SARS-CoV-2 Infection in Public School District Employees Following a District-Wide Vaccination Program — Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, March 21–April 23, 2021

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The School District of Philadelphia reopened for in-school instruction the week of March 21, 2021, and required weekly testing for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, for all employees returning to in-school responsibilities. The resumption of in-school instruction followed a mass vaccination program using the Pfizer-BioNTech 2-dose vaccine offered under a partnership between the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia to all 22,808 School District of Philadelphia employees during February 23–April 3, 2021.* The subsequent mandatory testing program provided an opportunity to assess the percentage of positive BinaxNow point-of-care antigen tests (Abbott Laboratories) identified among school staff members based on their self-reported vaccination status (i.e., received zero, 1, or 2 vaccine doses) at the time of testing. During the initial 5 weeks after schools reopened, 34,048 screening tests were performed. Overall, 0.70% of tests returned a positive result. The percentage of positive test results was lower among persons who reported receipt of 2 vaccine doses (0.09%) compared with those who reported receipt of 1 dose (1.21%) or zero doses (1.76%) ($p<0.001$) representing a 95% reduction in percentage of positive SARS-CoV-2 test results among persons reporting receipt of 2 compared with zero doses of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Vaccination of school staff members has been highlighted as an important strategy to maximize the safety of in-person education of K–12 students this fall (1). These findings reinforce the importance of promoting COVID-19 vaccination among school staff members before commencement of the 2021–22 school year.

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