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December 3, 2020

WILLINGNESS TO TEST SURVEY

Greetings Little Flower Parents and Guardians:

Micro-cluster Initiative and School Testing

As you have likely heard, the Governor has implemented a micro-cluster initiative across the state to address areas with high incidences of COVID-19 cases. As part of this initiative, areas may be designated as yellow, orange, or red zones. Schools which fall within these zones are required to implement a COVID-19 testing protocol in order to remain open to in-person learning. ([Read more about the initiative and zones here.](#))

The purpose of this school testing model is to demonstrate that, in communities with high positivity rates, it is not the schools in which the virus is being spread. Thus, when a school demonstrates its positivity rate is lower than the average rate of the zone, they are permitted to continue delivering instruction in-person. ([Hear more about the testing requirements here.](#))

The Suffolk County Department of Health (DOH) is collaborating with county school districts to structure testing models if or when a school falls within a designated color zone. The tests would be carried out by trained staff overseen by medical professionals. The test would be the [Abbott BinaxNow](#) Rapid COVID-19 test, which is a minimally-invasive nasal swab (limited to just the nostrils) test that provides results in 15 minutes. This information would be uploaded by the school through the DOH's Limited Service Laboratory license into the statewide COVID-19 database. ([See the test in action here.](#))

Once testing the specific percentage of population based on zone requirements is completed (e.g. 20% of students and staff) and results demonstrate a positivity rate lower than zone average, the school will be permitted to continue in-person learning without testing.

Governor Cuomo's Winter Plan

In a recent press conference and press release, the Governor also detailed several strategies referred to as the [Winter Plan](#) to combat the spread of COVID-19 in the colder months which include holidays typical for family gatherings and when people spend more time indoors. Of the plan's five strategies, number three is Keeping Schools Open Safely.

Recognizing that in-person learning is critical to a student's academic and social-emotional success, particularly for elementary students and students with disabilities. Little Flower shares this view, and is committed to doing everything possible to continue our in-person learning while following all health and safety protocols.

It is here that I ask you to complete a [Willingness to Test Survey](#) as we prepare for the potential of the school being part of a designated color zone. Our neighboring area of Riverhead was recently identified, as have [several other areas on Long Island](#). With COVID-19 rates only increasing, we wish to have the preliminary steps toward implementing our testing model in place so we can respond quickly, efficiently, and effectively should that time come.

The [Willingness to Test Survey](#) will help us identify an initial pool of randomized candidates for testing. For those parents and guardians who indicate they would allow their child to participate, upon a zone designation, those parents would be provided with a Consent to Test Form which authorizes the school to test the child. If you indicate your willingness in this survey, you may withdraw this consent at any time. In the event we did not have sufficient participants to meet testing requirements, the school would be required to move to remote learning until able to meet testing pool minimums.

The Willingness to Test Survey, available online as a Google Form, is available here:

<https://forms.gle/6iZnE1VgGZajNPTN6>

Thank you for your time in reviewing this letter and related content through the hyperlinks to better inform you of the current environment surrounding schools as all continue to work to keep our students, staff, and communities safe and healthy. And, as always, thank you for your continued cooperation and support.

Sincerely,



Dr. Harold J. Dean
Superintendent