

## Case Study:

# How Primary.Health powered California Department of Public Health's State-Wide School Testing Program



### Background

Near the end of 2021, the **California Department of Public Health (CDPH)** approached Primary.Health to help ensure a safe return to in-person learning for students and staff after the holidays. Omnicron was the prevalent COVID-19 variant during this time and had been spreading rapidly across the country. CDPH was concerned that a spike in infections over the break could spread rapidly once schools reopened and disrupt in-person learning.



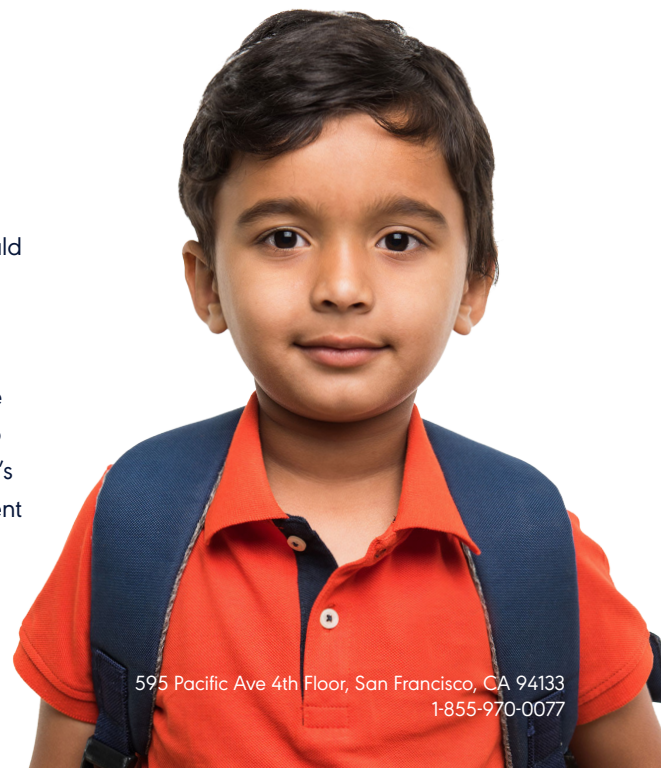
### Challenge

The scale of CDPH's program is significant as it encompasses over **six million K-12 students, 10,000 schools, and 1,000 districts**. Implementing a voluntary testing program of this size presented logistical challenges such as test distribution, participant registration, consent form and data collection, communicating appropriately based on results, and data reporting. It was also unknown whether a large population of people would engage in a voluntary testing program.

## Solution

CDPH utilized Primary.Health's platform to power its state-wide at-home testing program for schools. Primary.Health's platform provided the **automation and efficiency so that the testing program could include millions of participants**. It also provided the data collection and reporting capabilities so that all stakeholders could have real-time visibility into infection rates and make decisions accordingly.

Before the holiday break, CDPH procured and distributed millions of rapid antigen test kits to school districts across the state. Parents, guardians and school staff were instructed to administer tests three days before and the last day before returning to school. Participants were given instructions to log their test results in Primary.Health's platform. Depending on the result, automated messages via SMS or email were sent with protocols they should follow. Testing data for all schools was aggregated and organized by county and district so that it could be analyzed and shared easily.





## Results

A subset of schools that was asked to emphasize reporting demonstrated an average voluntary reporting compliance rate of 77.2%. Some schools were able to demonstrate rates of up to 96% by strongly encouraging parents to self-report.

From late December 2021 to the first week of January 2022, the self-reported positivity rate increased 97% from 3.2% to 6.3%. Underscoring the critical importance of testing, 97.5% of the positive tests logged were from participants who were not symptomatic, which means that without testing, those individuals could have exposed students and staff following the holiday break. The data was essential in tracking positive cases, and keeping infected students and staff at home, which kept in-person learning as safe as possible.

