

October 20th 2021

Dear Parents, Caregivers and Guardians,

As we get closer to the winter months we want to make sure we are taking every available precaution to ensure we have a safe learning environment. One mitigation effort we will be undertaking starting on Thursday, October 28th is to offer free weekly COVID-19 testing for our students at HSA-Belmont. Regular testing will help protect our students, staff, family members and others who are not vaccinated against COVID-19 or are otherwise at risk for getting sick from COVID-10.

Through this program, we will be able to identify COVID-19 cases quickly and proactively which will help us stop a potential outbreak before it happens. This will help us keep students in the classroom and continue in person learning.

The testing will be provided by SHIELD Illinois – the University of Illinois' PCR saliva test. The test has a sensitivity rate of 96.8% and a specificity rate of 98.9%. That level of accuracy means that the individuals being tested won't need a second test to confirm the result. This test is being used at schools across Illinois to great success.

- **Who will be tested?** All students will be tested unless their parents opt out. You can opt your child out of testing by filling out the form in this packet or by going on the school's website.
 - Students who opt out of testing will be sent home if they develop symptoms and will not be allowed to return to school until a negative COVID test is provided to the school.
- **How is the testing done?** The SHIELD Illinois testing is free, quick and easy. The test is a saliva based test and is NOT a nasal swab. Members of our school staff and staff from Zebra Health will administer and oversee the testing.
- **Where and when is the testing done?** Our school's testing site will be in the cafeteria or on the school's stage and will take place every Thursday. Results will be available within 24-36 hours.
- **How can I be sure that my child's information will be protected.** 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.

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 this virus. If you have any questions regarding the SHIELD Illinois testing program, please reach out to Mr. Connell.

Best,

Mr. Connell
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