District Participation in Screen and Stay

Results from a Survey of Public School Districts

December 2021

Introduction

On November 4, 2021, Governor Lamont announced the Screen and Stay Initiative for Connecticut schools. In certain lower-risk situations, this program allows students and staff who are not fully vaccinated, to remain in school after close contact with a Covid-19 case. On November 18th, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) conducted a brief survey to gauge the extent of implementation of Screen and Stay.

District responses were collected between November 18 and December 6. Aggregate results from the survey are presented below. The individual district decision to implement Screen and Stay is listed in the appendix. It is important to note that these results represent district responses at a specific point in time i.e., shortly after the announcement of the new policy, and may change.

Results

Over 80 percent of all public school districts (81.4%, N=162) are implementing Screen and Stay. See Table 1.

Table 1: Number and Percent of Districts Implementing Screen and Stay

Implementing Screen and Stay?	Number of Districts	Percent of Districts
Yes	162	81.4%
No	28	14.1%
Undecided	9	4.5%
Total	199	100.0%

Over 95 percent of those districts (N=154) are implementing Screen and Stay in **all** their schools. It is estimated that in total, approximately 7,000 students statewide have participated in Screen and Stay.

The primary positive of the Screen and Stay program that was noted by almost all respondents was that it allows students to stay in school. Some specific responses include the following:

- *It allows us to safely keep more students in school.*

- *Students are able to stay in school which is best for learning.*

- *The most significant positive is students can stay in school learning, and parents are not out of work to care for children in quarantine. The disruption of moving from in-person to remote, and back to in-person has been significant for students.*

- *Allows students to stay in school, and holds parents accountable for monitoring symptoms.*

- *Having kids stay in school is important. So far about 50% of the close contacts qualified for screen and stay.*

- *Screen and Stay allows students to remain in school instead of having to quarantine.   Data thus far is not showing that spread is ocurring [sic] among close contacts who participate in screen and stay. Our one positive case from screen and stay was traced to a sleepover the student attended while on screen and stay.*

- *It will reduce absenteeism in low risk cases that would have otherwise needed to quarantine.*

- *Allowing students to remain in school because quarantining these students is doing much more harm than good.*

- *Our data supports the use of Screen and Stay and we are glad to keep students in school. Parents are happy to take advantage of it.*

Those implementing Screen and Stay also shared some challenges, mostly centered around the somewhat limited scope of the program, the communication to families, and the necessary record keeping. A representative set of their comments is presented below.

- *Record keeping and the parent/guardian understanding that Screen and Stay is limited and a narrow option for students.*

- *Explaining why "this" is OK but all other mitigation strategies are still being followed, unlike the rest of society. Regardless, we continue to explain that this is another step toward normalcy and it needs to be monitored to ensure it is working. If it is working (i.e., we don't see any/more school transmissions), it will be evidence to assist decision making to further lessen restrictions and return to normal.*

- *We would like to start offering after school clubs, such as chess club, after nearly a 2 year hiatus. The Screen and Stay does not cover us for that even though we would carry on with our safety measures.*

- *The oversight and logistics of keeping track off [sic] students elected to screen and stay has required additional staff and resources.*

- *Explaining to parents that their child is not eligible unless it was a school-based exposure. We manage it though.*

- *Parents not performing the daily screening as agreed. Extra paperwork for nurse to complete and track. Time consuming.*

- *The biggest challenge is determining which students/staff were consistently wearing their masks during the time of exposure. This is an easier task with older students, but with the younger ones more difficult.*

- *Does not apply to PreK - this seems arbitrary based on data.*

- *Limiting students to not participate in extracurricular activities and providing alternative activities in music/PE.*

- *parents don't understand it doesn't apply to settings like cafe, bus, etc. It would be great if CSDE/DPH created an easy to understand one-pager for us to use with parents. Top of page - When S&S applies and the bottom when it doesn't apply.*

- *I would prefer test and stay to guarantee students are negative.*

Less than 20 percent of districts are not implementing Screen and Stay; 14.1 percent are not implementing while 4.5 percent are undecided. Here are some of the reasons why districts are not implementing or are undecided.

