

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN □ PAXTON □ PRINCETON □ RUTLAND □ STERLING

Minutes

Special Meeting #327

Tuesday, November 17, 2020  
6:30 PM

MEETING CONDUCTED REMOTELY, VIA GOOGLE MEET

*Wachusett Regional School District Committee*

Megan Weeks, Chair	Kenneth Mills (8:32 PM)
Michael Dennis, Vice-chair	Benjamin Mitchel
Melissa Ayala	Karl Ottmar
Krista Bennett	Deidre Shapiro
Scott Brown	Asima Silva (8:27 PM)
Maleah Gustafson	Christina Smith
Sherrie Haber	Kelly Williamson
Laura Kirshenbaum	Linda Woodland
Matthew Lavoie	Adam Young
Linda Long-Bellil (8:28 PM)	

*Committee Members Absent:*

Robert Imber

*Administration Present:*

Darryll McCall, Superintendent of Schools  
Robert Berlo, Deputy Superintendent  
Jeff Carlson, Director of Human Resources  
Brendan Keenan, Director of Social Emotional Learning  
Christine Smith, Administrator of Special Education  
Barry Sclar, Supervisor of Information Technology  
Rebecca Petersen, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent

*Others:*

District Counsel Naomi Stonberg  
Julia Pingitore, Paxton Board of Health  
Leonard Waice, District Physician  
Richard Stevens, Rutland Board of Health

*Student Representatives Present:*

Kenichi Gomi                      Kathryn Mangus

I. Call to Order

Chair Weeks called the special meeting to order at 6:31 PM. Chair Weeks announced the meeting was being conducted remotely, via Google Meet, was streaming live on HCTV, and the recording of the meeting will be available on the District website. Members of the public could access the meeting via YouTube. Chair Weeks also explained the Committee would be entering executive session, to return to public session at the conclusion of the executive session.

- II. Motion: To enter executive session to discuss strategy for contract negotiations with the Wachusett Regional Education Association, Inc. (WREA) on 2020-2021 school reopening, as the Chair deems a discussion in public session would have an adverse effect on the District's bargaining position, to return to public session.

Motion: To enter executive session to discuss strategy for contract negotiations with the Wachusett Regional Education Association, Inc. (WREA) on 2020-2021 school reopening, as the Chair deems a discussion in public session would have an adverse effect on the District's bargaining position, to return to public session.

(S. Brown)  
(B. Mitchel)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Michael Dennis  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherrie Haber  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Benjamin Mitchel  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*

None

The motion was unanimously approved.

The Committee entered executive session at 6:34 PM.

The Committee returned to public session at 8:28 PM.

District Counsel Stonberg did not return to public session.

- III. Motion: To authorize the Superintendent of Schools to sign the Memorandum of Agreement Between the Wachusett Regional School District and the Wachusett Regional Education Association, Inc. regarding schools reopening for the 2020-2021 school year

Deferred

- IV. Motion: To accept the settlement agreement between AA Transportation (for Home to School Transportation, Special Education In-District, and Special Education Out-of-District) and the Wachusett Regional School District for FY20 and FY21.

Deferred

V. New Business

8:32 PM Member Mills joined the meeting.

Motion: To recommend the delay of hybrid reopening for no sooner than January 19, 2021.  
(A. Young)  
(L. Woodland)

