

NC DHHS K-12 COVID-19 Response Updates

DPI/NC DHHS Monthly Meeting
August 3rd, 2021

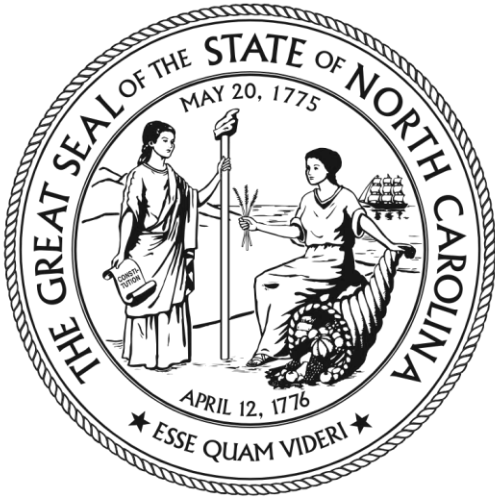


NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**



Agenda

- **Statewide COVID-19 Updates & Data Trends**
- **Delta Variant Concerns**
- **K-12 Covid Testing Updates**
- **StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit Changes/Recommendations**
- **Vaccine Operational Guidance**



NC DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Statewide COVID-19 Updates & Data Trends

Dr. Susan Kansagra

Deputy Director, NC Division of Public Health