- *With Thanksgiving & Winter break approaching and cases rising, we are not interested in implementing this at this time. The majority of our quarantines are a result of close contact due to eating meals - which is not covered under this process; and through bussing - and we dont want to risk bringing more covid into the schools when we have a process by which it can be avoided. We are focusing our efforts on vaccination campaign instead.*

- *We have a wide variety (10) of mitigation strategies that are working to reduce COVID exposure and quarantines. We are reluctant to make changes until after the winter break.*

- *We may implement in the near future. Our mitigation strategies have overall have worked, positive cases have been minimal, and we don't have a major need for this program at this time.*

- *For our district, the number of COVID cases occurring within school are low. Additionally, to monitor such restrictions would be overwhelming to such a small administrative/nursing staff.*

- *Our rates are high within our schools and within the broader community. Through discussion with leadership and health professionals, we will adhere to Addendum 5 which allows for close contacts to test at day 5 after exposure and return after day 7. (It was the way to shorten the quarantine period and lesson the likelihood of spreading the virus.)*

- *We are currently following the original COVID 19 guidelines as established by the SDE, the State Dept of Health and the CDC. [Our size], staffing, and school locations would cause us to incur significant inconsistencies in implementing the Screen and Stay initiative with the integrity it requires.*

- *Because my Medical Subcommittee has determined that our current protocols are working effectively, We're also concerned we won't be able to effectively monitor this procedure and it will make us more vulnerable to school and community spread.*

- *We are too small and have a successful policy in place. Since we are only a Pre-K to grade 6 district, we have very few students vaccinated and therefore we are using the best practices of the CDPH.*

- *Our district's response is "undecided" because we are not physically able to observe the mandated 6 feet protocol as stipulated when making decisions consistent with Screen and Stay protocol. It will be situational for us depending on the campus and classroom spaces that would allow for us to be in alignment with Screen and Stay Protocol.*

- *When the State launched Screen and Stay, [our district] was identified as an outbreak community. We were advised to wait for COVID-19 data to drop and stabilize. That has not happened. I have had follow up conversations with DPH and NDDH asking for a safe threshold as to when it will be safe to implement. No such threshold exists.*

- *One of [our] schools has 400 3-4 year olds, so it that school is ineligible. Another school eats meals in the classroom, so the students would have to be quarantined. [Our] special education programs have students who cannot comply with the mask mandate due to complex disabilities. [Our district] does not have the capacity to run different contract tracing programs for our different schools/programs. More efficient to remain status quo.*

- *We are working very hard to ensure to quarantine only those who absolutely must be quarantined, so our numbers have been low so far. If things change we'll take a look at Screen and Stay as an option on a case by case basis. Thanks!*

- *We have experienced very few cases throughout the pandemic and the impact on our small population, would be minimum. We believe that we will not get the level of buy-in from our parents, it seems very cumbersome, and the effort would be difficult to implement, with minimal benefits given our size. We have just held our first vaccination clinic for 5-11 year-olds and we want to focus on that valuable mitigation strategy.*

- *We are waiting to see how the initiative is implemented in other districts prior to our implementation.*

- *It is impossible to implement! The criteria does not match the reality in the district's school.*

- *We have had an uptick in positive COVID cases recently and have about 40 students in quarantine. We have been particularly careful to identify the necessary students to quarantine case by case. We are waiting until the week of December 7th following the Thanksgiving break to implement the program - essentially to get by the holiday COVID impact. If numbers are low we will implement the program. We are ready to go - we just want to wait and get past this upcoming break.*

- *There is a concern that if students stay and then test positive after the exposure it could lead to more quarantines.*

- *We discussed it and determined that it encourages families to stay unvaccinated. We also, felt as though it created another layer of work on top of the contact tracing; which is already cumbersome at best.*

Conclusion

The Screen and Stay initiative has been implemented in the vast majority (81.4%) of districts statewide. As of this collection, approximately 7,000 students have been able to remain in school because of their participation in Screen and Stay.

Appendix: Districts Implementation of Screen and Stay

District	Implementing Screen and Stay?
Achievement First Bridgeport Academy District	No
Achievement First Hartford Academy District	No
Amistad Academy District	No
Andover School District	Yes
Ansonia School District	Yes
Area Cooperative Educational Services	Yes
Ashford School District	No
Avon School District	Yes
Barkhamsted School District	Yes
Berlin School District	Yes
Bethany School District	Yes
Bethel School District	Yes
Bloomfield School District	Yes
Bolton School District	Yes
Booker T. Washington Academy District	Undecided
Bozrah School District	No
Branford School District	Yes
Brass City Charter School District	No
Bridgeport School District	Yes
Bristol School District	Yes
Brookfield School District	Yes
Brooklyn School District	Yes
Canaan School District	Yes
Canterbury School District	Yes
Canton School District	Yes
Capital Preparatory Harbor School District	No
Capitol Region Education Council	Yes
Chaplin School District	Yes
Cheshire School District	Yes
Chester School District	Yes
Clinton School District	Yes
Colchester School District	Yes
Colebrook School District	Yes
Columbia School District	Yes
Common Ground High School District	Yes
Connecticut Technical Education and Career System	No
Cooperative Educational Services	Yes
Cornwall School District	Yes

