

More Information

BH-BL has appointed Sharon McTygue to the position of COVID-19 Coordinator. She can be reached at smctygue@bhbl.org or at 518-399-9141, Ext. 85008.

The district's website, bhbl.org, has a webpage dedicated to COVID-19 related information. Click the links at the very top of any page on our website to access it.

Parents will be notified if anyone in their child's school is confirmed positive. An email will be sent to all parents of students in that building. Parents may also access an archive of confirmed positive cases on the district's website. In the yellow bar at the top of any page on the website, click "Confirmed COVID-19 Case Updates" to be redirected to the archive page.

BH-BL



COVID-19 Rapid Testing Information

Keeping BH-BL Schools Open

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the state has begun labeling areas of New York with high COVID-19 rates as yellow, orange, or red zones as part of the state's Cluster Action Initiative. Governor Cuomo's Winter Plan, released Nov. 30, includes an updated strategy aimed at safely keeping schools open. (See below.) Details of the Winter Plan are still being finalized, but we do know it includes random rapid testing of on-site students, faculty, and staff in each building.

BH-BL encompasses both Schenectady and Saratoga Counties. Therefore, if either county or specific zipcode within our district is placed in a zone, BH-BL will implement zone requirements throughout the entire district.

Below are the state's three-zone designations that outline how receiving a designation might impact BH-BL. Information about in-school rapid testing can be found on the other side of this sheet.

DESIGNATION ZONE DISTINCTIONS

YELLOW ZONE — PRECAUTIONARY BUFFER*



- Schools in yellow zones may remain open as long as they rapid test a random sampling of 10% of their on-site students, faculty, and staff within a two-week period of being designated in the yellow zone.
- If our testing results reveal a positivity rate lower than the county's rate, BH-BL is exempt from further testing as long as the county remains in the yellow zone.
- If test results reveal a positivity rate higher than the county's 7-day positivity rate, BH-BL must continue to test 10% of its in-person population on a bi-weekly basis.

ORANGE ZONE — WARNING BUFFER*



- Schools may remain open as long as they rapid test a random sampling of 20% of their on-site students, faculty, and staff over the course of a month.
- If BH-BL is unable to meet the rapid testing threshold, the district will be forced to close and shift to remote learning only.

RED ZONE — MICRO-CLUSTER*



- Schools may remain open as long as they rapid test a random sampling of 30% of on-site students, faculty, and staff over the course of a month.
- If BH-BL is unable to meet the rapid testing threshold, the district will be forced to close and shift to remote learning only.

**The Governor's Winter Plan may be modified in this ever-changing climate. Listed above is what we know as of Dec. 3, 2020. We will continue to keep our community and families updated as soon as information is shared with us. We encourage you to check your email for updates from Superintendent McGrath and visit our website, bhbl.org, for information.*



Keeping BH-BL Schools Open



On-Site Rapid Testing Fast Facts

What students, staff, and parents can expect

For the past few weeks, BH-BL's COVID-19 Coordinators have been in frequent contact with public health experts who have shared valuable resources and best practices so that if we are required to begin testing in order to keep our district open, we will be ready with testing protocols that are safe and efficient. Here are a few things to know about the in-school rapid tests:



They will only be administered by a school nurse or other qualified health professional.



They are considered non-invasive tests because they only require a quick swab of the lower portion of an individual's nostrils. The tests are fast and painless. They are *not* the deep-sinus swab tests often conducted at medical facilities.



The test results are available within minutes. Students and staff wait for their results. Individual test results will only be shared with families, the school nurse, and the local DOH.



COVID19

Parents will be notified immediately by school personnel if their child's test result comes back positive. Parents will be asked to pick their child up from school.



Students who test positive will be relocated to a separate, supervised area until they are picked up from school. A staff member who tests positive will be sent home immediately. Any individual who tests positive will be required to be in mandatory quarantine as per the DOH guidelines, which can be found on our website. The district's COVID-19 Coordinators will work with DOH officials to implement contact tracing protocols, as appropriate. If the test results are negative, students may return to their classes.



Reports indicate that rapid tests are not necessarily the first choice by medical experts for individual needs. However, they are a reliable source to gather pool testing baseline data. The valuable data gathered, ease of use, and rapid results from this test make it the tool of choice for this particular application.

Parental Consent for Testing



Rapid testing of students is voluntary and done only with the advance consent of parents/guardians. Having consent allows us to create a pool of eligible students to test should the district need to move forward quickly to conduct in-school testing. If parents do not want their children randomly tested, they simply will not be included in the pool of volunteers. If we have enough volunteers, names will be selected randomly.

From Dec. 7 to Dec. 11, a testing consent statement will appear on the daily Qualtrics Screening Survey. To give parental consent, click "yes" and enter your name in the space provided. (The complete consent statement is on our website.)



SAMPLE FROM CONSENT STATEMENT

"The Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central School District is seeking your consent to test your child for COVID-19 infection. If you consent, your child may receive a free diagnostic test for the COVID-19 virus that will be administered by a certified or licensed medical provider (CNA, LPN, or RN). A rapid COVID-19 test will be used, which will involve inserting a small swab, similar to a Q-Tip, into the front of the nose. We will notify you if your child tests positive for COVID-19..."

The law requires and/or allows some information about your child to be shared with the County Public Health Department and New York State Public Health Agencies. This includes notifying the County Department of Public Health about the COVID-19 results of each student who is tested, including the student's name, date of birth, race, ethnicity, gender, address, phone number, and result of the COVID-19 test..."

It's important to note that public health parameters dictate that if a district cannot reach the required percentage threshold for testing, school building(s) will be required to close for in-person classes and must shift to fully remote instruction.



The rapid tests are provided to schools throughout New York state at no cost to the districts.