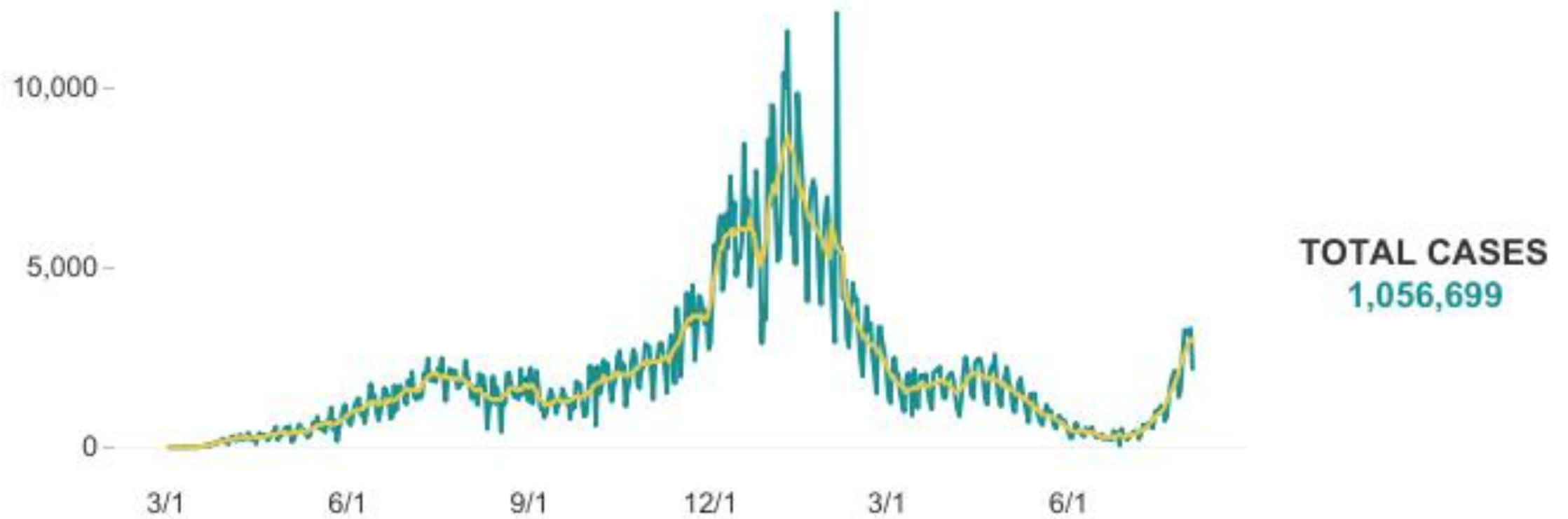
NC DHHS- DPI Monthly Webinar

August 3, 2021

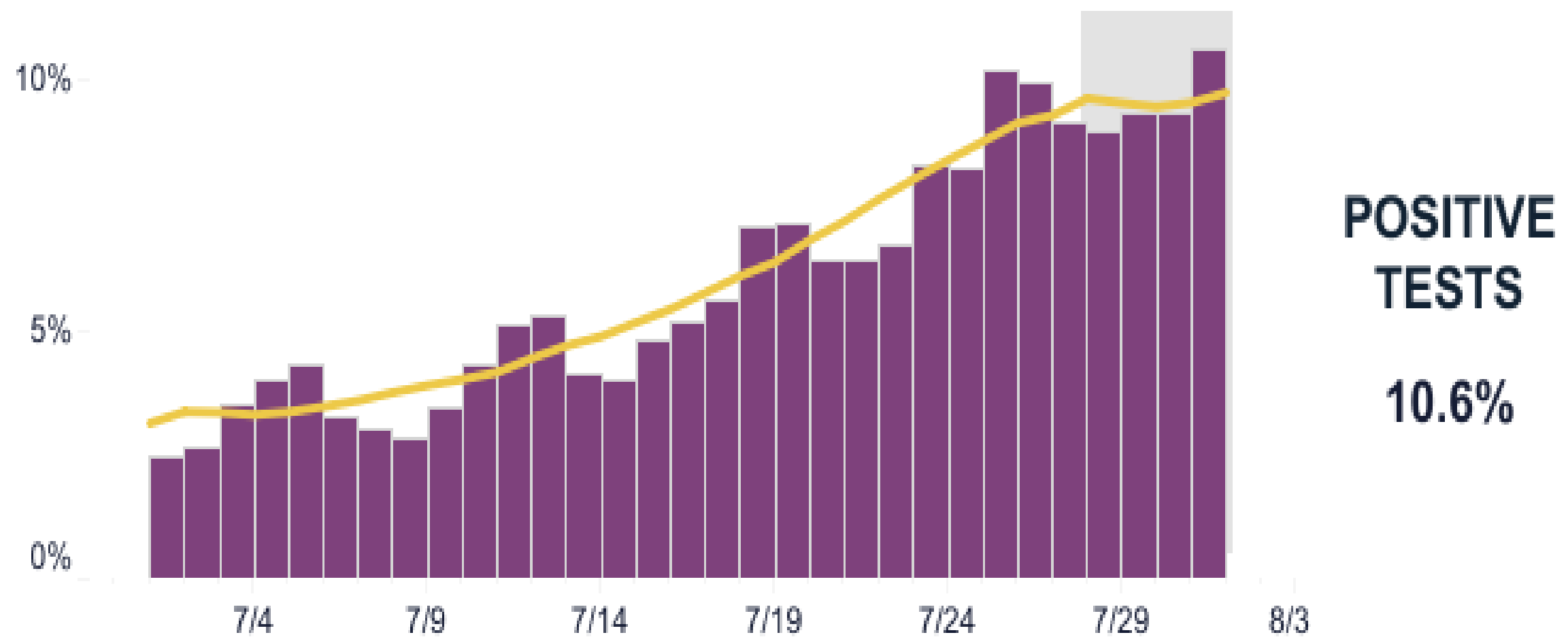
K-12 Reported Clusters – as of 8/2/21

- **269 total K-12 clusters since June 2020**
 - 183 at public schools, 86 at private schools
- **2,454 cases associated with all K-12 clusters**
 - 1,767 cases among students and 687 cases among staff
 - 1,503 cases among public schools, 951 among private schools
- **16 currently active clusters (on 5/3/2021 there were 35 active K-12 clusters)**
 - 14 currently active clusters at public schools, 2 currently active clusters at private schools

