

Superintendent's COVID-19 Update

January 5, 2022

As I am sure everyone is aware, the last few weeks have seen a surge in COVID-19 cases in Dedham, in Massachusetts, and in the nation.

On Monday, December 27, the CDC released new guidance recommending a 5-day (rather than a 10-day) isolation/quarantine for individuals who become infected with COVID-19 or are a close contact (provided they are asymptomatic or have reduced symptoms).

On a zoom call with the Commissioner on Wednesday, December 29, DESE verbally announced new guidance aligning with the CDC guidance for ISOLATION (positive COVID individuals), **but not for QUARANTINE** (those designated as “close contacts”). DESE also announced the scheduled distribution of 400,000 COVID rapid tests to all school employees. These would be distributed to all districts in MA on Friday, 12/31. DPS employees were notified that these tests would be distributed in a “drive-thru” pickup at the ECEC on Sunday, 1/2/2022 from 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM.

On Thursday, December 30 [DESE and DPH released updated written Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios](#). This guidance reduced both isolation and quarantine times to 5 days provided there were “reduced symptoms”.

On Thursday, 12/30 at 9:36 PM, all superintendents received an [email indicating DESE's vendor for the 400,000 COVID tests could not fulfill the order](#). Scheduled pickup of tests, originally scheduled for Friday, 12/31, was called off.

At 6:24 PM on Friday, 12/31 all superintendents received [email confirmation that DESE had secured 200,000 tests from a different vendor](#) that were being flown in overnight. Distribution of these tests would take place at a warehouse in Franklin on Saturday, 1/1 beginning at 9:00 AM. However, all districts would only receive half as many tests as they were originally told, and 2-test “kits” would need to be physically separated in order to provide enough tests for 1 test per employee.

On Saturday, 1/1 I retrieved 360 test kits (containing 2 tests per kit) in Franklin. I re-notified and [confirmed with all staff via email](#) how the distribution process would work.

On Sunday, 1/2/22 all principals, Ed Gotgart, Liza O'Connell and Amy Hicks convened at 8:00 AM to separate and re-package all 360 rapid tests. From 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM almost 300 employees voluntarily drove to the ECEC in Dedham to receive their rapid tests. By 7:00 PM, 19 employees (6.83%) had tested positive through these rapid tests. Those [results are shown HERE](#).

On Monday, January 3 students returned to DPS classrooms. Pool Testing was shifted for all schools to Monday. 207 pool tests were performed, and 1400 individuals participated. Results from those tests are in the link below.

The most recent data regarding COVID cases in Dedham and the Dedham Public Schools are shown below:

1. [COVID-19 data for Town of Dedham](#)
2. [COVID cases in MA schools](#) (For comprehensive statewide results, click [HERE](#))
3. [Positive Cases in DPS Schools](#)
4. [DPS Pooled Testing Participation and Results](#)
5. [January 3 DPS Pooled Testing Results Detail](#)
6. [DPS Student & Staff Attendance January 3-4, 2022](#)
7. [January, 2022 Vaccination Status Summary for DPS Employees](#)

[Newest CDC quarantine/isolation guidance \(Tuesday, Jan. 4\)](#)