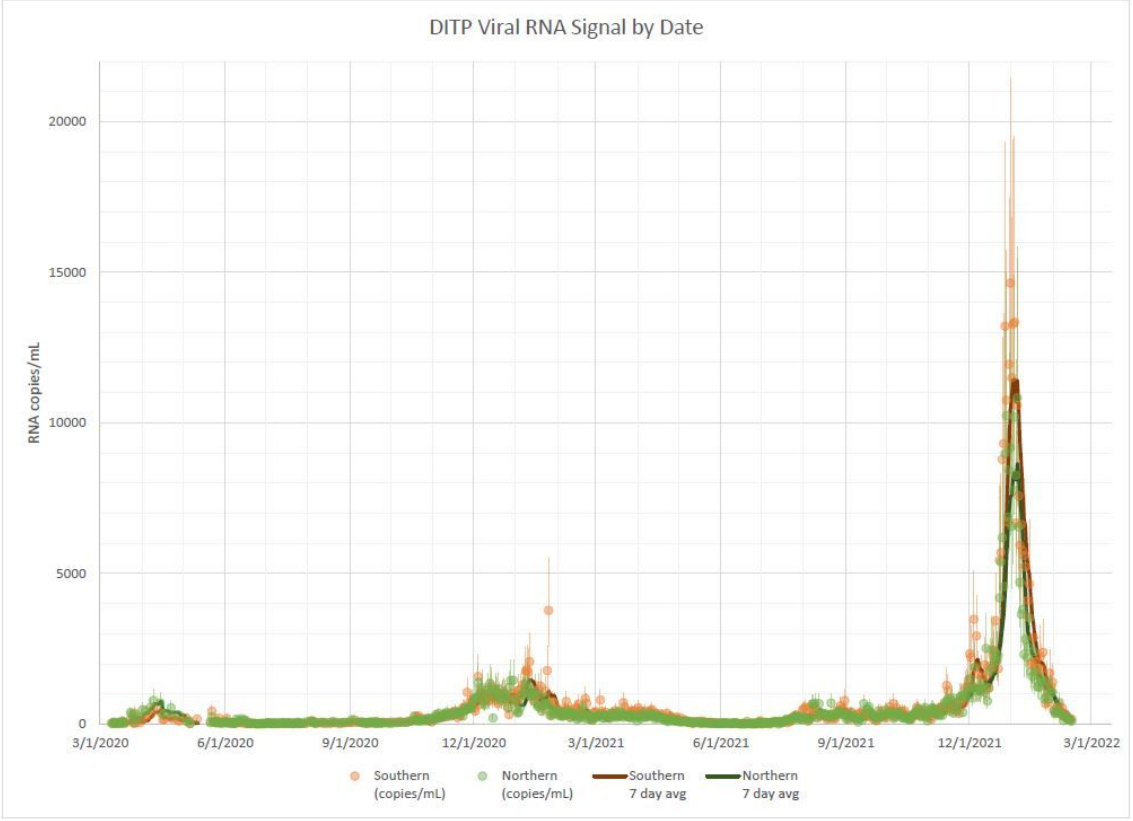
Indicators for Decision-Making



Dr. Joseph Allen, in a recent [Opinion in the Washington Post](#), cited these as indicators for decision-makers in lifting government restrictions. In addition to educational reasons, these were among the health-related points mentioned in the Governor's press conference.

1. Wastewater
2. Health-care capacity
3. Hospitalizations due to COVID
4. Risk (e.g. age, vaccination rate, co-morbidities)

Source: MWRA 2/14/2022



Recommendation based on the Revised MASC Model Policy

1. Strongly recommend that unvaccinated or otherwise immunocompromised individuals wear masks in school buildings, and on school grounds, even when social distancing is observed.
2. Individuals who are fully vaccinated are not required to wear a mask, but may do so if desired.

Suggested Implementation Timeframe:

- A. Monday, February 28, 2022 for all schools in Franklin
- B. FHS Admin. asks for consideration for either Thursday (2/17) or Friday (2/18) based on the waiver from DESE

**** Masks would still be required under certain circumstances, as noted on the next slide.

**** DESE is cautioning us from building in metrics.

We would expect that all individuals in our schools to be treated respectfully whether they choose to wear a mask or not wear a mask.