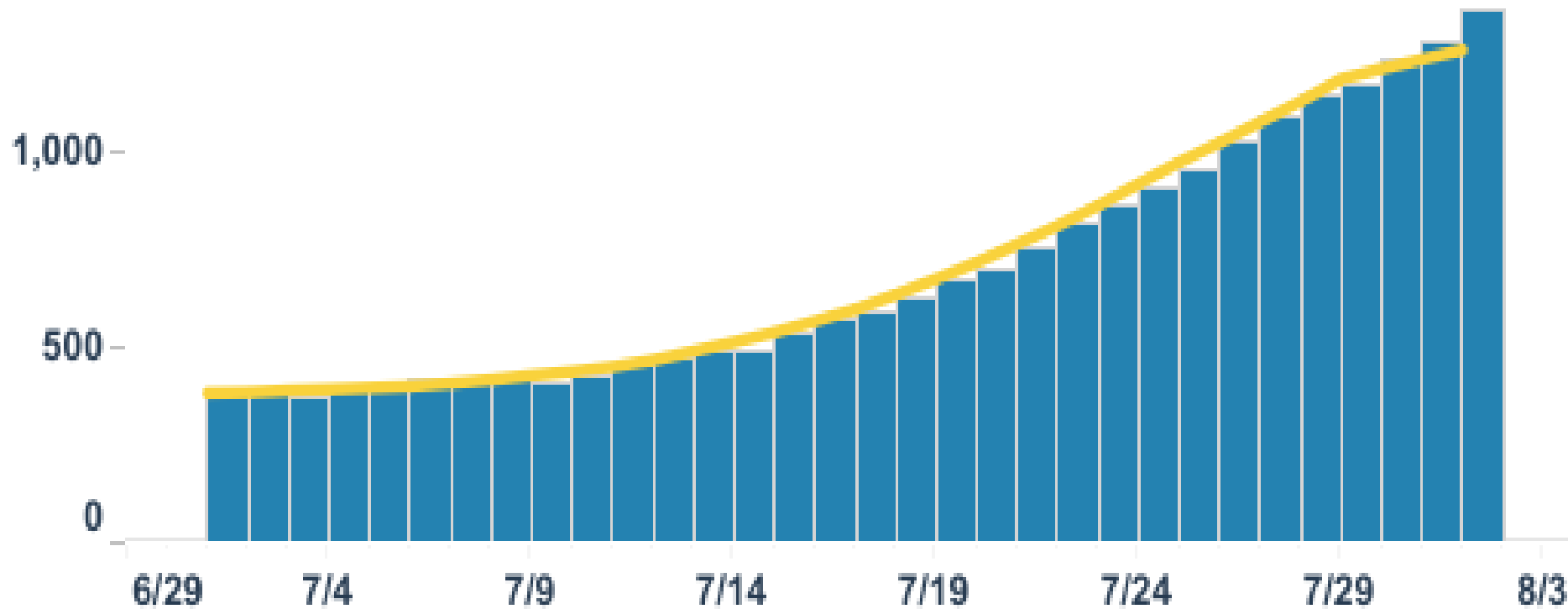
Daily Cases by Date Reported



Positive Tests as a Percent of Total Tests



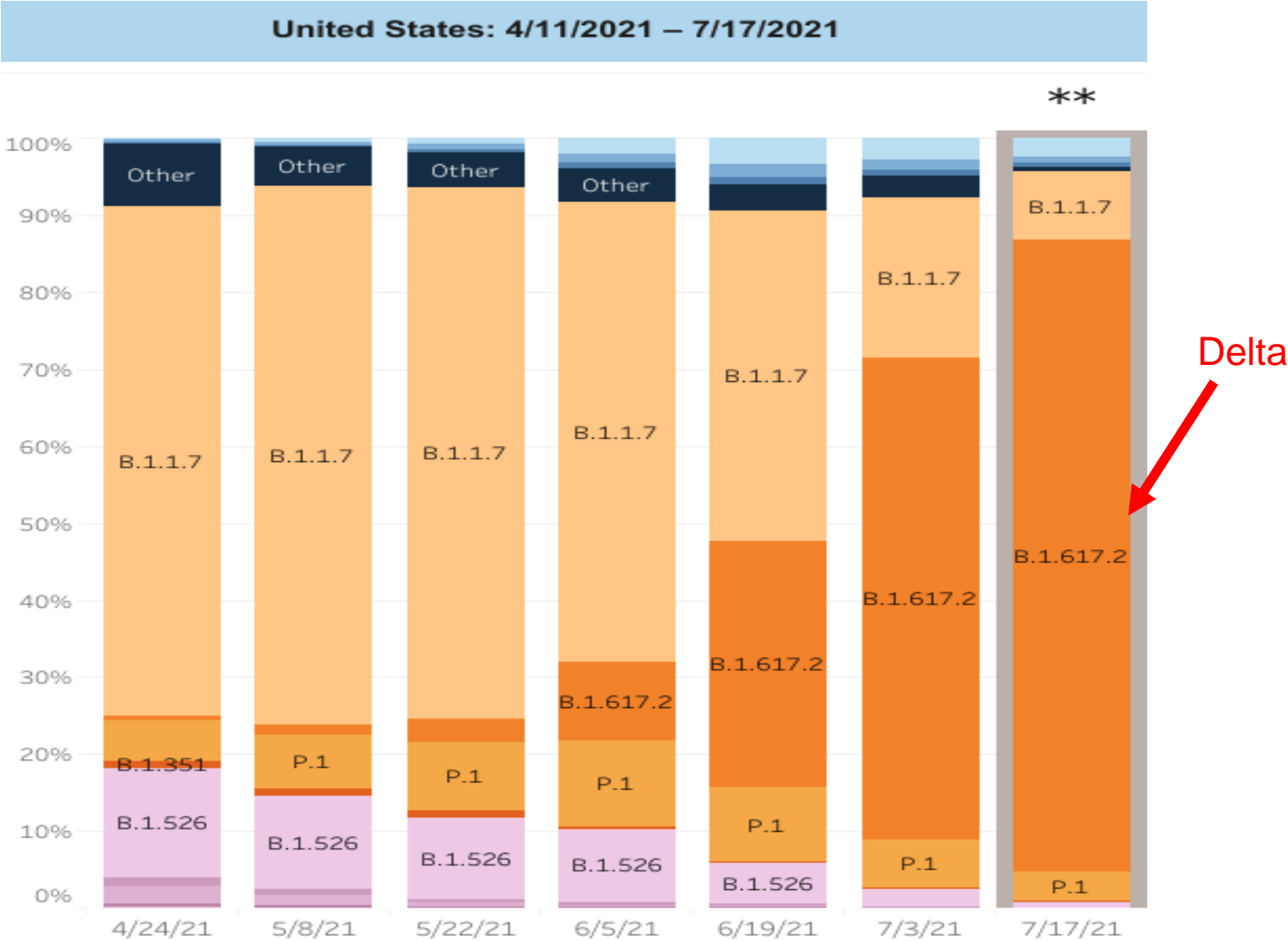
Daily Number of People Currently Hospitalized