Chair Weeks turned the floor over to Facilities and Security Subcommittee Chair Young. Subcommittee Chair Young reported on the meeting of this subcommittee, held on November 16, 2020. Subcommittee Chair Young spoke about tours he had taken of the high school and Dawson Elementary School. Facilities and Security Subcommittee Member Woodland had also toured schools, Houghton Elementary and Chocksett Middle in Sterling. Subcommittee Chair Young spoke about reported cases of COVID in the District. He spoke about contact tracing and management of reports of COVID in the District. Chair Weeks opened the floor to Superintendent McCall. Superintendent McCall welcomed Paxton Board of Health representative Julia Pingitore, who addressed the Committee, speaking about hybrid and students returning to school. She spoke about the data, which is changing daily. She also spoke about the important point that rising COVID hospitalizations impact hospitals and the health care system. She voiced her opinion that cases of COVID will likely spike between Thanksgiving and the beginning of the new year. Superintendent McCall welcomed District Physician Leonard Waice, who addressed the Committee. Doctor Waice reported on the increasing numbers of cases of COVID being seen in urgent care settings. Doctor Waice is of the opinion bringing students and staff back to school in-person, at this time, is not in the best interest of anyone. Superintendent McCall introduced Rutland Board of Health representative Richard Stevens, who addressed the Committee. He explained cases in Rutland are on the increase. Mr. Stevens' opinion is similar to Ms. Pingitore, that there will likely be an increase in cases between Thanksgiving and the new year. Superintendent McCall presented charts and data about cases of COVID (attachment 1).

At the conclusion of Superintendent McCall's address, Chair Weeks opened the floor to discussion, questions, and comments from members.

Member Gustafson asked for clarification that high needs students would remain in-person, even if hybrid is not implemented at this time. Several members addressed the Committee.

Several members thanked the Boards of Health representatives for their input. Member Kirshenbaum asked what staffing, instructional support, and resources are needed and necessary for when schools will reopen, even if it is after the new year. Vice-chair Dennis addressed the Committee, and he stated he will make an amendment to the motion on the floor. Member Smith spoke about transmission of the virus within the District and across the state. Member Mills expressed frustration with communications and the lack of information about the metric for return to school. Member Long-Bellil spoke about struggles some students are dealing with during remote learning.

Motion: To amend the motion on the floor by adding “for students in grades 3 – 12” to the motion, which would read: To recommend the delay of hybrid reopening for no sooner than January 19, 2021 for students in grades 3 – 12.

(M. Dennis)

(K. Mills)

At the request of some members, Doctor Waice spoke to the amendment to the motion, about students K – 2 returning in-person. Ms. Pingitore also spoke about implementation of hybrid.

Motion: To extend the meeting until 10:30 PM.

(K. Mills)

(K. Ottmar)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Michael Dennis  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherrie Haber  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Kenneth Mills  
Benjamin Mitchel  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*

None

The motion was unanimously approved.

Member Lavoie addressed the Committee, and suggested postponing action on the reopening of schools, in order to provide an opportunity for additional discussion and input from the public before the Committee voting.

Additional discussion ensued.

Motion: To lay the motion on the amendment on the table to a time forward, November 18, 2020.

(K. Mills)  
(M. Lavoie)

10:15 PM Member Gustafson left the table.

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Michael Dennis  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Kenneth Mills

*Opposed:*

Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Sherrie Haber  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Benjamin Mitchel  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Abstained:*

Megan Weeks

The motion failed 4-13-1.

10:17 PM Member Gustafson returned to the table.

Roll call vote on amendment:

*In favor:*

Michael Dennis  
Sherrie Haber

Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Kenneth Mills  
Asima Silva

*Opposed:*

Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Benjamin Mitchel  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Abstained:*

Megan Weeks

The motion failed 6-12-1.

Motion: To table the vote on the motion on the floor until November 18, 2020  
(M. Lavoie)  
(M. Dennis)

Member Lavoie spoke to the motion on the floor, explaining the importance of hearing the data about the safe reopening of schools as well as to give members of the public the opportunity to provide input.

Motion: To call the question.

(S. Brown)  
(B. Mitchel)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Michael Dennis  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherrie Haber  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Kenneth Mills

Benjamin Mitchel  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*  
Linda Long-Bellil

The motion was approved 18-1.

Motion: To extend the meeting until 11:00 PM.

(M. Gustafson)  
(L. Long-Bellil)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Megan Weeks  
Michael Dennis  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherrie Haber  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Kenneth Mills  
Benjamin Mitchel  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*  
None

The motion was unanimously approved.

