



December 28, 2021

Dear County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators:

COVID-19 Testing For Safe Return to School—Messaging and Resources

I hope this letter finds you all well and enjoying the blessings of this season.

As winter break comes to a close, the rise in COVID-19 cases caused by the Omicron variant is an important reminder that we need to continue to work together to do all we can to keep our schools safe. To this end, we are urging every eligible person to get the COVID-19 vaccine and booster. In addition, the California Department of Education is joining with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to recommend that all school children access COVID-19 testing as they return to school following the holiday break.

K-12 At Home Test Distribution

While there is no associated statewide requirement to have a documented negative test prior to returning to school, we are working with CDPH to increase access to no-cost, at-home COVID-19 antigen tests by distributing kits through county offices of education. A similar process was used to distribute personal protective equipment to thousands of schools across the state at the onset of the pandemic. Deliveries are already underway, and we thank those of you who are working expeditiously to get these tests in to the hands of families and students.

Local Testing Options

With this letter, I am also asking all local educational agencies (LEAs) to contact their families to remind them of the importance of vaccines as well as students taking a COVID-19 test prior to returning to school. As part of your reminder, you might consider directing families to the California for All website at <https://covid19.ca.gov/> and the “Find Testing Near You” link, where they will be able to search by address, city, county, or ZIP code for a testing site.

For more details and helpful resources, LEAs can access the CDPH At Home Testing Program Google Drive at https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1SDjfm9Ru_VTqygQpjw7KIUtDjAjqN2CE with additional supportive materials and Frequently Asked Questions prepared by the CDPH exclusively for our schools.

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Thank you for all you have done for our students and families in 2021 and your continued partnership in keeping our schools safe and open.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tony Thurmond". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "T".

Tony Thurmond
State Superintendent of Public Instruction