

Orange East Supervisory Union

*Serving the town of Bradford, Corinth, Groton, Newbury,
Ryegate, Thetford, Topsham, Wells River*
Tel. 802-222-5216 Fax 802-222-4451

64 Main Street
P O Box 396
Bradford VT 05033
www.oesu.org

Dear OESU Families,

As the school year gets underway we continue to pay close attention to measures that will prevent or minimize the spread of COVID-19 in our schools. Every day we endeavor to keep our schools open with the least amount of disruption to in-person learning. Our many mitigation strategies reflect the most up-to-date recommendations by the Vermont Department of Health and the CDC. **Thank you for your cooperation with this effort.**

For the 2021-22 school year, we are offering an extra layer of protection to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our schools — our COVID-19 testing program. This program is free for all students and staff regardless of vaccination status. Vaccines prevent serious illness, but unfortunately not always infection.

OESU schools will be conducting weekly testing on Tuesdays by way of a quick, non-invasive nasal swab, collected under the supervision of your child's school nurse. Unlike many COVID-19 tests of the past, these are easy for students 5 years and older to perform themselves and involve gently swabbing the inner part of the lower nostril. This test is not painful. Students do not use the longer swabs that reach higher into the nose.

Test results will be available to you within 24-36 hours via a protected parent microsite. These results are also shared with your school nurse and the Vermont Department of Health. Sharing of information about your child will only be done for public health purposes and in accordance with applicable law and policies protecting student privacy and the security of your child's data. If you have any reservations about protected data please proceed to the consent form for further information before you sign it.

There are many benefits to weekly testing and we hope that everyone will participate:

- Identifying infections early to prevent the spread of the virus, chiefly among those who are not showing any signs of illness when they could be transmitting the virus.
- Increasing the safety net for families, students and school staff especially who are not vaccinated.
- Making evidence-based, well-informed decisions to prevent viral outbreaks in schools.
- Preparing our community for unexpected changes in the pandemic. In preparation for the possibility of new, more virulent strains, having a comprehensive testing program in place in schools will help inform our community of new strains and viral patterns.

Students may only participate in the program with permission from a parent or guardian. To participate in the program, you must sign this [consent form](#) on behalf of your student. There is no charge for participating. Any student aged 5 years or older is eligible to participate.

In advance of signing the [consent form](#), it is important to us that you are **fully informed** regarding the process and that we answer any questions you might have. To learn more about our COVID-19 testing program, please visit the Agency of Education's [Covid-19 Surveillance Testing Program Overview](#).

This program will support our current efforts to keep students in the classroom and able to take part in the school activities they enjoy. We are extremely grateful to our committed families and staff who continue to show great flexibility and resilience as we work together to contain the spread of COVID-19. If you have questions please reach out to Susie Tann, OESU District COVID Coordinator at 802-392-4025 or susannah.tann@oesu.org.

Sincerely,
Emilie Knisley, Superintendent
Randy Gawel, Assistant Superintendent
Susie Tann, OESU District COVID Coordinator

Cultivating a Love for Learning!