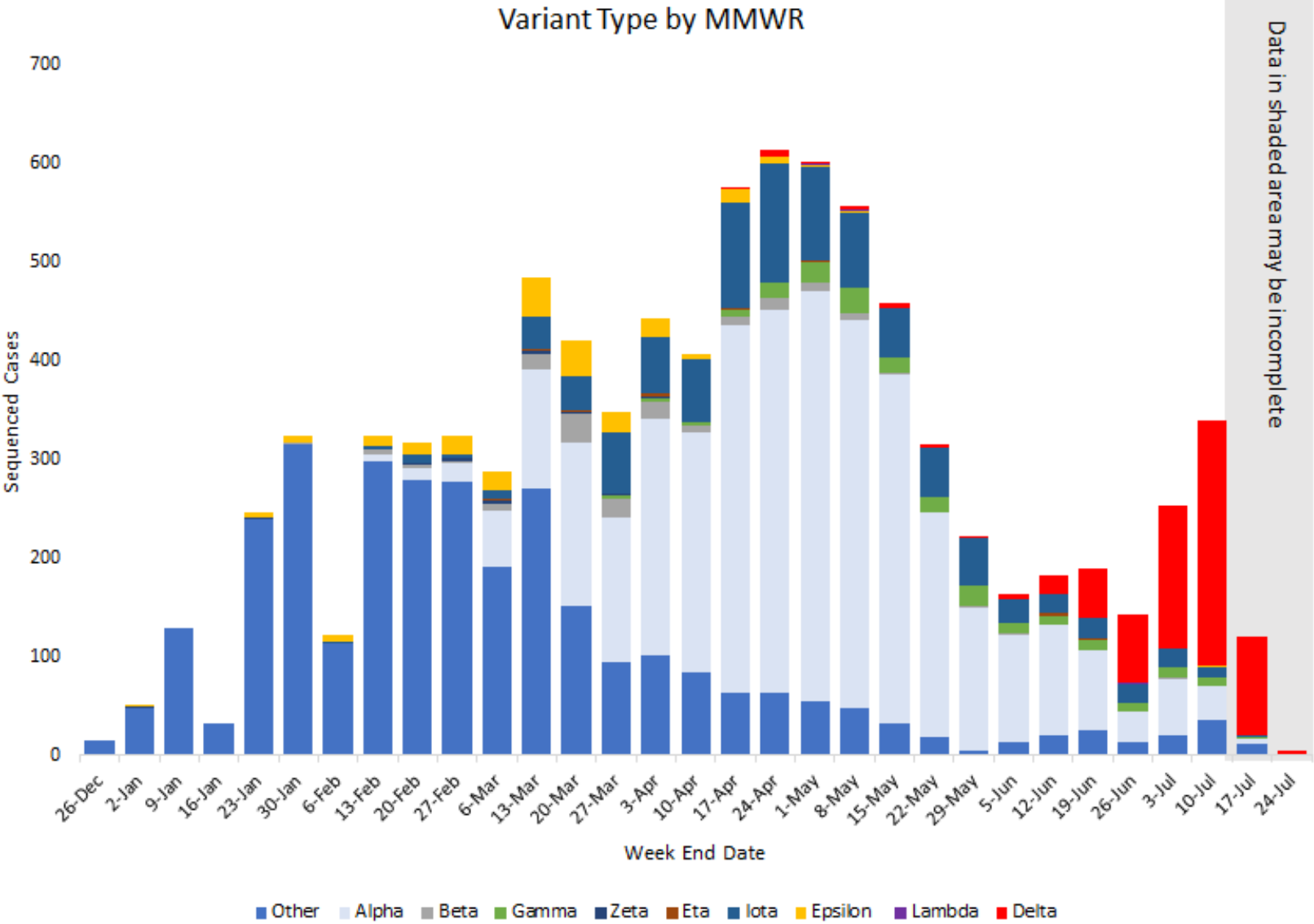
**CURRENTLY
HOSPITALIZED**

1,359

Delta Variant is the Predominant Strain in NC and US

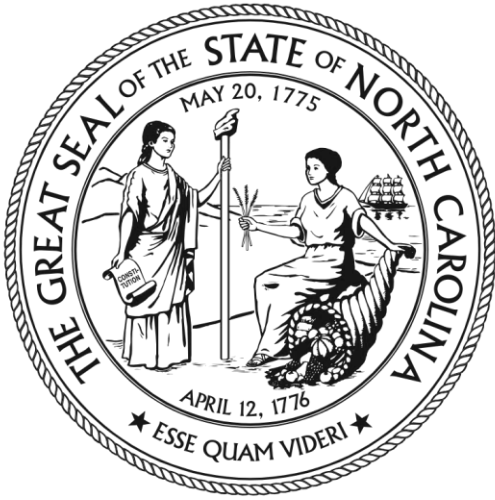


Delta variant is the most common variant in NC



Delta Variant – What We Know

- **More transmissible**
- **May lead to more severe disease**
- **Vaccine is still effective in preventing infection and especially severe disease, hospitalization, and death**
- **If a post-vaccination case occurs, the individual may be able to transmit infection as well as an unvaccinated individual**
 - Updated CDC Guidance: Everyone, regardless of vaccine status, should wear masks indoors in counties with substantial to high community spread



NC DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

K-12 COVID-19 Testing Updates

Jenifer Simone- School Health Nurse Consultant
Natalie Ivanov– Director, COVID-19 Testing

NC DHHS- DPI Monthly Webinar

August 3, 2021

Overview

- All schools should have rapid antigen tests on hand to provide **diagnostic testing** to symptomatic students and staff and their close contacts
- Schools should consider providing **routine screening testing (scheduled testing of individuals who are not symptomatic or close contacts)** to their students and staff as a prevention measure
 - CDC guidance says that those who are **vaccinated do not need to participate** in routine screening
- **For any testing, parental consent is required** for students under the age of 18 to receive testing

	Low ¹ Transmission Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
Students	Do not need to screen students.	Offer screening testing for students who are not fully vaccinated at least once per week.		
Teachers and staff	Offer screening testing for teachers and staff who are not fully vaccinated at least once per week.			
High risk sports and activities	Recommend screening testing for high-risk sports and extracurricular activities ² at least once per week for participants who are not fully vaccinated.		Recommend screening testing for high-risk sports and extracurricular activities twice per week for participants who are not fully vaccinated.	Cancel or hold high-risk sports and extracurricular activities virtually to protect in-person learning, unless all participants are fully vaccinated.
Low-and intermediate-risk sports	Do not need to screen students participating in low and intermediate risk sports. ²	Recommend screening testing for low- and intermediate-risk sports at least once per week for participants who are not fully vaccinated.		

STRONGSCHOOLSNC PUBLIC HEALTH TOOLKIT: **BENEFITS OF TESTING**



A testing program at school offers the ability for students and staff to have **easy access** to testing with **quick results**.

1

There is **no cost to families or the school** related to the testing program, which is developed by the school to meet community needs in collaboration with the vendor.