***"This testing has been huge for our community. Our students and families feel so much better knowing we can test them and their students at any time."***

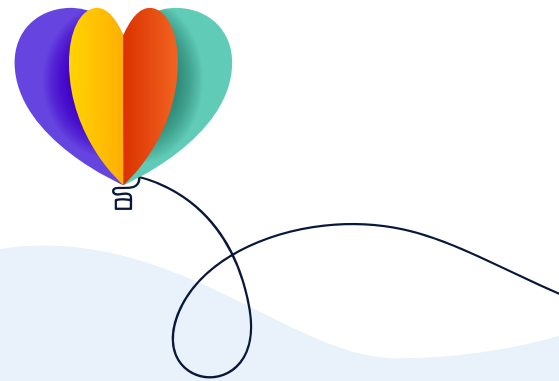
- *Madeline Carr Leonie, Office Manager,  
Napa Christian Campus of Education*

**77.2%**

Average voluntary reporting compliance rate was demonstrated in a subset of schools

**97%**

Increase in positivity rates was recorded from late December 2021 to the first week of January 2022, which identified the population to keep at home



## Conclusion

With a little foresight, teamwork, and technology, proactive testing on a massive scale was proven to be possible and effective. With public health being the common motivator, many different stakeholders played their part: CDPH procured tests, schools distributed tests, parents, students

and staff followed instructions, and Primary.Health provided the technology platform that connected the processes and participants. Working together, the right people got the right data, at the right time, to reduce the spread of COVID-19 on school campuses across the state.

## Testimonials



“We knew right away that a return to school and classroom learning required us to think about the tools and protocols that would keep our students safe. While our students are back to focusing on learning, credit is due to the district’s ongoing commitment to testing and responding proactively to the data with the measures and care our educators and health experts have at their disposal.

Testing contributed to where we are today: a reduction of in-school transmission to almost zero.”

—  
Don Geddis

Governing Member of the Board of Trustees  
Hillsborough City School District



“It has allowed rapid antigen tests for our students, staff, and students’ household members during a time where no walk-in or rapid antigen was available. It has allowed our students to return as early as possible and parents to go back to work earlier.”

—  
Elizabeth Semmelmann  
District School Nurse  
Santa Rita Union School District



“We began using antigen testing following extended breaks. After Winter Break, we were able to significantly decrease exposure due to a staggered school day start and antigen testing. This program has kept our school in-person through the Omicron surge and we are very grateful for it.”

—  
Tanya Spishak  
Director of Communications  
Woodland School



“We’ve been able to minimize the number of school days missed due to illness by using rapid testing to bring students back to campus after either a non-COVID illness or to shorten the isolation period for students or staff with COVID. Being able to provide response testing following an exposure provides reassurance to our staff, students, and parents.”

—  
Marjorie Lucks  
Director of Special Projects  
Santa Rita Union School District

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“It has helped parents trust that we are paying attention, it has taken the pressure off families to find tests, it has helped us keep kids at school.”

—  
Cory Powers  
Grade School Administration Coordinator  
San Francisco Waldorf School

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“Testing has allowed us to respond more quickly to positive cases as well as allow students and staff to return to campus earlier after isolation or quarantine. Using Primary as a reporting platform has made the whole process easier and quicker than earlier versions.”

—  
Barbara Lounsbury  
M.D. Medical Director  
The Institute for Effective Education

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“We have been able to supply testing to our school community when it has been difficult to get testing done anywhere else. With the ability to test in school, we can keep a lot more kids in school vs them staying home to quarantine after an exposure.”

—  
Melissa Casson  
District School Nurse  
Yreka Union School District

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“We have been able to identify people who are asymptomatic before they enter the site (they almost always develop symptoms by the following day). We have also been able to get people back to work and school earlier by confirming they are no longer positive. Overall, our staff feels much safer and our families have been happy to have the at-home test kits.”

—  
Jennifer Logue  
Administrator  
San Benito County Office of Education

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“Many of our families have struggled to find at home antigen tests and rely on our testing to clear students to return after illness or exposure.”

—  
Janna Nygren  
Operations Manager  
Camellia Waldorf School