

# The Brooklyn Public Schools

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## **Change in Learning Model** **Connecticut COVID-19 Response** **Northeast District Department of Health** **Free Priority Testing Sites**

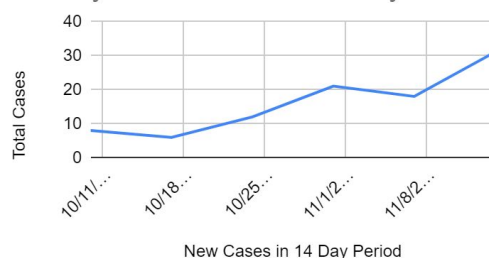
November 23, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff,

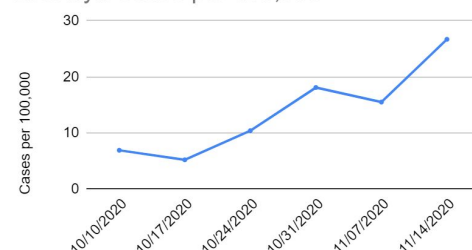
I would like to begin by stating how thankful I am for the wonderful students in our district, for their families and this community and the staff who have kept our schools open and productive over the past few months. If you were impacted by a quarantine period or class closure I hope you are doing well. I am thankful that we did not need to close the entire school or district for any period of time.

Since March we have all watched the numbers of cases of COVID-19 and learned more than we ever wanted to about this virus. We know that the cohorting and mitigation strategies of handwashing, masks, physical distancing, ventilation, and cleaning have created a healthy learning environment. There has been zero in-school transmission in Brooklyn and very low transmission across schools in the State. We also know that there has been a drastic increase in community spread. In the past 14 days Brooklyn has had 31 new cases and in the schools we have had four cases in one week. In Connecticut from October 20-November 16th there were over 700 new cases. In the last week Connecticut has had 100+ new cases.

Brooklyn New Cases in 14 Day Period



Brooklyn Cases per 100,000



I am confident that when the students and staff are in school they are taking every measure to remain healthy. We are concerned about the number of social gatherings outside of school, over a holiday weekend impacting the district staff and students and our ability to ensure that the mitigation strategies we have implemented can handle the likely spread of the virus after families and friends gather over the holidays. We have heard repeated warnings and pleas to stay home and keep family gatherings to only those immediate family members in your home. I understand the draw to spend time with family but when we let our guard down, that is when we might share the virus unknowingly with loved ones.

Given the current rise in cases in our community and the growing concerns about the numerous gatherings we hear about from our students, it is necessary to pivot to a full remote/distance learning model for at least one week and possibly two following the Thanksgiving break. If the number of cases increase as suspected, the distance learning model may last for weeks. I will monitor the local transmission as well as any families who may report illnesses in the coming weeks. If the numbers flatten out in Brooklyn we will consider transitioning to a less dense option in schools. We need to work together to reduce the spread of COVID-19 so that we can safely open schools and have staff available to teach.

**Mission:** The Brooklyn Schools will foster a drive for learning within each student to reach his/her greatest potential. To achieve this mission, the school will continually improve its educational programs and services to meet this community's expectations for a quality education for all.

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I have consulted with the Director of Health at NDDH who has expressed concern about the trends and supports the closure of school for a period of time to flatten the curve or stop the spread. Staff, Board of Education and parents have expressed concerns about the risks and we continue to see families transition their children to distance learning. We will pause the reassignment of students for the next few days. If you decide to move to distance learning, your child will remain with their classroom teacher until we return to in person teaching. Our classroom teachers have a changing class list daily due to students moving from distance learning to in person and back to distance learning. Our class numbers vary dramatically and we need to see what the next few weeks brings before we make additional changes. During distance learning all students will be asked to log in and follow a schedule of check-ins, instruction and work completion. We have a new and improved distance learning model that will be shared with you. It is similar to the hybrid model of instruction we started this year with, only better.

**Travel Advisory:** All individuals, students, families and staff are required to follow the [State's travel advisory guidelines](#). If you travel over the holiday, you are asked to report this to the school prior to your return to ensure we are following all appropriate quarantine periods.

**Food service:** We will continue to offer meal distribution a couple of days a week. We bundle food and put multiple servings in one serving container and try to make the meals easy to reheat. [To order meals please use this link](#).

**School Nurses:** During distance learning, the school nurses will be in the buildings every day. Please continue to call to inform the nurses if you or your child are not feeling well. We have been assisting NDDH with supporting families with school aged children. We care and want to be able to provide assistance if we can. [BES nurse's email](#) or 860-774-4618. [BMS nurse's email](#) or 860-774-1498.

**Parks and Recreation:** The Brooklyn Parks and Recreation Department has agreed to provide childcare at the schools at a very low cost. These groups of students will be assisted to access their learning and they will follow all mitigation strategies. They will be physically distanced from one another and will be able to access school meals. They can be reached at (860) 779-3411 X7. The Clifford Green Building is closed today but if you are interested in gathering more information or registration please call them directly.

**Schedule: Wednesday, Nov. 25: (half day) All students check login in preparation for distance learning**  
**Monday, Nov. 30: All students begin distance learning**  
**\*Distance learning will extend until community rates decrease or we return with fewer students in attendance. Some high needs student populations may be in school if possible.**

If you are aware of a challenge, you need a charger or don't have internet access please let your child's teacher know right away. We want to be sure that as we start the school week on 11/30 every student has what they need and can easily log in and engage in their distance learning. We are very prepared for this change.

As always, thank you for your hard work and commitment to achievement in Brooklyn! Thank you for doing your part to support learning in school and at home while remaining safe! Have a safe holiday!

Sincerely,

*Patricia L. Buell*

Patricia L. Buell  
Superintendent

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