2

Diagnostic and screening testing are provided in a manner set by district or school leadership **based on the needs** of their local community.

3

The testing program gives families **information about levels of transmission** in the schools.

4

Screening testing provides a **strategy for high-risk group activities** (e.g., band/chorus and sports) to be able to perform in a more normal manner.

5

STRONGSCHOOLSNC K-12 TESTING: PROGRAM REFRESHER

- To support and maintain in-person learning, the federal government is providing funds to enable and expand school-based screening testing
- Funds are available April 2021 through July 2022
- 85% of funds must be allocated to support schools (public or private) that cover all or some K-12 grades.
- Screening guidance will be implemented consistent with CDC guidance



School Health Staff 68%

to LEAs and charters schools to hire temporary school health staff to support testing related efforts and meet other school health needs



Vendor 16%

to contract an end-to-end vendor that any public or private school may request to provide screening testing



Test Supplies 14%

for school purchase of additional testing supplies



Program Support 2%

to bolster IT infrastructure for reporting and hire state-level personnel to support local staff and manage program, vendor and reporting

STRONGSCHOOLSNC K-12 TESTING: 2021-22 PROGRAM OPTIONS

LEAs / Schools opt-in to testing through the online form shared with district/school leadership*



State Contracted Vendor

NCDHHS vendor available to support testing program at school/district

Available to all schools

OR



Independent Testing

NCDHHS provides free tests that schools may request to perform screening and/or diagnostic testing

Available to all schools

+



Staffing Support**

NC DHHS provides funds for LEAs/charters to hire clinical staff

Available to LEAs and charters who participate in screening testing

Districts will define their own testing programs or may choose not to participate in testing for 2021-2022.
[StrongSchoolsNC K-12 Testing Program Guidance](#)

* The opt-in form was released July 16th, along with additional guidance on vendor versus school/ district testing responsibilities
**Staffing support is a program that LEAs and charters can take advantage of in addition to state contracted vendor or independent testing

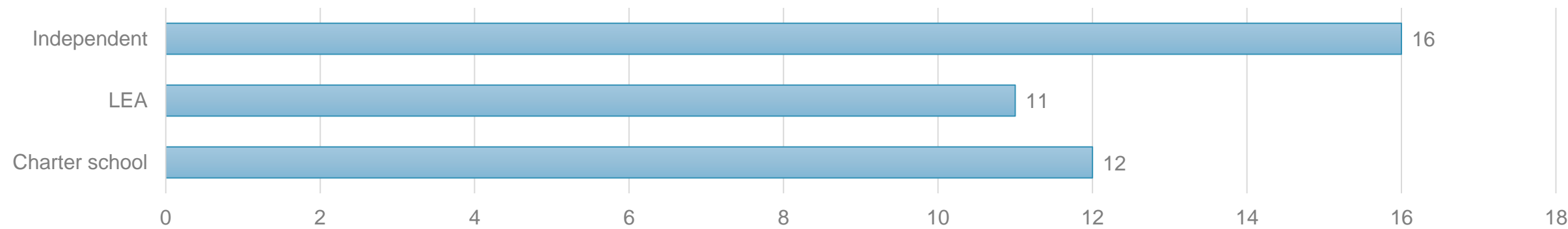
STRONGSCHOOLSNC K-12 COVID-19 TESTING: **VENDOR UPDATE**

	MAKO Medical Labs	Concentric by Ginkgo
Headquarters	Raleigh, NC	Boston, MA
Regions Served*	State Board of Education Regions 1-4: Northeast, Southeast, North Central, Sandhills	State Board of Education Regions 5-8: Piedmont-Triad, Southwest, Northwest, Western
Type of Testing	Routine Screening Diagnostic	Routine Screening Diagnostic
Past Experience	Implemented same day PCR testing programs for DE public and private schools and >1,000 MD schools	Worked with MA and ME on statewide pooled testing programs and Baltimore City Schools testing program

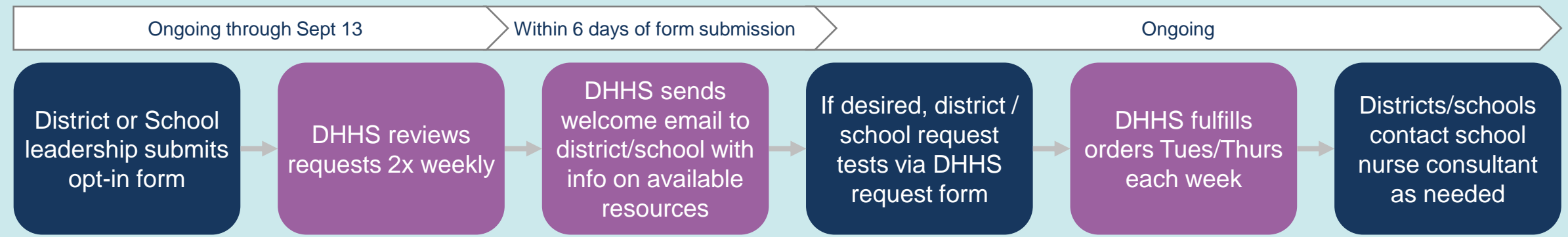
*Vendors may serve schools in different regions based on needs of schools

STRONGSCHOOLSNC K-12 COVID-19 TESTING: **INDEPENDENT TESTING**

Districts / Schools electing to pursue an independent testing program
as of August 2nd, 2021

