

Has RSU 2 decided to do pool testing?

No, not yet. We want to know if our families support this first.

We are waiting for forms from our families, that confirm their position. We sent a packet with a cover letter explaining the options with a form that says DO NOT APPROVE and forms for PERMISSION, so the family can choose which to send back to us by June 30. If they support it, they will send back the PERMISSION forms. Once we tally the forms, we will find out if enough families want the pool testing to justify the increased workload on our staff.

It is the end of the year, why make families decide about pool testing now?

There are a lot of steps to complete for approval for pool testing, to order test kits, to figure out the logistics, to enter data into databases, and to train staff for implementing the processes. If families want to have students begin the school year without the three foot distance requirement, we would need to do all of that work before the first day of school. If we wait until school starts to send forms and find out from families, it could be months before we get started and can remove the 3 ft distancing and reduce the amount of quarantine requirements for pool testing students.

If it is more work, why even ask families to consider pool testing?

There is nothing more important to us than maximizing student learning and social emotional development. Pool testing was presented as a way to allow students to stay in school if deemed a close contact to a positive case, because the routine testing should catch positive cases earlier to reduce the time of spread for those who are asymptomatic. Pool testing was also presented to us by the DOE/CDC as a way to remove the 3 ft distancing that changes how school feels and limits the size of a group in one classroom. This added safety net affords students a bit more normalcy with less disruption to in person learning, so if most families support pool testing we are willing to do the extra work.

Why are schools still requiring masks and distancing when other businesses are not?

School leaders received a Priority Notice on 5/17/21 informing us of what the safety rules are that we must follow, and the notice emphasized that school rules are different from those for other settings.

Right now (and we all know things could change), we have been told by DOE to plan for the following when students return:

1. mask wearing for all inside school buildings
2. distance of 3 ft between students inside school buildings (unless we end up participating in the pool testing with participation levels above the threshold)
3. distance of 6 ft between everyone at mealtimes or mask breaks
4. minimize sharing of materials
5. maintain increased handwashing and sanitation
6. everyone stays home if sick or if notified to quarantine as a close contact

and other practices such as increasing outdoor learning as much as possible which are described in linked guidance documents.

Where can I get more information about pool testing?

Here is a link to another FAQ on pool testing.

<https://5il.co/ttz3>