



# Henry County Schools Press Release

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## **Henry County Schools, Pediatricians Discuss Reopening Plans**

Multiple town hall forums with local health officials provide encouragement around return to campus

HENRY COUNTY, GA – Over the weeks leading up to the special called meeting of the Henry County Board of Education on August 31 to discuss the return-to-campus plans for students, district leaders engaged medical community members in discussions around their approach and thoughts regarding reopening schools.

The pediatric community, more specifically, had multiple conversations with Superintendent Mary Elizabeth Davis about the current COVID-19 numbers, how the virus is impacting Henry County, and what matters most to those responsible for the healthcare of our students.

Representatives from various clinics and healthcare providers were able to participate in a couple of brief town hall meetings, and their feedback was important in the recent decisions that have been made to safely welcome back those students whose families opted for them to return to on-campus instruction.

Dr. Patrick Pulliam with Covenant Care Pediatrics shared that he has noticed a great amount of care and attention around the efforts of the school district to safely bring back students to an on campus environment.

“The amount of thought, effort, and care Henry County Schools has put into these plans is just amazing,” said Pulliam. “You guys have done and continue to do an amazing job.”

Pulliam, along with other doctors in the meetings, noted that there will always be risks versus benefits, but the risks are going to fall when COVID-19 cases are not increasing in the community.

Dr. Lyra Ratmeyer with Primary Pediatrics shared that before schools consider reopening, there should be statistics showing improving numbers for the county.

“I would like to see our area having a very steady trend down in the numbers,” said Ratmeyer. “I would like to see our hospitalization rate be very much lower than it is now before we consider in-person schooling.”

The statistics in Henry County do currently show a downward trend in the number of new positive cases, thus meeting one of the main requirements for the district in order to consider reopening.

As shared in the board presentations and found on the district website, Henry County Schools has stayed on top of the numbers in the area and now has an available dashboard for public consumption showing just how far the numbers have dropped and continue on a downward trajectory.

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The data found through the dashboard will be utilized for the progression of the Henry County Schools phased-in return-to-campus plans. Superintendent Davis shared that transparency of these numbers is important for the community. Numbers reviewed and checked weekly include the new positive cases in Henry County over a 14-day period, a daily average of those new cases, the hospitalization rate, and the transmission rate of cases per school.

Numbers publicized at the August 24 special called meeting of the board of education revealed that the trends for Henry County are positive in that the rolling 14-day daily average of new positive COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents has been steadily declining over the past month. The latest numbers show that of the new cases that have been confirmed in the last week alone, those numbers represent only 0.08 percent of the county's population. Numbers now show that there is a daily average of only 10 new positive COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents in a county with a population of 239,866 residents.

"It's the trend in these very numbers that is allowing us to once again return to the hybrid learning model that we had designed to start the year," said Davis. "We are appreciative of our community partners, including our pediatricians, for their insight and feedback to help us in providing a safe educational environment for our community."

For more information on Henry County Schools, visit

[www.henry.k12.ga.us](http://www.henry.k12.ga.us). ###

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