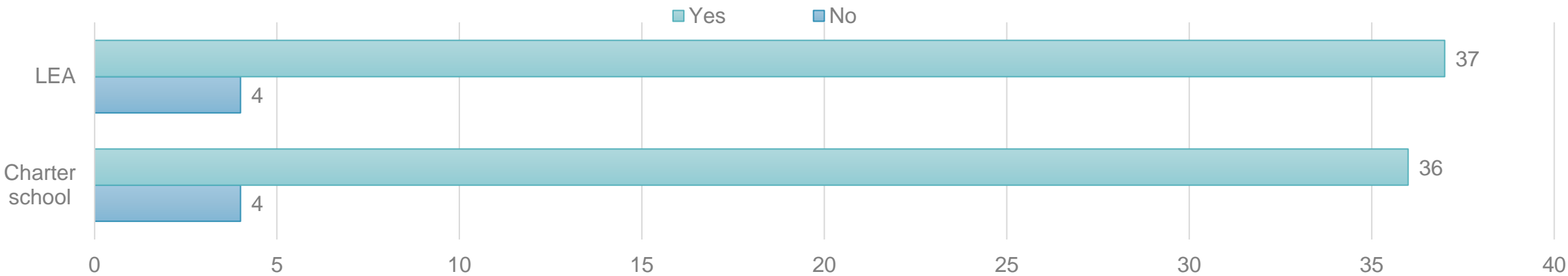


Onboarding Process



STRONGSCHOOLSNC K-12 COVID-19 TESTING: **STAFF FUNDING**

District/ school election to receive staff funding
as of August 2nd, 2021

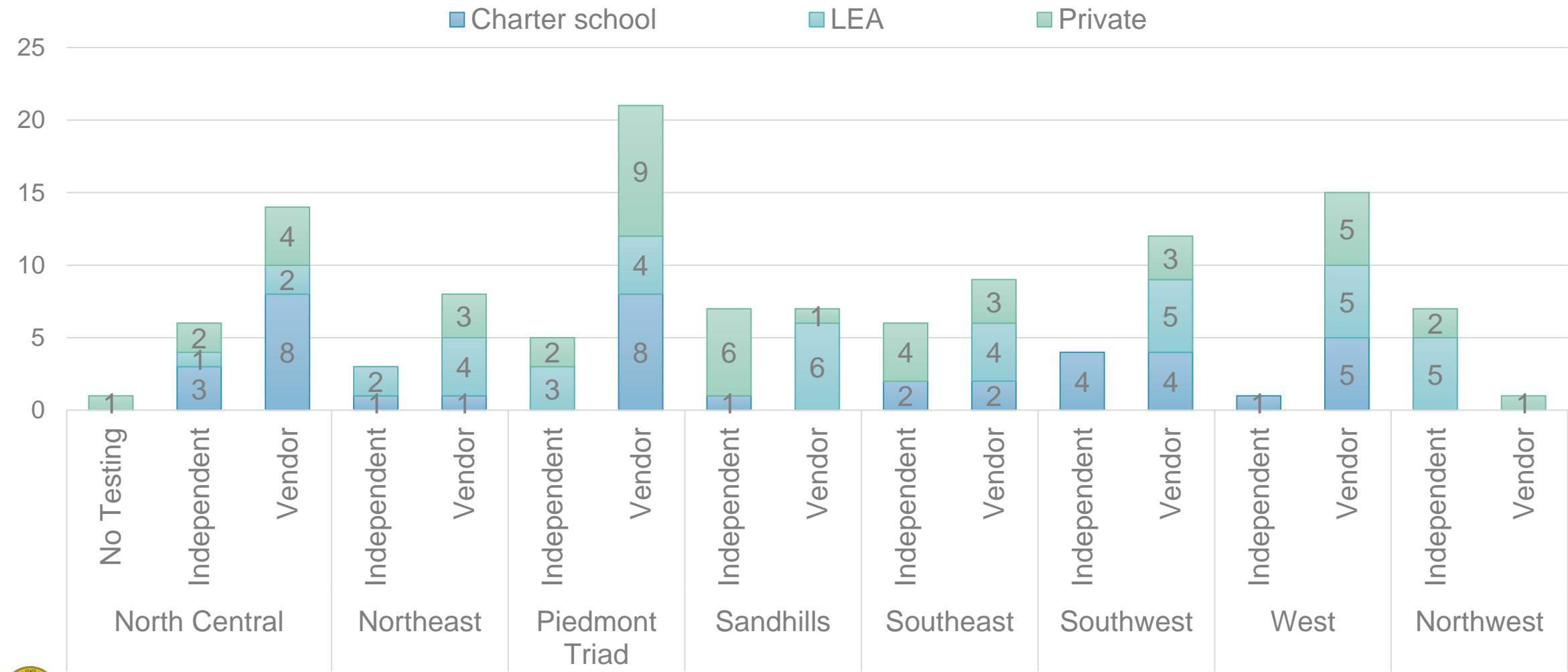


Fund Distribution Process

Contracts and Agreements for those who opt-in to the public school staffing funds option are in budgetary development. For planning purposes, LEAs and other public school units that select this add-on option may request allocation information from K12COVIDtesting@dhhs.nc.gov

STRONGSCHOOLSNC K-12 COVID-19 TESTING: **OPT-IN NUMBERS BY REGION**

NC DHHS has received responses from 41 LEAs, 40 charter schools and 46 private schools.