District	Implementing Screen and Stay?
Coventry School District	Yes
Cromwell School District	Yes
Danbury School District	Yes
Darien School District	Yes
Deep River School District	Yes
Derby School District	Yes
East Granby School District	Yes
East Haddam School District	Yes
East Hampton School District	Yes
East Hartford School District	Yes
East Haven School District	Yes
East Lyme School District	Yes
East Windsor School District	Yes
Eastern Connecticut Regional Educational Service Center (EASTCONN)	No
Eastford School District	Yes
Easton School District	Yes
Ellington School District	Yes
Elm City College Preparatory School District	No
Elm City Montessori School District	Yes
Enfield School District	Undecided
Essex School District	Yes
Explorations District	Yes
Fairfield School District	Yes
Farmington School District	Yes
Franklin School District	Yes
Glastonbury School District	Yes
Goodwin University Educational Services (GUES)	No
Granby School District	Yes
Great Oaks Charter School District	Yes
Greenwich School District	Yes
Griswold School District	Yes
Groton School District	Yes
Guilford School District	Yes
Hamden School District	Undecided
Hampton School District	No
Hartford School District	Yes
Hartland School District	Yes
Hebron School District	Yes
Highville Charter School District	No

District	Implementing Screen and Stay?
Integrated Day Charter School District	Yes
Interdistrict School for Arts and Comm District	Yes
Jumoke Academy District	Undecided
Kent School District	Yes
Killingly School District	No
Learn	No
Lebanon School District	Yes
Ledyard School District	Yes
Lisbon School District	Yes
Litchfield School District	Yes
Madison School District	No
Manchester School District	Yes
Mansfield School District	Yes
Marlborough School District	Yes
Meriden School District	Yes
Middletown School District	Yes
Milford School District	Yes
Monroe School District	Yes
Montville School District	Yes
Naugatuck School District	Yes
New Beginnings Inc Family Academy District	No
New Britain School District	Yes
New Canaan School District	No
New Fairfield School District	Yes
New Hartford School District	Yes
New Haven School District	Yes
New London School District	No
New Milford School District	Yes
Newington School District	Yes
Newtown School District	Yes
Norfolk School District	Yes
North Branford School District	Yes
North Canaan School District	Yes
North Haven School District	Yes
North Stonington School District	Yes
Norwalk School District	Yes
Norwich Free Academy District	Yes
Norwich School District	Yes
Odyssey Community School District	No

District	Implementing Screen and Stay?
Old Saybrook School District	Yes
Orange School District	Yes
Oxford School District	Yes
Park City Prep Charter School District	No
Plainfield School District	Yes
Plainville School District	Yes
Plymouth School District	Undecided
Pomfret School District	Yes
Portland School District	Yes
Preston School District	Yes
Putnam School District	Yes
Redding School District	Yes
Regional School District 01	Yes
Regional School District 04	Yes
Regional School District 05	Yes
Regional School District 06	Yes
Regional School District 07	Yes
Regional School District 08	Yes
Regional School District 09	Yes
Regional School District 10	Yes
Regional School District 11	Yes
Regional School District 12	Yes
Regional School District 13	Yes
Regional School District 14	Undecided
Regional School District 15	Yes
Regional School District 16	No
Regional School District 17	Yes
Regional School District 18	Yes
Regional School District 19	Yes
Ridgefield School District	Yes
Rocky Hill School District	Yes
Salem School District	Yes
Salisbury School District	Yes
Scotland School District	Yes
Seymour School District	Yes
Sharon School District	Yes
Shelton School District	Yes
Sherman School District	Yes
Side By Side Charter School District	Yes

District	Implementing Screen and Stay?
Simsbury School District	Yes
Somers School District	Yes
South Windsor School District	Yes
Southington School District	Yes
Sprague School District	No
Stafford School District	Yes
Stamford Charter School for Excellence District	No
Stamford School District	Yes
Sterling School District	Yes
Stonington School District	Yes
Stratford School District	No
Suffield School District	Yes
The Bridge Academy District	Yes
The Gilbert School District	Yes
The Woodstock Academy District	Yes
Thomaston School District	Yes
Thompson School District	Undecided
Tolland School District	Yes
Torrington School District	Yes
Trumbull School District	Yes
Unified School District #1	No
Unified School District #2	No
Union School District	Yes
Vernon School District	Yes
Voluntown School District	Yes
Wallingford School District	Yes
Waterbury School District	Yes
Waterford School District	Yes
Watertown School District	Yes
West Hartford School District	Yes
West Haven School District	Undecided
Westbrook School District	Yes
Weston School District	Undecided
Westport School District	Yes
Wethersfield School District	Yes
Willington School District	Yes
Wilton School District	Yes
Winchester School District	Yes
Windham School District	Yes

District	Implementing Screen and Stay?
Windsor Locks School District	Yes
Windsor School District	No
Wolcott School District	Yes
Woodbridge School District	Yes
Woodstock School District	Yes