



10 TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTING COVID-19 TESTING PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS

This document is based on feedback from AASA members for AASA members on developing COVID-testing programs.

1. Utilize this [impact estimator](#), designed by Mathematica and The Rockefeller Foundation, to help district leaders make decisions about the potential value of routine testing in K-12 schools and determine different routine testing strategies that are available.
2. Have candid conversations with vendors, local health departments and the State about the supply of tests and whether you need to source testing from multiple vendors.
3. Determine what testing strategy to use (PCR, pooled PCR or antigen, nasal swabs or saliva tests) and the availability of procuring enough of one type of test for students. Consider the availability of a multi-prong approach where these tests are used in combination with one another and what the potential drawbacks may be to doing this.
4. Investigate the staffing demands of various testing options and when and where testing will need to occur. Pricing, availability and scheduling are all important factors to consider
5. Consider the district's ability to provide consistent testing in select sites, or if a universal launch is feasible. Reach out to other local districts about supply chain challenges they have experienced with testing programs and what preferred vendors and partnerships may exist. Involve your procurement department and legal departments in all planning meetings, so they know expectations and issues particular to your local context.
6. Understand what funding streams can be used to pay for COVID testing. Go first to the State to make sure they understand what funding should be covered through state and [CDC funding streams](#), and what funding may be needed from federal COVID relief such as the American Rescue Plan funding.



7. Spend time talking to principals and health care teams before rolling out the testing program to make sure they understand the value in having in-house testing and have the capacity to do the work required to keep up with demand. Be proactive about overcoming misconceptions from staff and administrators. Get buy-in from principals so they understand that a robust testing program will ultimately benefit their academic-driven goals for many reasons, including reducing the number of quarantines. Ask principals to designate a site-based person at each school to manage the testing process and consider using federal dollars to cover the salary of any additional hires you may need to implement the testing program.
8. Develop a protocol to determine priorities for testing (i.e. medically fragile students and staff that work with them, possible exposure, symptoms). Some staff members may want to be tested daily, every other day or weekly and it's critical to have a defined list of who gets tested and how often based on the supply of available tests. Be prepared to scale-back to only symptomatic test takers if supply chain issues arise.
9. Discuss how parents will receive notice of the testing results and what new or different approaches the districts will take to addressing a positive infection now that the testing program is in place.
10. Invest in a communication campaign to make sure parents, students and staff understand the testing program. Take time to consult with your legal and healthcare teams about whether your testing program will be opt-in or opt-out for staff and students, whether parental consent will be passive or pro-active and how parents will be notified of the results of the testing. Also, consider whether you will offer parents the option to be present when their child is getting tested.

Note: Many of the points in this document are highlighted in the [Covid-19 Testing in K-12 Settings: A Playbook for Educators and Leaders](#) developed by the Rockefeller Foundation. We strongly encourage AASA members to read the playbook for more detailed strategies and information on COVID testing in schools.