STRONGSCHOOLSNC K-12 COVID-19 TESTING: **UPCOMING COMMUNICATIONS**

Week of Aug

2

- Press release announcing vendors
- DHHS / State Board of Education meeting
- Partner emails advertising vendor webinars

Week of Aug

9

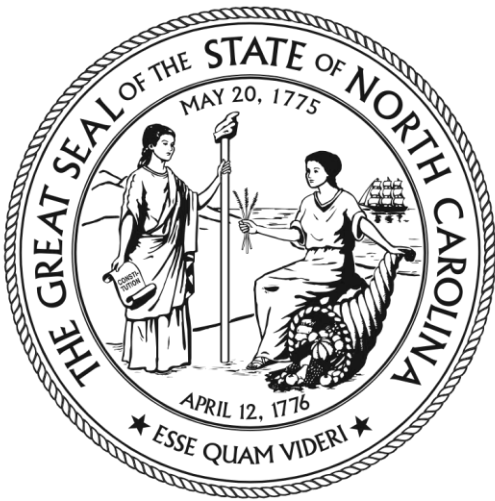
Vendor informational webinars

- *Audience:* District and School Leadership and Health Staff
- *Dates & Times: Invites will be shared later this week*
 - Monday, Aug 9 @ 3pm and Wednesday, Aug 11 @ 9am
 - Each vendor will be presenting in separate meetings at both times

Week of Aug

30

- Parent school testing web page live
- Updated school communications toolkit live



NC DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit Changes/Recommendations

Walker Wilson, MPH
Assistant Secretary for Policy

NC DHHS- DPI Monthly Webinar

August 3, 2021

Key Changes

The StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit has been updated to align to the CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools updated on July 9 and more recently on July 27.

Recommendations prioritize strategies that have been shown to be most effective in lowering the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread in school sessions and activities.

- Strategies that **should** be implemented by all schools. These are strategies that, if not implemented, create conditions of high risk for COVID-19 exposure and spread. NCDHHS strongly advises that school leaders adopt all the strategies in the should sections.
- Strategies that school leaders **could consider** adopting. These are strategies to provide additional layers of prevention to further reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread.

Key Changes

- The Toolkit includes several preventive measures, including that all schools should require all children and staff in schools K through 12th grade wear masks, regardless of vaccine status.
- Added information on offering and promoting COVID-19 vaccination and testing strategies.
- Added language on the importance of offering in-person learning, regardless of whether all the prevention strategies can be implemented at the school, including students should not be excluded from full-time, in-person learning to accommodate physical distancing. Instead, other prevention strategies, consistent and proper masking, should be used.

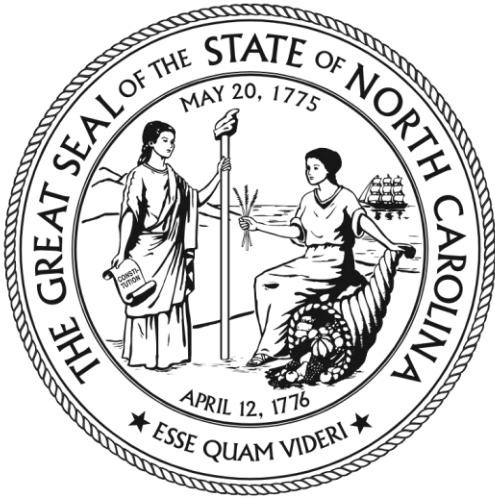
Key Changes

- Added modified quarantine guidance for students after a close contact in which both people were wearing masks.
- Removed references to options for Plans A, B, and C.
- Removed reference to remote learning requirement.

Key Changes

Additionally, the following actions were **removed** that are not supported by current evidence or are no longer needed:

- Limit nonessential visitors
- Discontinue activities that bring a large group together, such as field trips or assemblies
- Keep students in small cohorts
- Direct the flow of traffic by designating hallways as one way or designating certain doors for entrance or exit
- Conduct daily symptom screening
- Provide remote learning options for students unable to be at school due to illness or exposure



NC DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Vaccine Operational Guidance for Schools

Karen Wade
Senior Policy Advisor

NC DHHS- DPI Monthly Webinar

August 3, 2021

OVERVIEW

New guidance intended to help school leaders support their eligible students and employees in getting vaccinated.

- Vaccination models
- Roles and responsibilities for school administrators, employees, and parents/students
- Email templates
- FAQs



StrongSchoolsNC

Vaccine Operational Guidance for Schools

1. Background

This operational guidance includes recommendations intended to help school leaders support their eligible students and employees in getting vaccinated. COVID-19 vaccines are a safe and effective tool that will help stop the pandemic. Vaccines are now widely accessible and are recommended for anyone ages 12 and older. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine can help protect adults, children, and teens from getting COVID-19 and spreading the virus to others. To learn more visit the CDC's website on [Teachers, School Staff & Childcare Workers](#) and [COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens](#).

Who is eligible? Students ages 12 and over are eligible to receive a vaccine. People cannot get COVID-19 from any COVID-19 vaccine, however some individuals may have some temporary side effects after getting the vaccine. Although most COVID-19 cases are from adults, children can be infected and become sick with the virus that causes COVID-19. If infected they can also spread this virus to others. Vaccination helps protect the person who receives the vaccine and others in the community. Currently the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is the only vaccine available to children ages 12 and older.

