Suffolk County School Superintendents Association

COVID-19 TESTING IN SUFFOLK COUNTY SCHOOLS

A 10-Step Process

Updated December 14, 2020

NYS Micro-Cluster Zone Action Initiative

To reduce transmission of COVID-19 NYS Governor Cuomo has implemented the Micro-Cluster Zone Action Initiative in New York State. As of 12/14/20 the initiative identifies three different Zones:

- RED ZONE: Region where hospital capacity is within 21 days of reaching 90 percent, even after the cancellation of elective procedures and a 50 percent increase in bed capacity in hospitals in the region.
- ORANGE ZONE: A 4 percent positivity rate (7-day average) over the last 10 days and it is located in a region that has reached 85 percent hospital capacity.
  - May also become an Orange Zone if the State DOH determines the region's rate of hospital admissions is unacceptably high
- YELLOW ZONE: 3 percent positivity rate (7-day average) over the past 10 days and is in the top 10 percent in the state for hospital admissions per capita over the past week and is experiencing week-over-week growth in daily admissions.

Effective the week of November 30, 2020, schools in Yellow Zones must test 20% of in-person students, faculty and staff over the two-week period immediately following the announcement of a Yellow Zone designation. If the results of the testing reveal that the positivity rate among the 20% of those tested is lower than the Yellow Zone's current 7-day positivity rate, testing at that school will no longer be required to continue. A positivity rate in a school that is lower than in the Yellow Zone is a sufficient demonstration that in-person instruction is not a significant driver of local viral spread.

Type of Activity	RED	ORANGE	YELLOW
Worship	25% capacity 10 people maximum	33% capacity 25 people maximum	50% capacity
Mass Gathering	Prohibited	10 people maximum, indoor and outdoor	25 people maximum, indoors and outdoors
Businesses	Only essential businesses open	Closing high-risk non-essential business (gyms, personal care, etc.)	Open
Dining	Takeout only	Outdoor dining only, 4 person maximum per table	Indoor and outdoor dining, 4 person maximum per table
Schools	CLOSED Remote-only		Open Mandatory weekly testing of students and teachers/staff for in-person settings. DOH will set percent by Friday.

Schools located in Orange and Red Zones must implement testing on a rolling basis each month. Schools can remain open in Orange and Red Zones. However, they must conduct testing as follows:

- Orange Zone - 20% of in-person students and staff over a month. Testing must be spread out 10% over every two weeks.
- Red Zone - 30% of in-person students and staff over a month. Testing must be spread our 15% over every two weeks.

Testing continues on a rolling basis, monthly until the Governor determines an area is no longer a "Hot Spot" and the zone designation changes. Click to view the current positivity rates by County.

The Need for School-Based Testing in Suffolk County

Recent trends in COVID-19 infection rates have been alarming, in Suffolk County and across the country. As of 12/9/20, the County has a 14-day rolling average of 5.4% and a 7-day rolling average of 6.2%. Based on this trend, locally and nationally, a comprehensive plan for testing in our schools must be effectuated.

In partnership with Suffolk County Executive's Office, the SCSSA has been working with the Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) to develop supports so that in the event of any Micro-cluster Zone Designation, the schools in Suffolk County will be prepared to test the requisite number of students and staff and implement this COVID-19 testing in a timely manner.

As a preparatory measure, our County Executive has asked all schools to administer the survey we have prepared regarding Willingness to Test. Also included is a Cover Letter to use when you send out the survey. This should be done now to build a pool of willing testers from your in-person students, faculty and staff. Once individuals are identified as willing to test, you can also obtain Consent to Test. In this way, once designated you will

be prepared to implement testing expeditiously. There are three versions of consent in the folder, (Guercio, Volz and NYSED). We have prepared paper and pencil versions as well as templates to collect Digital Consent. We recommend that you keep Paper and Pencil versions on hand at your testing site for use with any walk-ins.

In the event your District is identified as being in a Yellow, Orange or Red Zone, you should follow the procedures outlined in the sections that follow. To Date we have supported testing in a number of districts throughout the county. For a real-time updated list of School-Based COVID-19 testing in our Suffolk County Schools you can access our SCSSA Testing in Schools Tracker.

