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From: Honeysett, Adam <[Adam.Honeysett@ed.gov](mailto:Adam.Honeysett@ed.gov)>

Date: Fri, Jan 14, 2022 at 1:26 PM

Subject: From Secretary Cardona: Thank you for joining our conversation

To:

Dear Superintendents,

Thank you all for joining my conversation with the Surgeon General, CDC, and White House. An hour out of your day, on the first week back after break, is asking a lot and is not lost on me. I continue to be grateful for your commitment to solving these challenging issues and keeping students and staff safe – and hopefully in the classroom in-person.

We know needs and concerns are changing rapidly, and everyone is working tirelessly to respond, balancing what we've learned, the latest science, students' academic needs, and everyone's mental health and safety concerns.

The Department will continue to host conversations with you and your colleagues. As was mentioned on the call, we're beginning virtual regional roundtables shortly and want to ensure there is always an open line of communication. We continue to hear about the impacts of educators and other school staff shortages due to COVID-19. We are committed to supporting you in [addressing these shortages](#) and [urge you to use resources](#) from the American Rescue Plan Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) to ensure that students have access to the teachers and other critical staff they need to support their success during this critical period.

Since we spoke, Biden-Harris Administration [announced new actions to increase COVID-19 testing in schools](#) by:

- Sending 5 Million No-Cost Point-of-Care Tests Per Month to Schools;
- Providing 5 Million Additional Lab-Based PCR Tests for Free to Schools Per Month;
- Deploying Federal Surge Testing Units to Support Free Testing Access for Students, School Staff, and Families at Community Testing Sites;
- Connecting Schools with COVID-19 Testing Providers to Set Up School Testing Programs using American Rescue Plan Funds; and

- New Training, Resources, and Materials for Implementing Test to Stay in Schools

In the days since, the Administration has released a number of additional resources for schools seeking COVID-19 tests, and I wanted to make sure they were easily at your fingertips:

- CDC: [National Resources Supporting School COVID-19 Screening Testing](#)
- CDC ELC Reopening Schools: [Support for COVID-19 Screening Testing to Reopen and Keep Schools Operating Safely](#)
- CDC Operation Expanded Testing (OpET): [OpET provides no-cost testing to child care centers, K-12 schools, and other settings](#)
- My Dear Colleague Letter: [Letter to Colleagues on Federal Resources to Support COVID-19 Testing in Schools](#)
- School Access to Testing Slides: Attached is an expanded version of the slide shared on our call last week, including updated information about how to access testing resources.

If I could make just one ask of everyone, it'd be to host a vaccination clinic for students, staff, and families (first shots and boosters!) in January. We know the vaccine is safe and effective and our best defense against COVID. Additionally, following the CDC's guidance, those who are vaccinated do not need to participate in Test to Stay if a close contact tests positive. Instead, if they're asymptomatic, students and staff can safely remain masked in school in-person. This eases the testing burden and allows everyone to safely remain in school.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Miguel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Thank you for everything you're doing. It's not easy, but

your dedication is inspiring.

Sincerely,

Miguel