2. Where can school employees and students get a vaccine?

Eligible students and employees can get vaccinated by any provider in North Carolina enrolled in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program. Currently, vaccinations are available for free in every county and provided by:

- Most hospitals and health systems
- Many federally qualified health centers and community health centers
- All local health departments
- Many pharmacies
- Some primary care providers (i.e., doctor's offices)

You can learn which vaccine providers are near you by visiting Find a Vaccine Location (myspot.nc.gov).

HOW CAN SCHOOL LEADERS SUPPORT STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES IN GETTING VACCINATED?

Example 1: Vaccine Event On-Site at School Facility	Example 2: Vaccine Provider Host Special Vaccine Event for School	Example 3: Support Getting Vaccinated Independently
Partnership between school district or individual school and vaccine provider for on-site vaccine event. School districts can support vaccinations by scheduling appointments, organizing event logistics, and supporting event staffing.	Partnership between school district or individual school and vaccine provider who host special events at their community location. School or district can support vaccination by scheduling appointments, supporting event staffing, and providing school buses for transportation.	Share information and encourage vaccination to facilitate student families seeking vaccination on their own at any vaccine provider.

VACCINE INCENTIVES

Example 1: Vaccinations at annual well visits and sports physicals

- Schools can work with the local health department or a local primary care provider to offer the COVID-19 vaccine at well visits and other visits. Pre-participation physical evaluation are required for students to participate in sports or camps.

Example 2: Prize Drawings

- School districts can support vaccination by creating a drawing for all vaccinated students.
- Prize packages could compose of school supplies, gift cards, and additional recourses that may be useful to the student of the employee

Example 3: School Supply Drives

- School districts can offer vaccination as part of a back-to-school event with live music, food trucks, and/or giveaways like school supplies or popsicles.

VACCINE COMMUNICATION MATERIALS



You Have a Spot...at Opening

COVID-19 Vaccine for Children and Teens

CDC recommends vaccination for everyone 12 years and older to help protect against COVID-19.

Why does my child need a COVID-19 vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccines help protect kids from getting COVID-19. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine will also help keep them from getting seriously ill even if they do get COVID-19.

When should my child be vaccinated?

All children who are 12 years and older should get a COVID-19 vaccine if your child hasn't gotten their vaccine yet. Talk to their doctor about getting it as soon as possible.

Are COVID-19 vaccines safe for my child?

Yes. COVID-19 vaccines provide safe and effective protection against the virus that causes COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccines have been used earlier than most vaccines safely monitoring in U.S. history.

All authorized and recommended COVID-19 vaccines:

- are safe
- are effective
- help protect from severe illness

The Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is now available for everyone ages 16 years and older. In the United States for children 12 through 15 years old, including vaccinees who identified with the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine.

The clinical trial also showed that the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine was 100% effective at preventing COVID-19 with symptoms in children 12 through 15 years old. In addition, children's immune systems responded to the vaccine in a way similar to that of older teens and young adults. To get the most protection, your child will need 2 shots given 3 weeks apart.

Before, during and after your child's vaccination

- Tell the doctor about any allergies your child may have.
- Confirm your child's age during the appointment.
- If your child has a fever or is sick, your child should be asked to bring down during vaccination and for 15 minutes after the vaccine is given.
- After your child's COVID-19 vaccination, you will be asked to stay for 15-30 minutes so your child can be observed in the clinic.

Can my child get a COVID-19 vaccine during the same visit with other vaccine?

Yes. Your child can get a COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccine at the same visit. In general, with other vaccinees, no other shot that day. Your doctor should give you information about getting vaccinated. In general, you should only get one shot of vaccine at a time. Generally, the same shot given alone or with other vaccines. Talk with your health care provider to learn more.

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines

YOU HAVE A SPOT. TAKE YOUR SHOT.

10 FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINES

1. Everyone age 12+ is eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine.
2. The vaccines are proven to help prevent COVID-19 and are effective in preventing hospitalization and death. Millions of people in the U.S. have already received them.
3. COVID-19 vaccines are built on years of work to develop vaccines for similar viruses.
4. You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccines.
5. There were no serious safety concerns noted in the clinical trials. You may have temporary reactions like a sore arm, fever, headache or feeling tired and achy for a day or two after receiving the vaccine.
6. The vaccines teach your body how to create a protein that helps you fight COVID-19. The protein and vaccine leave your body after they are finished and cannot be tracked.
7. The vaccines are free to everyone, even if you don't have health insurance.
8. Personal information about your health and identity is carefully managed to protect your privacy. It is not shared with CDC or ICE.
9. Vax Up or Mask Up. If you are NOT fully vaccinated, you still need to wear a mask inside.
10. Everyone has a spot for honest information on COVID-19 vaccines and where to get vaccinated. Go to www.nc.gov/health-services or call the COVID-19 Vaccine Help Center toll-free at 888-675-4343.

Everyone 12 and older in North Carolina is eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine.

A free COVID-19 vaccine is available for everyone, regardless of your immigration status.

Getting vaccinated will not affect your immigration status.

You do not need ID or health insurance.

Looking for a vaccine appointment? Visit MySpot.nc.gov.

SPOT. SHOT.

A free COVID-19 vaccine is available for all, regardless of your migration status

A free #COVID19Vaccine is available for all, regardless of your migration status. Your personal information will not be shared with ICE for immigration enforcement and getting vaccinated will not have a negative impact on your migratory status. More:

<https://www.dhs.gov/news/2021/02/02/dhs-statement-equal-access-covid-19-vaccines-and-vaccine-distribution-sites>

#WhyIGotMyShot

SPOT. SHOT. MYSPOT.NC.GOV