Discussion continued. Chair Weeks re-read the motion on the floor to table a vote until November 18, 2020.

Motion: To call the question.

(B. Mitchel)  
(K. Ottmar)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*

Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherrie Haber  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Benjamin Mitchel  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland

*Opposed:*

Michael Dennis  
Matthew Lavoie  
Kenneth Mills  
Adam Young

*Abstained:*

Megan Weeks

The motion was approved 14-4-1.

Roll call vote on motion to table:

*In favor:*

Michael Dennis  
Sherrie Haber  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Kenneth Mills

*Opposed:*

Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Benjamin Mitchel  
Karl Ottmar



Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Abstained:*  
Megan Weeks

The motion failed 5-13-1.

Roll call vote on main motion:

*In favor:*  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherrie Haber  
Laura Kirshenbaum  
Benjamin Mitchel  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*  
Michael Dennis  
Matthew Lavoie  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Kenneth Mills

*Abstained:*  
Megan Weeks

The motion was approved 14-4-1.

VI. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

(B. Mitchel)  
(K. Mills)

Roll call vote:

*In favor:*  
Megan Weeks

Michael Dennis  
Melissa Ayala  
Krista Bennett  
Scott Brown  
Maleah Gustafson  
Sherrie Haber  
Linda Long-Bellil  
Kenneth Mills  
Benjamin Mitchel  
Karl Ottmar  
Deidre Shapiro  
Asima Silva  
Christina Smith  
Kelly Williamson  
Linda Woodland  
Adam Young

*Opposed:*

Laura Kirshenbaum  
Matthew Lavoie

The motion was approved 17-2.

The meeting adjourned at 10:34 PM.

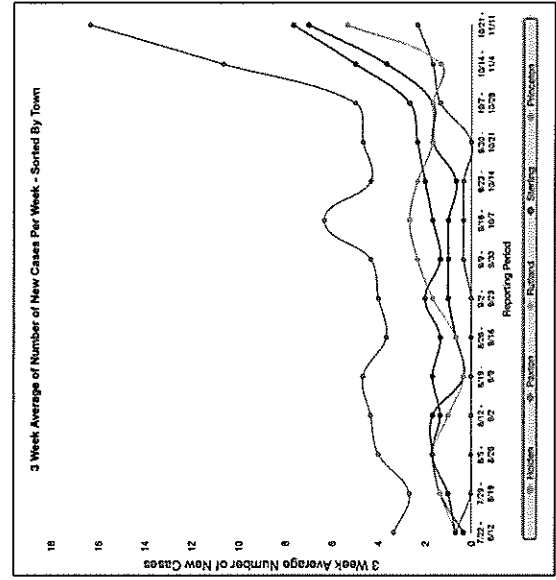
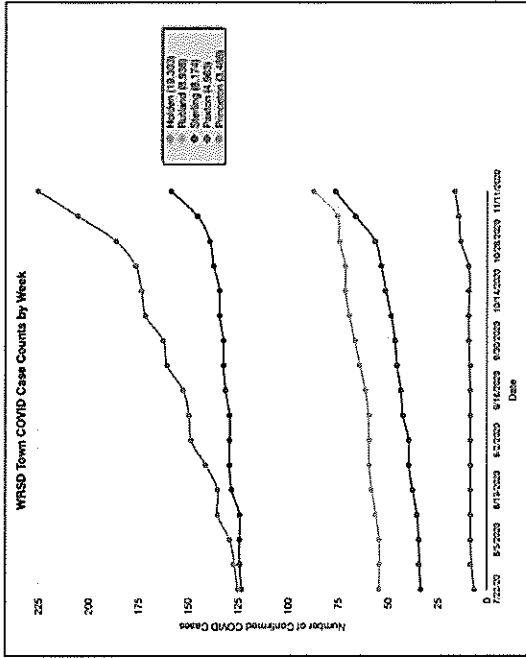
Respectfully submitted,

