



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-ND](#)

TIGER TIMES

News from the South Hadley Public Schools
October 20, 2021

Good Day Tiger Country,

I hope that everyone is enjoying the warm fall, apple cider, the blooming mums, and time with family and friends. I am reaching out to you this week to provide some general updates in the district. Information highlighted in this correspondence will be covered during the superintendent's comments at the next school committee meeting on October 21, 2021.

I. Test & Stay: COVID-19 Testing

Over the last couple of weeks, I have received several inquiries about COVID testing for students and staff. South Hadley Public Schools applied for and was accepted into the state's Test and Stay Program (hereinafter "TSP"). Listed below is a brief Questions & Answers section which helps South Hadley community members understand the TSP's expectations and limitations.

A. What does enrollment in the Test and Stay Program mean?

When the program is fully implemented, it means that students deemed close contacts to a positive case of COVID-19 will not have to be automatically quarantined, as currently outlined in the DESE guidelines. They will be required to be tested daily and may remain in school pending positive diagnosis.

B. Is the Test and Stay Program optional?

Yes. Parents/students may opt out of the Test and Stay Program, BUT will have to be quarantined, per DESE guidelines, if they are deemed a close contact.

C. When will this program begin?

The State has made the commitment to provide staffing support to districts that have been accepted into the program. On Tuesday, October 19, 2021, the state contacted South Hadley Public Schools and indicated they could help us start the TSP over the next several weeks. The TSP requires extensive oversight both in DAILY testing and in monitoring the results of testing and the status of symptoms, all of which is just one component of the responsibilities of the school health offices. It is a labor-intensive program. This is an excellent beginning, and we are grateful to the state for their help. We are examining the long-term plans for testing students and staff—please be patient and thank you for your understanding.

D. What is South Hadley doing to help implement the Test and Stay Program?

In addition to our incredibly hard-working nursing staff, the district has recently hired **2 Certified Nurse Assistants (CNAs)** and **1 Nurse Manager** to assist the health offices with the increased demands resulting from the COVID-19 protocols and the monitoring component of the program. Additional CNAs are being interviewed and will be hired pending completion of that process. The district recognizes that staffing is a nationwide challenge; therefore, the district is exploring significantly expanding health staff to meet the increased demands of the state's expectations to track staff and student exposure to COVID-19 and vaccinations.

E. What are the protocols for quarantine?

Until the Test and Stay Program is fully implemented, the district is required to follow DESE guidelines. These include:

- Mandatory quarantine for all students deemed close contacts. In such cases, school health offices always consult the town Department of Health and Ms. Sharon Hart, Public Health Director, who advises on the proper response based on the particular circumstances of the individual case or cases. For more information, please visit: [Public Health | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](#)

F. What are the guidelines for Close Contact Quarantine?

When a student is deemed a close contact each parent and student is given two documents prior to the student being sent home:

- Close Contact Quarantine Guidance (See Attachments)
- SHPS COVID-19-Like Symptom Instructions

II. COVID-19-like Symptom Instructions

These documents are intended to address questions concerning the duration of the quarantine; information concerning when to get tested; or possible return to school dates based on factors like date of exposure, testing results, and symptoms, etc.

- A. Guidelines concerning under what conditions to quarantine are NOT developed by South Hadley Public Schools. They are developed and provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in conjunction with local and state public health departments.

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/protocols/>
<https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>

III. STAFFING

South Hadley School District is not immune to the staffing shortages that have plagued the national workforce. Despite an aggressive campaign to attract more educators, our district, like many others, is experiencing a significant decrease in the number of available substitute teachers, para-educators, teachers, and administrators. We are competing with neighboring school districts for the same small pool of available candidates. This staff shortage has put a strain on administrators who must ensure class coverage when staff are absent to maintain safety and security in the schools. The staff shortage also challenges our goals to meet the educational needs of all students. We continue to look for creative ways to partner with our community to address these challenges for the sake of our students and their education. If you know of anyone interested in working in the South Hadley Public Schools, please refer them to the following link:

<https://www.schoolspring.com/jobs/index.cfm?employer=11173>.

IV. EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

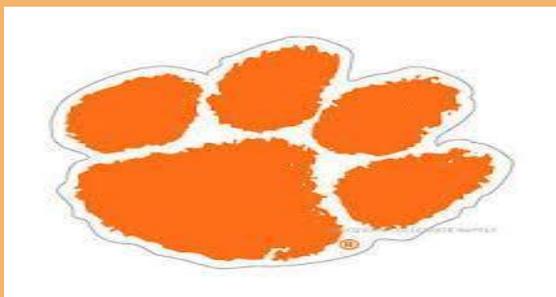
The South Hadley Public Schools continues its coaching/training partnership with the Collaborative for Educational Services (CES) in Northampton. This partnership seeks to continue building upon the abundant strengths within the teaching and administrative staff in the district. This year, South Hadley staff will participate in professional development that will focus on the following:

- Social, Emotional, and Well-Being of students and staff
- Differentiated Instruction
- Diversity Equity and Inclusion
- Using Data to Inform Instruction
- Accountability for Success

Look to future editions of **Tiger Times** to learn more about the plan for this year's professional development program.

V. Mosier Elementary School

As some of you may know, the Mosier School's portable classrooms did not meet building codes related to egress and the handicapped access ramp. Staff and students cannot occupy the portables until the stairs and ramp are fixed. The lack of access to the portables has disrupted teachers' workspaces and students' learning environment. The district filed an emergency construction waiver with the state Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) to expedite repairs to Mosier. The state approved the waiver, and I am pleased to report that we secured a contractor, Larochelle Co., to begin working on the stairs and the ramp. The repairs will begin immediately after the proper building permits are secured.





VI. A ROAR of THANKS

Finally, we'd like to acknowledge the dedicated efforts of all the professionals who work so hard in the service of the students of this community. All teachers, para educators, custodians, food service, counselors, librarians, nurses, principals, assistant principals, administrative support staff, bus drivers and all who come to work every day committed to helping educate the students of South Hadley and do so to the best of their ability. Thank you!

My best,

Dr. Jahmal Mosley

