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**SARATOGA COUNTY EXPANDS “TEST TO STAY” COUNTYWIDE TO KEEP KIDS IN SCHOOL**

**County’s Successful Pilot Data & CDC Data Show Little Spread of COVID in the School Setting**

**Program Includes Dedicated Web Portal to Assist Families and Schools**

BALLSTON SPA – Saratoga County officials today announced it is expanding its “Test to Stay” (TTS) protocol to school districts countywide to allow more students to remain in the classroom during COVID-19.

TTS is a test-based protocol for preK-12 students who have been exposed to COVID-19 in school or on a school bus that allows them attend classes in person rather than quarantine at home. Using at-home test kits provided by the school, parents conduct the test on a set schedule and must report the results before a school day begins. Students who are positive or who have symptoms of COVID-19 (regardless of their test result) are not allowed to proceed to school.

Saratoga County was the first county in the State to implement a TTS program and partnered directly with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on a pilot project in the South Glens Falls School District (SGF) in October 2021. Through January sixth, 457 SGF students have enrolled in test to stay and only four tested positive (0.875%). Ninety-six-percent (96%) of parents consented to have their child participate, which saved nearly 1800 days of in-person instruction. TTS allows schools to maximize instruction time and minimize interruptions to learning.

Many school districts in Saratoga County will begin offering the program this week.

To lessen the burden of TTS on schools and families, SCPHS has launched a [web portal](#) to assist parents and guardians with reporting and schools with timely surveillance and data management. Participating schools will link to the portal from their websites.

Theodore T. Kusnierz, Jr., Town of Moreau Supervisor and Chair of the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors said, “During the past two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become abundantly clear that the best place for children to be is in the classroom, not only for education but also for their social and emotional well-being. I am excited to announce we are now expanding the successful pilot ‘Test to Stay’ program to students throughout the county. Saratoga County is committed to making our response to COVID-19 our top priority where we lead the state in effective, innovative response measures and we will continue to respond with measures that are in the best interest of our residents.”

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Dr. Daniel Kuhles, Commissioner of Saratoga County Public Health Services said, "The results of our Test to Stay pilot program, which was done in cooperation with CDC, prove that it is a valuable addition to existing layered prevention strategies. Notably, the pilot was conducted during a period of high COVID-19 community transmission, which further demonstrates that kids are safer in schools than in most other settings. SCPHS will continue to develop and implement public health interventions that promote and protect the overall health and well-being of students and families."

Said James Dexter, District Superintendent, WSWHE BOCES "Saratoga County has continued to focus on ensuring that all students have access to school. More than ever, we have learned the importance of daily attendance, and also, that the test to stay system is an effective tool for schools to utilize to keep our staff and students safe. We are thankful for our partnership with the county, and their dedication to the children and families we jointly serve."

Anita Murphy, District Superintendent, Capital Region BOCES said, "Saratoga County and Saratoga County Public Health Services continue to advocate for and support our children and families by ensuring that students can remain in school. The test to stay program is another tool for schools to keep our students in safe learning environments. We are grateful for the support of the county and its public health department for their continued support of our schools districts."

For more information about Saratoga County's COVID-19 response, visit [www.saratogacountyny.gov/covid](http://www.saratogacountyny.gov/covid).

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