Darryll McCall, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Attachments:

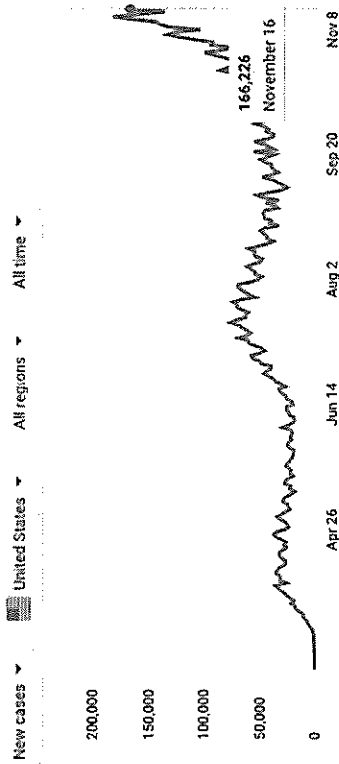
- COVID data (attachment 1)

DM:rlp



## United States

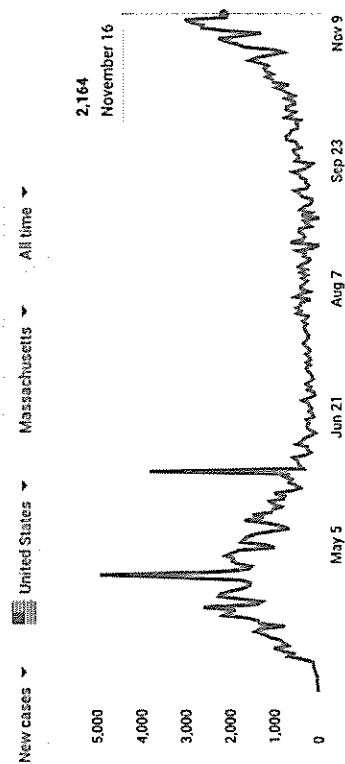
### Daily change



Each day shows new cases reported since the previous day. Updated less than 20 mins ago  
Source: [The New York Times](#) · [About this data](#)

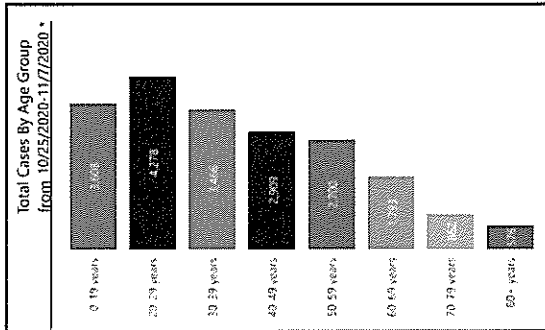
## Massachusetts Only

### Daily change



Each day shows new cases reported since the previous day. Updated less than 1 day ago  
Source: [The New York Times](#) · [About this data](#)

