



# Easton School Department

Office of the Superintendent



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Students, Staff and Community Members of Easton,

I am writing to inform you of an update to our Safe Return to Schools Plan.

Based on the DOE's Standard Operating Procedure's suggestion of testing students who are close contacts prior to their reentry into school, my administrative team and I felt it was necessary to begin the school year with the requirement that all students placed in quarantine provide a negative test as soon as possible, and prior to returning to school in order to protect our students and staff from potential asymptomatic spread of COVID-19. From the start of the school year to now, over 50% of all positive cases of both students and staff have come from testing all in quarantine prior to their return to school.

Like many things with this pandemic, testing children for COVID-19 while serving a 10-day quarantine is a serious hardship on many families in our community.

With the successful implementation of pooled testing, and the availability of a vaccine for children 5 years old and up, we feel the time is right to make testing for students in quarantine a recommendation for all those who are asymptomatic, and a requirement for those in quarantine who develop symptoms.

Also, we will now perform a rapid antigen (BinaxNow) test on all students (with consent on file) who come to our nurse with symptoms of COVID-19. Though the student will still need to leave the building until symptoms subside, they will now not need a negative test to return to school. We ask that you continue to keep students home from school if they develop symptoms prior to the school day. Consent forms will be sent home to allow us to test symptomatic students today.

Thank you for your continued work and support in keeping our schools open for safe, healthy, in-person learning.

Sincerely,

Mark Stanley, Superintendent of Schools