

Test-to-stay program safe for facilitating in-person learning

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(HealthDay)—A statewide test-to-stay (TTS) program involving daily

rapid antigen testing is safe and can maximize in-person learning during the pandemic, according to a study published online Feb. 8 in *Pediatrics*.

Elissa M. Schecter-Perkins, M.D., M.P.H., from the Boston University School of Medicine, and colleagues reported the results of the first 13 weeks of an opt-in TTS [program](#), implemented in Massachusetts, in which students exposed to COVID-19 in [school](#) are tested each school day for seven days after exposure with a [rapid antigen test](#) and can participate in school-related activities if negative.

Overall, 2,298 schools signed up for TTS and 504,167 individuals consented to participate. The researchers found that 1,959 of the schools activated the program at least once for 102,373 individual exposed students during the 13 weeks. A total of 2,943 positive cases were identified out of 328,271 tests performed (per-person positivity rate, 2.9%). Through participation in the program, a minimum of 325,328 and a maximum of 497,150 days of in-person school were saved.

"This study was conducted during a period of widespread availability of COVID-19 vaccine for staff and students age 12 and up, but also prior to distribution of vaccine for individuals aged 5 to 11 years, and during a time when the [delta variant](#) was the predominant strain," the authors write. "In the context of a new, more transmissible variant, or one for which available diagnostic tests have different sensitivity or specificity, these findings may no longer be applicable."

More information: Elissa M. Schecter-Perkins et al, A Test-to-Stay Modified Quarantine Program for COVID-19 in Schools, *Pediatrics* (2022). [DOI: 10.1542/peds.2021-055727](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2021-055727)

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