## Massachusetts Only

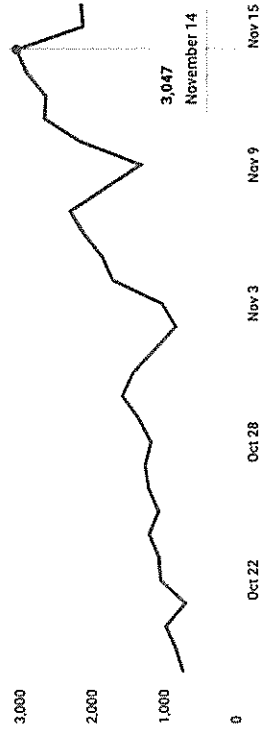


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Daily change

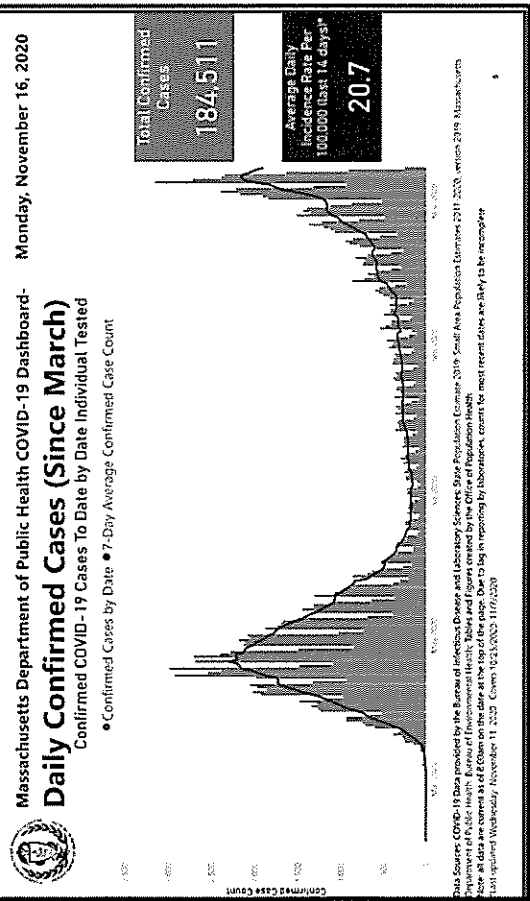
## Massachusetts Only

New cases United States Massachusetts 30 days

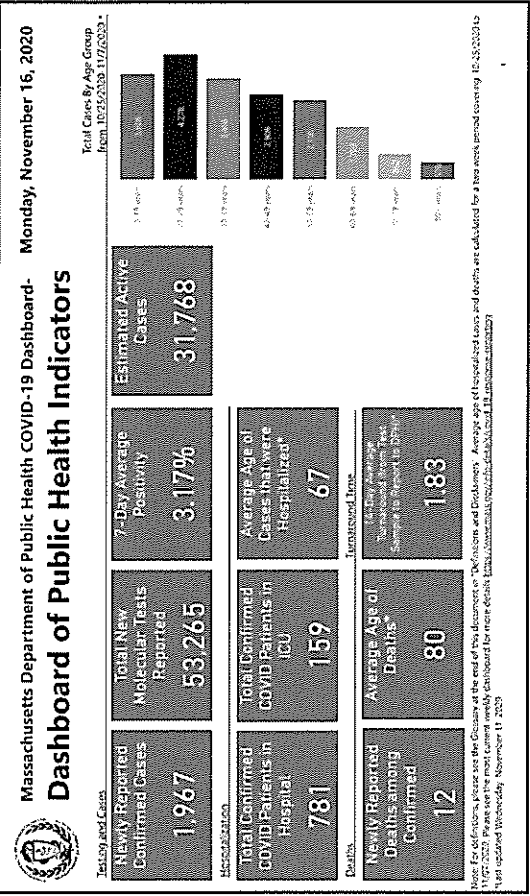


Each day shows new cases reported since the previous day. Updated less than 23 hours ago.  
Source: The New York Times. About this data