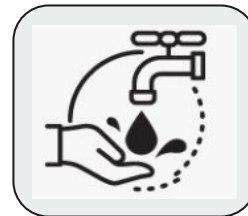
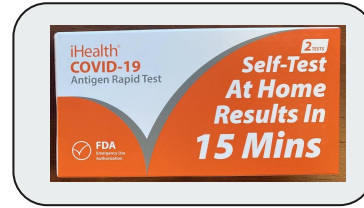
Clarifications if Masks Were to be Optional



- Masks would still be required on buses/school transportation (federal order)
- Masks would still be required in health offices (per DPH for health facilities)
- Masks would still be required for individuals testing as COVID-positive and returning to school from isolation on day 6 or later through day 10 (per DPH and CDC)
- MIAA dropped mask-wearing protocols. However, mask rules are up to host-school or venue-specific rules.

Summary of Layered Mitigation Efforts

- Vaccination
- Rapid antigen kits for students/staff to use at home
- Symptomatic COVID testing
- UVGI throughout the entire school
- Portable HEPA filtration units
- Good hand hygiene practices
- Monitoring symptoms and staying home when sick



Vaccination Information by School

Overall vaccination rate in Town of Franklin (2/10/2022): 75%

School	% Vaccinated
Jefferson	67.1%
Keller	61.3%
Kennedy	70%
Oak	64.5%
Parmenter	54.5%

School	% Vaccinated
ASMS	79.7%
HMMS	78.6%
RMS	72.2%
FHS	86.1%

As of 2/15/2022 - still collecting some staff data

If interest is high enough, we will consider running another mobile vaccine clinic

COVID+ Information by Level



Level	% Students COVID+ (last 90 days)*
ECDC	18%
Elementary	26%
Middle	23%
High	19%

*This involves both vaccinated and unvaccinated students

Data on Rapid Antigen Tests



	Number	Percentage
Students Opting In	1757	37%
Faculty/Staff Opting In	585	71%

Families and faculty/staff may still sign up

Data on Symptomatic Testing



	Number	Percentage
Students Opting In	3375	71%
Faculty/Staff Opting In	468	57%

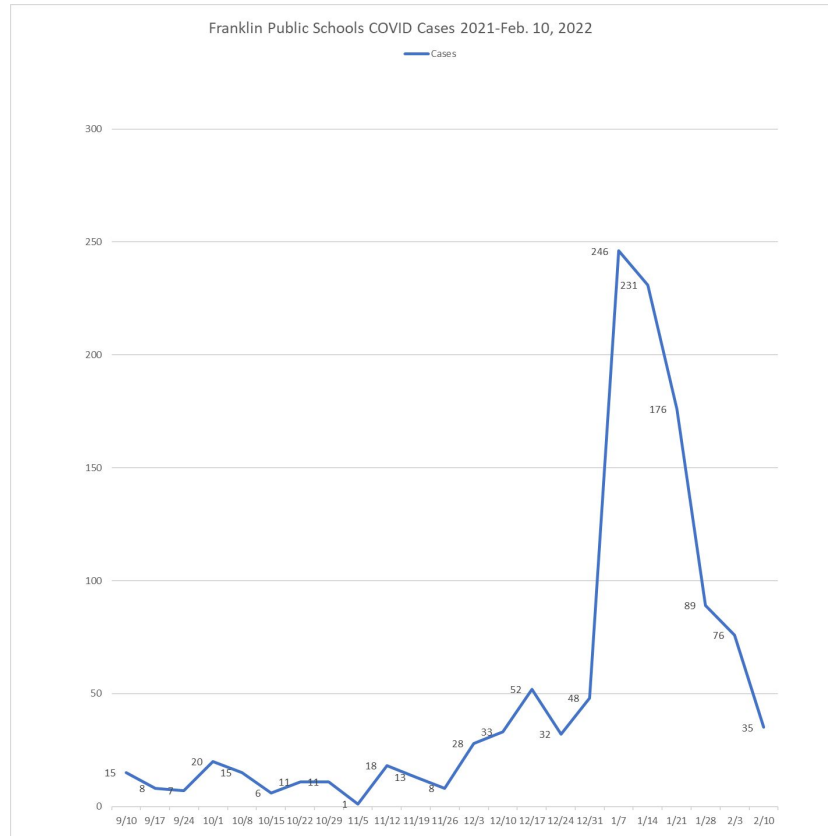
Families and faculty/staff may still sign up

