

Cluster Action Initiative Required Testing – FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions about the Micro-Cluster Strategy

Q: What is the New York State Cluster Action Initiative?

A: Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Department of Health (DOH) instituted a [Micro-Cluster Strategy](#) on October 21, 2020, that uses data and factors to identify areas where clusters of COVID-19 may be occurring, assigning them as Red, Orange or Yellow Cluster Zones, and implementing appropriate recommendations and restrictions based on their rating.

Q: Why are we required to test students and staff in order to keep our schools open for in-person learning?

A: The [New York State Cluster Action Initiative](#) requires schools to test students and staff in order to remain open for in-person learning.

Q: What are the testing requirements if our school is identified as being part of a yellow cluster zone?

A: If our schools are in a geographical area that is identified as a yellow zone by the DOH, school buildings would remain open and there would be random testing of 20% of the combined in-person staff and student population 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 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.

Q: What are the testing requirements if our school is identified as being part of an orange or red cluster zone?

A: If our schools are in a geographical area that is identified as an orange or red zone by the DOH, school buildings may remain open with monthly testing of 20% (orange) and 30% (red) of their combined in-person students and staff.

Q: How will the sample of in-person students and staff to be tested be selected?

A: The testing sample will be randomly selected electronically.

Q: Will Universal pre-K students be included in the sample of in-person students and staff to be tested?

A: No.

Q: Can a student or staff member be selected twice as part of the sample of in-person students and staff to be tested?

A: Per DOH guidelines, individuals can only be part of a testing sample again after five weeks have passed.

Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Testing

Q: How will we be notified if we (staff) or our child have been chosen for random testing?

A: As with all important districtwide notifications, **you will be contacted via email** if you or your child are selected to be tested. Parents are encouraged to make sure that their contact information in the Infinite Campus Parent Portal is up-to-date. Information on [how to update your contact information can be found here](#).

Q: What COVID-19 test will the district be using?

A: BinaxNow Rapid Testing Kits will be utilized to test. This test is a quick, less invasive nasal swab that can be easily administered.

Q: How long does it take to get test results back?

A: These are rapid tests and results are available in 15 minutes.

Q: Who will facilitate the testing?

A: Our partner, House MD, will provide teams of experienced medical assistants, registered nurses and physician assistants to carry out the rapid testing on-site.

Q: What is the test for COVID-19 like?

A: House MD has created the following short video to demonstrate how easy and non-invasive this test is. [\(LINK\)](#)

Q: Where will testing take place?

A: Testing will take place in our gymnasiums.

Q: Will students and staff be screened prior to testing?

A: Yes, just like on a normal school day, students and staff will be required to fill out the daily screening from prior to entering a district building for their test.

Q: Can parents be there when their child is being tested?

A: Due to the capacity restrictions in our buildings, we cannot permit parents to be present when students are being tested.

Q: Does the district need consent to test a child?

A: Yes. In advance of any need for COVID-19 testing, we will be sending out a form asking for parental consent to have your children participate in this state-required testing. We ask that you please take the time to fill out this form. If you do not consent and your child is selected for the random testing, you will be able to take them on your own to have a COVID-19 test and to submit the test results to the district.

Q: How much will the test cost me as a parent or staff members?

A: All costs to provide the in-district testing will be covered by the state and district. If you choose to get a COVID-19 test on your own through a different medical provider, you would be responsible for the cost.