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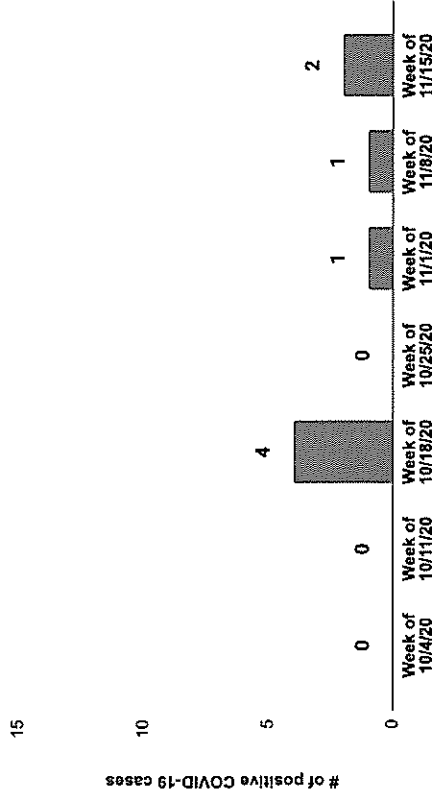
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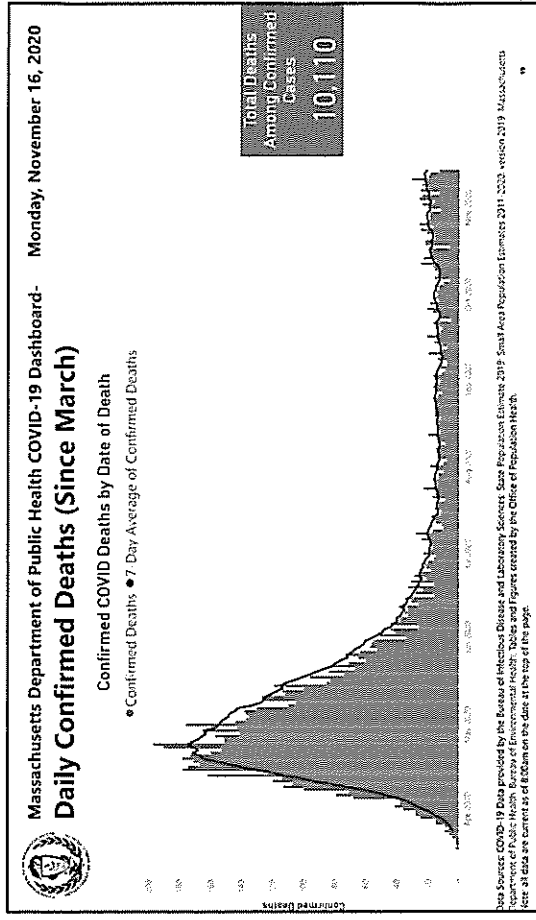
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## WRSD Positive COVID-19 Cases by Week

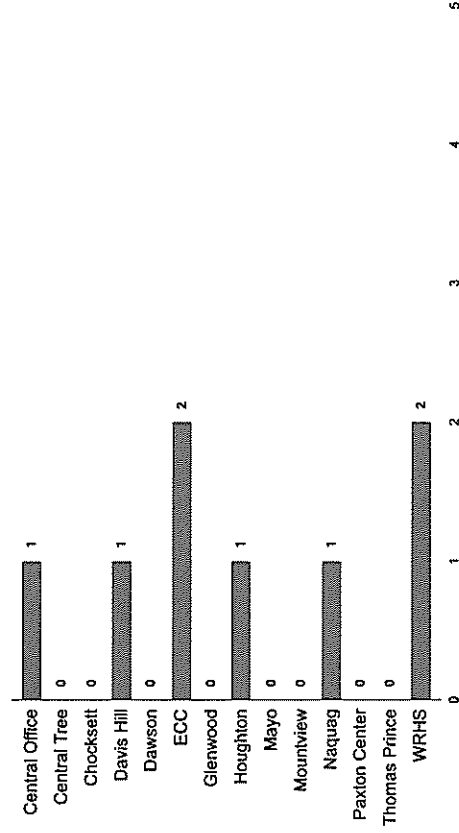


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## WRSD Positive COVID-19 Cases by Location



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## Wachusett Regional School District COVID-19 Data Dashboard

[Click here for WRSD COVID-19 Symptom Checklist](#)

Positive cases in previous month (October, 2020): 4

Positive cases this month (November, 2020): 4

Cases This Month Traced to Exposure in a WRSD School: 1

\* Note: Data included in this report are limited to cases *involving confirmed close contact occurring in a Wachusett Regional school or school building.*

For complete statewide data, please click the link below:  
[Click here for Massachusetts COVID data by location](#)

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