

# Eastport-South Manor Central School District

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January 11, 2021

Dear ESM Families,

I wanted to provide everyone with an update on the COVID-19 testing letter sent last week. As you may recall, the letter reviewed Governor Andrew Cuomo's "[Micro-cluster Action Initiative](#)". In preparation of the rising COVID positive numbers on Long Island, our County Executive, Steven Bellone, had requested that all Suffolk school districts disseminate a "[Willingness to Test Survey](#)", as a way to determine potential student participation in COVID-19 testing. In the letter, we asked that you complete the survey for each of your children.

The survey is part of the preliminary measures needed to keep our school doors open, to in-person instruction, if we are ever designated as a Yellow, Orange, or Red zone by the state. Please know that the ability to have our students attend school in-person, if designated a micro-cluster zone, is **not** a county nor district decision. The decision is part of the Governor's Micro-cluster Initiative.

As of the writing of this email, we have a **21%** response rate to our Willingness to Test Survey at ESM. As you might guess, because we do not have 100% "yes" responses, this is not enough volunteers if we need to COVID-19 test. Therefore, at this time, **if** we are designated as a zone by NYS, our students would be transitioned to our [remote learning model](#) of instruction. This of course could change if there are more "yes" responses added to our current results.

In a press conference held this past Friday, January 8, 2021, Governor Cuomo "appeared" to be shifting away from his micro-cluster designations and mandatory testing requirements for a school district to remain open if the positivity rate increases. With six of ten geographical regions in NYS above a 9% positivity rate, he now seems more focused on the COVID-19 [vaccination rollout planning](#). With the continued uncertainty of what Governor Cuomo's next move might be, the district will continue to prep for potential testing, provided we have enough volunteers and are required to do so by the state.

Your ongoing support is greatly appreciated as we move through this challenging time period together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph A. Steimel".

Joseph A. Steimel  
Superintendent of Schools

*Together We Build Excellence*

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