

Massachusetts Schools Report 1,230 COVID-19 Cases Over Three Days

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School districts reported more than 1,200 student cases of COVID-19 and 190 cases among staff members this week, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education said in its first case report of the new school year. The department said the 1,230 student cases represent 0.13 percent of the estimated 920,000 students enrolled in K-12 schools. The 190 cases among around 140,000 staff members work out to a similar percentage, 0.14 percent.

After a 2019-2020 school year marked by periods of remote instruction, districts across Massachusetts are now back to full-time in-person learning. Teachers and students age 12 and up are able to get vaccinated against COVID-19, but there's still no clear timeline on when younger kids will be eligible for vaccines. Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Jeff Riley has mandated universal mask-wearing in schools until at least Oct. 1. Springfield reported the most student cases, with 70, followed by Wachusett's 40. Of the 400 districts, 160 reported no COVID-19 cases in students. Boston, Worcester and Springfield logged the highest number of staff cases, with eight each.

This week's total 1,420 school cases represent cases reported to DESE from Monday through Wednesday this week, and the department said future reports will cover a weekly time frame of Thursday through Wednesday.

In its final report from last school year, the department tallied 53 student cases and five staff cases the week of June

10 through June 16. The department said it expects to report pooled testing results from schools “in the coming weeks,” and that more than 2,200 public and private Massachusetts schools, more than twice last year’s number, are participating in the state’s COVID-19 testing programs, “either rapid testing, pooled testing, test and stay, or a combination of all three.”