

# Medway Public Schools

## Exploring COVID-19 Surveillance Testing for Students, Faculty, and Staff

September 24, 2020



# Focus on Risk Mitigation

- We will be reopening schools during the continuing COVID-19 health crisis
- While Massachusetts continues to have lower infection rates, the virus is still present and continues to be highly transmissible
- Adhering to physical distancing and other health protocols, both in school and out, will support the reopening plan
- MPS adopted a minimum of 6' of physical distancing across the schools to support improved safety for students, faculty, and staff, excluding bus travel (3' distance used)
- Planning and preparing for this year is new for all of us

# Focus on Risk Mitigation - Practices to support health and safety

- Mask wearing for students, faculty, and staff
- Adoption of a 6' minimum physical spacing standard in our classrooms
- Implementation of enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols
- Assessment and repairs to our HVAC systems
- Assessment of all sinks in our schools, and the procurement of hand sanitizer throughout
- Procurement of individual room HEPA air purification systems for teaching spaces
- Purchase and installation of hands-free water bottle filling stations in schools, with more to be installed
- Reduction of higher risk activities, at least temporarily (e.g. fall interscholastic football and cheerleading)
- **Exploration of a COVID-19 Surveillance Testing program for all students, faculty, and staff (more to come on this soon)**

# Rationale: COVID-19 Surveillance Testing

- Regular testing will allow us to better understand the impact of COVID-19 within our school community
- Regular testing will improve information and confidence as it will identify “asymptomatic carriers”
- Information gained from regular testing will allow us to make fact-based decisions about opening/closing schools or the district
- Regular testing may provide a path toward increased in-person experiences for students

# What is Pool Testing?

- Individuals are grouped into pools based on their interaction with each other at school
- Samples are received from all members of a pool and combined and tested together
- If the test results are negative, everyone in the pool is negative at the time of the test
- If the test results are positive, at least one member of that pool is positive
  - Individual samples would be tested to identify positive members of the pool

# Pool Testing: Advantages and Disadvantages

## Advantages

- Pool Testing is much less expensive as the reagents and equipment is being used to test and entire pool (12-18 individuals)
- Testing would occur regularly (every other week), approximately 15 times over the 2020-2021 school year
- Test is conducted using an at-home administered nasal swab
- Test results are reported within 24-48 hours
- We will likely identify positive tests that would have gone unknown

## Disadvantages

- Individual results are not gained through this process, only whether the pool is positive or negative
- If tests results reveal a positive pool, all members of that pool will need to have individual tests

# Test Type and Reliability

- Samples would be gathered at home via anterior nares swab and brought into school on a specified schedule
- Tests conducted on all samples and results reported 24-48 hours after lab receives
- If positive pool, additional individual tests are conducted immediately and positive cases identified
- Testing facility will use PCR testing to ensure high level of accuracy

# Potential Cost

Total cost for 30 testing events ( $\frac{1}{2}$  of the population each event) is approximately:

\$275 per person

Or

\$678,000\*

\*Includes retesting of all individual samples if a pool tests positive



# Identifying Partners to Support Costs

While we have some available funding, the total cost for the entire year exceeds our capacity. We are exploring potential partnerships to support this program.

# Next Steps

- Parent Webinar: Exploring COVID-19 Surveillance Testing for the *Medway Public Schools*: **Wednesday, September 30, 2020 at 5PM**
- Identify potential community partnerships and supports
- Move forward with an Invitation to Bid to ensure compliance with State procurement rules