The Process

Step 1 –   Contact - Kristen Nannini, Safety & Administrative Support Manager, Eastern Suffolk BOCES, Barton Avenue Armory.
- (631) 472-8785
- knannini@esboces.org

Step 2 –   Execute the SCDHS School-Based COVID Testing MOA. Access the Pre-Designation Communications Folder of resources and prepare your communications.

Step 3 –   Plan to conduct informational webinars for your community in all languages appropriate. Ensure messaging is positive and emphasizes that schools are safe, while articulating the reasons for testing.

Step 4 –   Identify those who will serve as testers; ensure that they complete the Testing Training.

Step 5 –   Identify a clerical employee who will input testing results to the Electronic Clinical Laboratory Reporting System (ECLRS), the NYS Database. If not previously completed, you must enroll them into the system in advance of testing. View the registration information in the ECLRS Reporting Folder.

Step 6 –   Review the materials in the testing Site Coordination Folder.
This includes: Testing Roles/Personnel, Site Maps and Signage.

The Process *(continued)*

Step 7 –   Identify your testing locations and develop your site plan: You will need at least the stations below. With additional personnel capacity, you could break these out further. See sample [Testing Location Site Map](#) for reference. Stations include (descriptions on page 7):
1. Welcome and Check in
2. Pre-Test Screening & Attestation
3. Testing - Swabbing
4. Testing - Reagent Application
5. Reading Result
6. Education
7. ECLRS Data Input Reporting Station

Step 8 –   Establish a Plan for Media Relations, Dignitary Presence and Visiting Districts
- This is a medical procedure with confidentiality protections; plan for media and dignitaries (Board of Ed, town, county, state officials) who may want access; school-based testing is a notable event.
- Ensure that all interactions convey a positive, professional tone and adhere to all COVID-19 protocols.
- Neighboring districts may be interested in viewing the testing operation to understand and prepare for their potential needs.

The Process *(continued)*

Step 9 – Day of Implementation Considerations:
- Ensure a welcoming environment with positive messaging.
  - As Superintendent, be the FIRST person to be tested.
  - Greet people and thank them for their willingness to test.
  - Consider stickers or lollipops for younger children as a reward.
- When selecting staff to be tested, give consideration to how you can randomize within your District's zip code.
- Arrange for on-site pick up of medical waste (Red garbage bag of discarded swabs/cards). Many Districts, via nurses have an on-call medical waste pick up arrangement for sharps and other waste. Make sure to check the status of that contract prior to testing.

Step 10 – Transmit Daily Testing Data to NYSDOH COVID School Report Card Designee. This data should be entered daily in the COVID reporting.

Stations Necessary to Facilitate School-Based Testing
Including: Personnel, Procedures and Supply/Equipment Needs

Station 1 - Pre-Test Screening & Attestation
Personnel Needs: One staff member (clerical, admin, nurse).
PPE Requirement: Must be wearing a face covering, desk shield (if available)
Function:
- Take temperature; If $\geq$100.0F do not test, send to the nurse's isolation room, below 100F, proceed.
- Conduct verbal school attestation This should be in addition to your traditional school attestation.
- Provide DOH Testing Registration Questionnaire on clipboard with pen.

Reminder:
- We should only be testing asymptomatic individuals who pass the attestation, if the individual fails attestation, then s/he should be sent home and referred to a doctor.

Supplies:
- Pre-Test Screening Questions, Test Registration Form (English, Spanish), polycarbonate desk shield (if available), clipboards & pens, touchless Thermometer

Station 2 - Welcome and Check-in
Personnel Needs: One Staff Member (clerical, admin, nurse); should be a friendly, familiar face to students & staff.
PPE Requirement: Staff must wear a face covering, desk shield (if available).
Function:
- Welcome and thank individuals for coming in for testing.
- Check off on roster or sign-in sheet, and check for Consent Form. If staff have not yet completed one, provide and collect signed form. Add name to roster if not already on.
- If no consent form is on file, students cannot test unless they're 18 yrs old and can consent for themselves. Request parental consent.