“One-way Masking”



- One-way Masking - “For anyone who fears moving away from universal masking, the great news is that they can continue to wear an N95 mask – along with being vaccinated and boosted – and live a low-risk life regardless of what others around them are doing.” Dr. Joseph Allen
 - [The Atlantic](#)
 - [Washington Post](#)
- Current supply of N95/KN95 Masks = 24,000 in storage; additional available at schools
 - We can continue to supply faculty/staff with KN95 masks (MIT tested)
 - We encourage families to upgrade their child’s mask

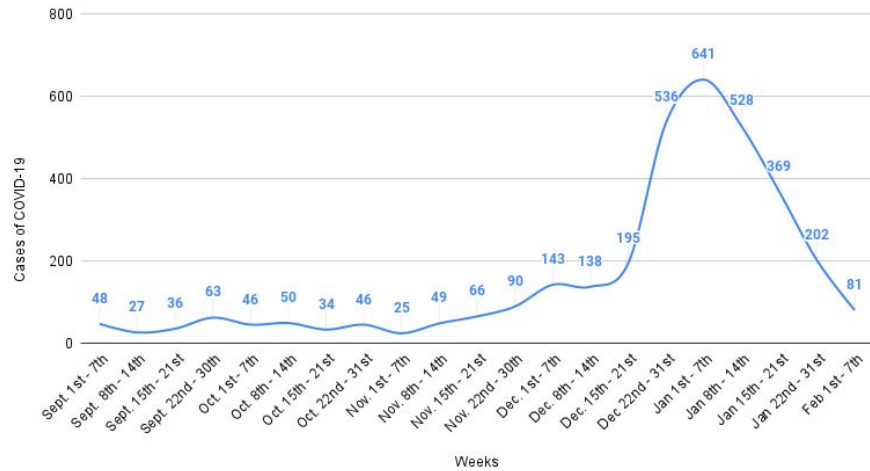
COVID Cases in FPS 2021-2022



Recent COVID Case Trends in Franklin

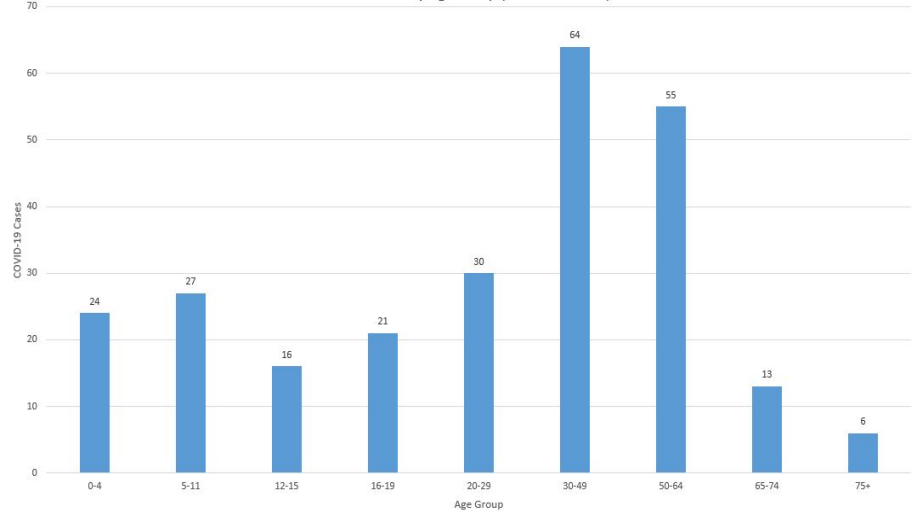
Chronological Franklin Cases

COVID-19 Cases by Week (09.01.22- 02.07.22)



