

Superintendent's COVID-19 Update

February 2, 2022

Over the past two weeks we have seen positive COVID-19 case numbers come down, but we have also seen somewhat of a “plateauing” of cases for students and staff. However, as you can see from the actual data below, the overall number of positive cases is much lower than in early January. This mirrors the case counts recorded by DPH data for the Dedham community as a whole. Cases have been scattered across all 7 schools and the data clearly shows infections happening within households and among siblings and parents in virtually all cases.

This week's pooled testing at all schools reveals how much overall case counts have dropped. This week we tested a total of 384 pools that included 1326 individuals. We received 7 positive results out of those 1326 individuals for a percent positivity of 0.5% positivity. There were NO positive pools at Greenlodge this week, with 2 pools each at Riverdale and Oakdale, and one each at DHS, DMS, and ECEC.

I continue to meet weekly with the Dedham Health Department to review cases counts and trends, and to discuss upcoming initiatives and mitigation measures. Our nurses, principals, administrative assistants, and COVID coordinator Emily Kadehjian continue to work extremely hard to test, monitor, and track cases in the schools.

On Monday, January 10, 2022 DESE Commissioner Jeff Riley extended the state's mask mandate through February 28, 2022. Details about this mask mandate extension may be found in this [1/10/22 DESE memo](#).

As the Committee is aware, on Tuesday, 1/18/22 Governor Baker and DESE Commissioner Jeff Riley announced a new program to distribute COVID-19 rapid tests to consented staff and students in all K-12 Massachusetts public schools. In Dedham, staff were [asked to “opt-in” last week](#), and we distributed the first wave of COVID-19 rapid antigen tests to **STAFF** last Friday for at-home use later this week (Thursday or Friday). Families were asked to return participation commitments this week and **STUDENTS** will be issued their test kits beginning on Monday, Feb. 7. So far, 325 of our ~600 staff members have opted into this program. Student opt-in's are ongoing this week.

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

[COVID-19 data for Town of Dedham](#)

[COVID cases in MA schools](#) (For comprehensive statewide results, click [HERE](#))

[Positive COVID Cases in DPS Schools](#)

[DPS Pooled Testing Participation and Results](#)