

Board of Education

Sue Finley, Chair
Tommy Gartrell, Vice Chair
Tucker Green
Aaron Holland
Steve Smith



Tony Young
Superintendent

July 28, 2021

Dear PCSD Family,

The health and safety of our students and staff will always be our number one priority. Last week, we were excited to release our return to school plan which allowed us to return to pre-pandemic protocols.

We have continued to monitor COVID-19 trends in Pickens County and remained in close contact with local and state health officials. Unfortunately, a troubling trend has become evident over the last several days involving the spread of COVID-19.

During a short period of time, the number of positive cases in Pickens County has more than doubled and of the tests administered, 81% have been positive. The percentage of those fully vaccinated in Pickens County is currently 9.4%.

Furthermore, we have been informed by the Department of Public Health (DPH) that they intend to conduct contact-tracing and quarantining regardless of our procedures. Based on this information, we have made the decision to conduct contact-tracing ourselves and have DPH reach out to those families who need to be contacted. We feel that this will be the least disruptive way to conduct contact-tracing in our schools. We fully understand the hardship quarantining students places on our families.

CDC guidance released yesterday afternoon "recommends" that all individuals wear a mask indoors regardless of vaccination status. Keep in mind that this is a recommendation, not a mandate.

The district recognizes that students benefit from in-person learning and we look forward to welcoming them all back into our buildings next week. We will continue to provide updates as needed and hope that this is just a bump in the road. The district appreciates your ongoing support as we navigate these challenging opportunities together.

Sincerely,



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