

NORTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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John A. Provost, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Nick Bernier, M.Ed.
Business Administrator

February 8, 2022

Dear NPS community,

On January 18, 2022, DESE and DPH released updated testing program guidance, linked [here](#). Under this guidance, districts and schools may select a new option within the testing program to provide weekly at-home rapid antigen tests to students and staff and discontinue contact tracing and the test and stay protocol.

Our district has provided weekly pooled testing and symptomatic testing since our program began. We will continue to provide these two testing options in addition to adding weekly at-home rapid antigen test distribution to staff and students. We have an established schedule for all schools for the weekly pooled testing set on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. DESE recommends that at-home testing be conducted at least two (2) days after in- school pooled testing.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

Weekly In -School Pooled-Testing

Earliest Weekly At Home Testing

NHS:	Tuesday	Friday
Leeds	Tuesday	Friday
JFK	Wednesday	Friday
Bridge	Wednesday	Friday
Jackson	Thursday	Saturday/Sunday
RK Finn	Thursday	Saturday/Sunday

Weekly Test Kit Distribution

Every other week, staff and students will receive an iHealth rapid antigen test kit which contains two (2) tests.

Our goal is to have kits distributed to staff and students on pooled testing days. Test kits will be going home for students via backpack. **PLEASE BE SURE TO CHECK YOUR CHILD'S OR CHILDREN'S BACKPACK FOR THEIR TEST KIT(S).**

Staff received kits the week of 1/31. Students will receive kits the week of 2/7 . Both students and staff will receive kits the week of 2/14 prior to February break. Please be patient as we work out any bumps with receiving our shipment from the State.

Both students and staff participating in this program should test prior to coming back to school from February break , on Friday, Saturday or Sunday. We return to school Monday, February 28,2022.

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER:

- Universal contact tracing will be discontinued once kits have been fully distributed to staff and students (Strategic contact tracing will still be conducted in certain scenarios)
- Test and Stay for unvaccinated students will be discontinued once kits have been fully distributed to staff and students
- The omicron surge protocol will be discontinued
- Positive classroom case letters will be sent via email, we will then return to our previous building based notification process towards springtime
- Any individual that has tested positive for COVID-19 within 90 days **should not participate** in pooled testing and weekly at-home rapid antigen testing. Individuals who have had COVID in the past 90 days can continue to produce positive test results even though they are past the contagion period.
- Symptomatic testing will continue to be available for any individual showing any symptoms of illness while in school (including vaccinated, unvaccinated and those who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days).
- Individuals identified as close contacts **outside of school** will follow current DPH guidance from the public health department.
- DESE and DPH continue to strongly recommend that all faculty, staff and eligible students receive the COVID-19 vaccine and booster.
- As the data has shown that transmission of COVID-19 is low risk outdoors, masking at recess and outdoor activities will no longer be required. For those individuals that wish to continue to wear a mask, they may do so.

Thank you for your continued support and collaboration with health and safety protocols.

Sincerely,



John A. Provost, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



Lisa Safron, BSN, RN, NCSN
Director of Health, Safety & Equity Programs