Franklin Cases by Age Group

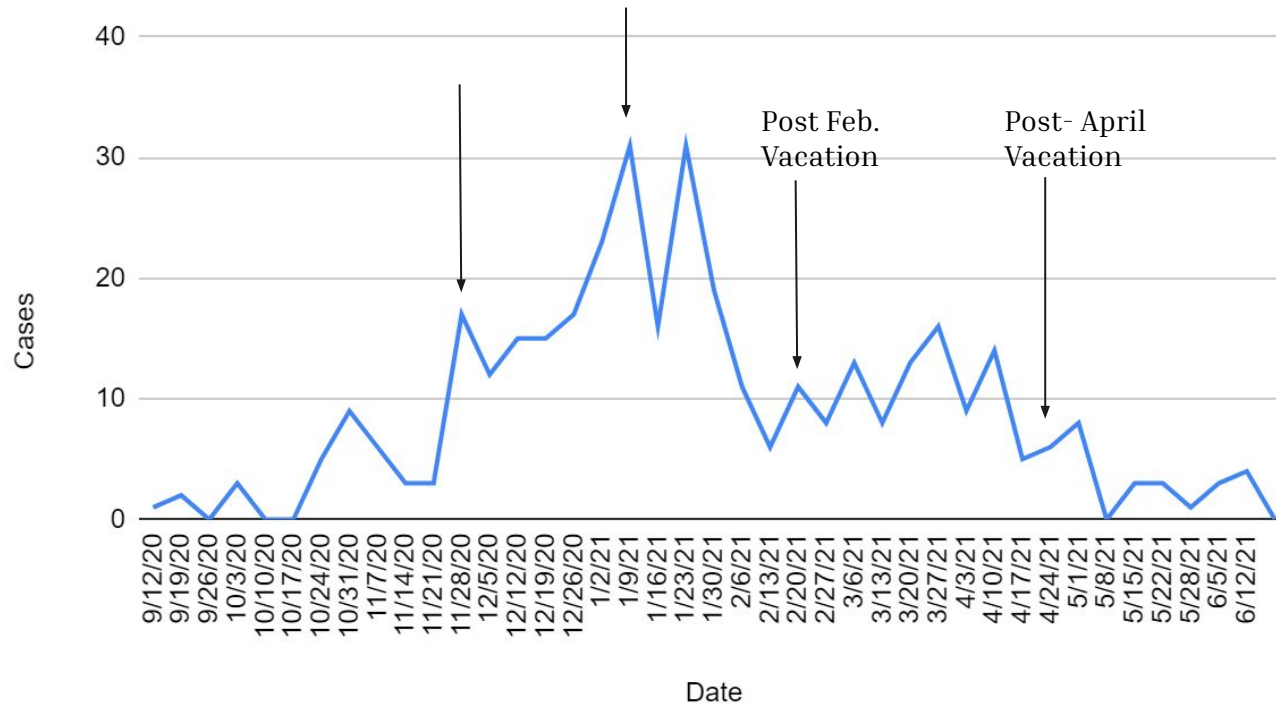
COVID-19 Cases by Age Group (1.23.22 - 2.5.22)



COVID Cases in FPS 2020-2021



Franklin Public Schools Case Reporting



Case Counts from January 2021



Week of:	FPS Case Count	Franklin % Positivity
12/26/2020	17	7.36%
1/2/2021	23	7.06%
1/9/2021	31	7.19%
1/16/2021	16	6.77%
1/23/2021	31	5.5%

Case Counts from February and April 2021



Week of:	FPS Case Count	Franklin % Positivity
1/30/2021	19	4.77%
2/6/2021	11	3.74%
2/13/2021 (Feb. Vacation)	6	2.44%
2/20/2021	11	1.36%
2/27/2021	8	1.11%

Week of:	FPS Case Count	Franklin % Positivity
4/3/2021	9	2.19%
4/10/2021	14	1.99%
4/17/2021 (April Vacation)	5	1.59%
4/24/2021	6	1.3%
5/1/2021	11	1.23%

Other Considerations



- Shift from daily communications about COVID cases to a weekly summary
 - Shift in mindset – “COVID” is all around
- We would monitor attendance, especially the weeks following February and April vacation
 - Good baseline data from Omicron surge with which to make a comparison
 - Peak student/staff absences January 2022 = 15%/9%
 - Baseline student/staff absences February 2022 = 5%/5%
- Decisions by area schools
 - BFCCPS: Masks optional for 2/28/2022
 - Many other area communities making masks optional in schools
 - Variability - start date
- Students and faculty/staff can still opt-in for rapid antigen test kits
- Students and faculty/staff can still opt-in to the symptomatic testing program
- Individuals who are immunocompromised should continue to mask; we are also happy to speak with them individually about additional supports/accommodations
- COVID Vaccine clinic for ages 5-11 being held at Franklin Senior Center on February 23



MASC Model Policy