

## **ELPS Updates**

### **January 1, 2022**

***Happy New Year to all of you! Weekly Updates are coming out a day early this weekend in order to provide you with some important information regarding Monday's return to school.***

***We will regularly monitor local and district COVID case data, consult with local health experts and communicate with impacted individuals should a class, grade-level or building experience a COVID outbreak.***

***We will continue to do all that we can to maintain in-person instruction for our students and will need your help and support!***

***With the presence of the highly-contagious omicron variant and the likely occurrence of many holiday gatherings, it is more important than ever to layer mitigation strategies to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in our schools and community.***

***1. ELPS strongly encourages all eligible students and staff members to be **vaccinated and boosted!** It's possible that the FDA may be approving the booster shot for 12-15-year-olds as soon as this week! We are hoping to have an onsite clinic for booster shots as soon as possible – stay tuned.***

***We'll also be implementing President Biden's "**Vaccinate or Test**" mandate in the coming weeks. Staff members will be required to be vaccinated or to obtain a negative PCR test result weekly.***

***2. **Universal masking** will continue. It is important that all staff and students wear well-fitting multi-layer masks. Each building will have a supply of multi-layer cloth masks, disposable masks, surgical-grade masks and KN-95 masks on hand.***

***3. **Weekly onsite PCR testing** continues – students and staff can still sign up to participate in our weekly PCR testing. This testing occurs once per week at each building and consists of a shallow nasal swab. Regardless of vaccination status, we strongly encourage staff and students to participate in this testing. You can register by emailing Kelly Hocquard at [kelly.hocquard@elps.us](mailto:kelly.hocquard@elps.us). She can assist you in getting registered.***

***4. In order to reduce opportunities for virus spread, ELPS will be implementing **capacity limits for non-essential gatherings** with 100 or more people as encouraged this week by our State Superintendent and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. When possible, these events will be held remotely. Otherwise, we will be limiting our capacity to sporting events, concerts, etc. to no more than 100 people. Student-athletes and activity participants will receive information regarding their***

*ticket allotment. This change will be effective Monday, January 3. Building administrators will help communicate this information to our students.*

**5. Stay home if you are sick or are exhibiting symptoms.** *With the highly-contagious omicron variant, it is crucial that students and staff do not come to school when symptoms are present. If you have symptoms, please get a PCR test as soon as possible and isolate.*

***I'm confident that we can safely continue in-person learning if we all follow these mitigation strategies. Thank you for your support!***

**COVID-19 Rapid Tests – Please test your children Sunday night or Monday morning!**

### **And... New Isolation and Quarantine Guidance**

Before winter break, BinaxNow Rapid Antigen Test boxes (each box contains 2 tests) were sent home with every student and staff member. Please help us keep COVID out of our schools by testing your child Monday morning (or Sunday night) before they return to school. If your child is exhibiting COVID symptoms, they should remain home, regardless of the antigen test result. Individuals should get a PCR test if they are presenting symptoms and have a negative result before returning to school.

See the following document for guidance on your next steps with a negative test result, a positive test result, a child with symptoms or one who has been a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID.

At-home Testing Guidance for BinaxNow Rapid Antigen Tests: [At-Home Testing Guidance](#)

Ingham County Health Department School Guidance (updated 12/28/21): [https://hd.ingham.org/Portals/HD/Home/Documents/cd/coronavirus/ICHD\\_SchoolCOVIDHandouts.pdf](https://hd.ingham.org/Portals/HD/Home/Documents/cd/coronavirus/ICHD_SchoolCOVIDHandouts.pdf)

Isolation and Quarantine Guidance was updated this past week. The health department guidance (linked above) reflects the changes, but here is a brief summary:

#### 1. Students:

- For vaccinated students who are identified as a close contact, there is no change. No quarantine required. Monitor for symptoms.
- For unvaccinated students who are identified as a close contact, present no symptoms and want to remain in school, serial testing (“test to stay”) is still available.
- For unvaccinated students who are identified as a close contact, present no symptoms and **do not want** to participate in serial testing, they must quarantine

for five days (previously ten days), with a strong recommendation to test the morning of Day 6.

- For students who test positive for COVID-19, they must isolate for a minimum of 5 days and can return on the 6th day, assuming symptoms have dramatically improved (essentially, no fever for 24+ hours, no headache, no vomiting.... they may have a slight ongoing cough still, as that seems to continue after the period of contagion has passed).

## 2. Staff:

- For vaccinated staff who are identified as a close contact, there is no change. No quarantine required. Monitor for symptoms.
- For unvaccinated staff who are identified as a close contact, serial testing is still not an option. For those unvaccinated, exposed, and asymptomatic, they must quarantine for five days (previously ten days), with a strong recommendation to test the morning of Day 6.
- For staff members who test positive for COVID-19, they must isolate for a minimum of 5 days and can return on the 6th day, assuming symptoms have dramatically improved (essentially, no fever for 24+ hours, no headache, no vomiting.... they may have a slight ongoing cough still, as that seems to continue after the period of contagion has passed).

## **Thank You for Supporting our Holiday Giving Program**

Through community and other donations, we were able to support 130 ELPS families with their winter break needs. Special thanks to the East Lansing Fire Department and the East Lansing Police Department for their support of two district families.

## **Snow Day Decisions and Communication**

As we enter the "Snow Day Season," I'd like to share some information about how the decision of whether or not to cancel school is made and how a school closing will be communicated.

### 1. Many weather factors are considered when determining whether or not to cancel school:

- Amount of snow (current and predicted)
- Timing of snow
- Temperature and wind chill (sustained wind chills of -20 degrees or lower will result in school closing or delay)
- Road and sidewalk conditions (including conditions for busses and young drivers)
- Other factors such as blowing and drifting, ice or freezing rain, visibility, power outages

I do a road check throughout the district beginning around 4:15 a.m. and communicate with other local superintendents and often the City of EL and/or ELPD.

2. When possible, we will make the call the night before in order to give families as much time as possible to prepare. If a decision to close schools is made the night before, it will be communicated no later than 10:00 p.m.

If the decision to close schools is made in the morning, we do our best to communicate by 5:30 a.m. (and no later than 6:00 a.m.).

3. If a decision is made to close school, the closing is communicated to staff and families via the following methods:

- Robocall to staff and families (make sure your phone number is current in PowerSchool)
- ELPS Facebook Page
- ELPS Website - main page
- Twitter - Follow me to hear it first! @ELPSSupt
- Local news media: WILX, WLNS, Fox 47, WKAR, WFMK

4. Information about other events (practices, games, concerts, etc.) will be made later in the morning and communicated through coaches and advisors and/or the district website.

### **Board of Education Meeting – Monday, January 10, 2022**

The ELPS Board of Education will be holding its next regular meeting Monday, January 10 at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room in East Lansing High School. The meeting will be held in person and will be live streamed. This meeting will be the Board's Organizational Meeting for 2022.

Here is a link to access the live stream of the meeting - the video of the meeting will also be posted on this site: <https://www.nfhsnetwork.com/schools/east-lansing-high-school-east-lansing-mi>

### **COVID-19 Reporting and Communicating**

Here is a link to the district's COVID-19 dashboard. Positive school-related cases must be posted on this site within 24 hours of the district learning of the case. If we are notified of a case over the weekend, updates will be posted Monday.

<https://elps.us/our-district/district-covid-19-dashboard/>