



Pine River Area Schools

Central Office
17445 Pine River Road
LeRoy, Michigan 49655
231-829-3141
Fax 829-4410

High School-Middle School
17445 Pine River Road
LeRoy, Michigan 49655
231-829-3841 (HS)
231-829-4064 (MS)

Pine River Area
Elementary School
408 W. Gilbert
LeRoy, Michigan 49655
231-768-4481

April 28, 2021

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer
Governor of Michigan
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, MI 48909

Elizabeth Hertel, Director
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
333 S. Grand Ave
P.O. Box 30195
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: Mandatory Testing; MI Safer Sports COVID-19 Testing Program

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer and Director Hertel,

I am writing this letter at the direction of the Pine River Area Schools' Board of Education to protest the manner and method of the MDHHS' MI Safer Sports COVID-19 Testing Program. First and Foremost, we believe that testing healthy individuals in order to participate in interscholastic sports is fundamentally wrong.

Requiring a weekly antigen test in order to participate in athletics is uncalled for and removes the parents/guardians from the decision-making. Parents and guardians should be involved with the testing of their children. If parents/guardians want their children tested, then that is a family decision, one the schools should not be forced to presume or impose.

Also, this weekly testing requires time, about 70 minutes' time for four adults and 94 student-athletes. While we begin testing before school on Mondays, kids still lose 30-35 minutes of classroom time once a week. We can't use more adults because we don't have them available. Our local hospitals only are testing employees now who demonstrate symptoms. Why are we not following their lead?

We find the testing to be inviolate for many reasons and I will borrow here from the Let Them Play Michigan webpage:

1. These tests are *only* meant to be used on people with symptoms...Michigan is using them on thousands of healthy kids *without* symptoms.
2. These tests are *not* meant to diagnose. They are only meant to be used if a medical doctor believes the patient is likely infected...Michigan is requiring them to be on all athletes, no doctor involved, no matter what.
3. These mandated tests are not FDA-approved and by law cannot be mandated... [and yet,] Michigan is forcing parents to follow their mandate, which is breaking the law.
4. These tests are only supposed to be used in a certified lab with certified technicians... Michigan is allowing random teachers and parents to administer these tests.
5. These tests are meant to be used in a sterile environment with proper PPE, proper temperature controls, proper handling, proper reading within 15-30 minutes or it's void, exact procedures (hold the bottle at the perfect angle and make sure no more than 6 drops are given, push swab up hard and



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- turn 3 times, etc)... Michigan is allowing tests to be given by whoever, wherever. Watch a Youtube video for training and you're good to go.
6. These tests are not meant to be used in an environment where the community infection rate is low, this could result in up to 70% false positives...Michigan is forcing every student athlete in every community to be tested, no matter what the infection rate is! This will result in huge amounts of false positives.
 7. These test swabs are sterilized using EO...Ethylene Oxide...one of the most toxic, cancer causing agents in the world. The FDA is requiring the medical field to work towards finding other means of medical sterilization because EO is so toxic. They say the swabs are "aired out" before they are packaged, but others say that the swabs are in such high demand that the that imperative step is likely being skipped. Either way...Michigan is forcing parents to allow this toxic chemical to be twisted five times around their child's nose, 1-3 times per week, for the next 3 months. Can't imagine that has been tested for long-term effects. This is not acceptable to us.
 8. Testing of winter sports was a nightmare and resulted in thousands of healthy kids being forced into quarantine and missing school, sports, and future dreams. 99.5% of quarantined kids never became sick according to your own released data.
 9. These tests are being done on *healthy* kids before they are allowed to go play outside...Michigan...please make it make sense.
 10. No one else in the state is required to test before going outside to be with friends. Shoot...no one is required to test before going inside to do anything! Michigan is targeting student-athletes and it's wrong. The only group forced to test...will obviously be the group blamed for a spike in cases. Common sense, which Michigan is greatly lacking right now.

In summation, if we are going to require the schools to administer testing, let's stick to symptomatic individuals. Better yet, let's direct the schools to have the parents make the decision—quarantine and removal from school or testing away from the schools. Let's return some parental and individual rights and eliminate this forced sabre at the neck of the school districts. Our parents and kids lose trust in a district that "makes them test" all the time.

Please consider removing this burden from the schools.

By direction of the Board,

Matt Lukshaitis, Superintendent

cc: MHSAA Director Mark Uyl
Senator (35th District) Curt VanderWall