Supplies: Laptop, wifi access, Roster, sign-in sheet, extra paper consent forms, pens, forehead thermometer, large hand sanitizer, polycarbonate desk shield (if available)

Stations Necessary to Facilitate School-Based Testing

Station 3 - Pre-Test Waiting Area (Can be Combined with Station #4)

Personnel Needs: n/a
PPE Requirement: Those sitting in the waiting area should have a face covering.
Function: Individuals wait here to be called to have test administered.
Supplies: Chairs should be spaced six feet apart in all directions.

Station 4 - Testing (Swabbing and Reagent)

Personnel Needs: Medical Professional; Nurse, EMT under supervision of an RN
PPE Requirement: Full PPE Required; gown, gloves, Test-fitted N-95 mask, secondary facemask covering and face shield.
Function:

- Invite individuals waiting to be tested to sit at swabbing station table.
- Complete appropriate section on bottom of form of Test Registration Form.
- Review process of the swab; five circles just inside the tip of each nostril.
- Collect the sample.
- Place swab on test card at Station 6 that has reagent waiting, hand paperwork to Station 6 along with it.
- Send student/staff to Post-Test Waiting Area to wait 15 min for results; tell them their name will be called when ready.
- Disinfect or change gloves.

Supplies: Scissors, hand sanitizer, boxes of gloves, test swabs provided by State

Stations Necessary to Facilitate School-Based Testing

Including: Personnel, Procedures and Supply/Equipment Needs

Station 5 - Post-Test Waiting Area

Personnel Needs: District Runner (any staff member)

PPE Requirement: Those sitting in the waiting area should have a face covering.

Function: Individuals wait to be called to have the test read and education given.

Supplies: Chairs should be spaced six feet apart in all directions

Station 6 - Reagent Table

Personnel Needs: Medical Professional (Nurse, EMT under Supervision of an RN)

PPE Requirement: Full PPE Required; gown, gloves, N95, secondary facemask covering and faceshield

Function:

- Prepare a testing card with 6 individual drops of the Reagent.
- After Nurse from Station 4 places swab on card, close card and begin 15 minute timer; place timer and test in basket (requires 1 timer per test).
- Review paperwork; confirm correct information and complete to this point.
- Prepare COVID Result Form
- Place the basket with paperwork, test card /swab and timer on Station 6.

Supplies: Minimum of 25 egg timers or stop watches (for timing 15 minutes), small baskets to place the tests in while waiting, test cards & reagents, registration paperwork, test result form, pens, COVID Result Form

For capacity issues, Station 4 & 6 could be combined

Stations Necessary to Facilitate School-Based Testing
Including: Personnel, Procedures and Supply/Equipment Needs

Station 7 - Test Reading and Education
Personnel Needs: RN
PPE Requirements: Full PPE Required; gown, gloves, Fit-Tested N-95, secondary facemask covering and face shield
Function:
- After 15 minute timer goes off, read the result of the test.
- Record the result on registration paperwork and on the test results form.
- Runner retrieves individual from Post-Test Waiting Area; escorts to Station 7.
- Prepare the COVID-19 Test Results Form.
- If invalid result, Runner brings individual back to Station 3 with paperwork for a new swab test at the direction of the RN.
- If valid result, Runner brings individual to sit for results and education;
  - **Positive Individual** - Informed of their result and immediately transported to existing isolation room, begin standard COVID Symptom protocol and send student/staff home with referral to their doctor. Begin contract tracing.
  - **Negative Individual** - Informed of their result, provided with the Test Result Form and given Education by the Nurse and released.
- Consider providing rewards, (stickers, lollipops), to younger children

Supplies: Pens, stapler, rewards , COVID-19 Test Results Form, CDC Education English; CDC Education Spanish; CDC What Results Mean; Suffolk Testing Sites

If the individual is a student, the District should request the results so they can be securely provided to the parent/guardian to avoid an unsecured medical record in the building.

Station 8 - ECLRS Data Entry
Personnel Needs: Clerical, admin with NYS HCS/ECLRS authorization
PPE Required: Face covering
Function:
- Enter registration information of individual into ECLRS system.
- Individual data entry personnel need to be given credentials in the ECRLS system (email knaninni@esboces.org with name and email of proposed individual ASAP).

Supplies: One laptop with wifi access per data entry clerk

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