

Rapid Response Testing

Local school officials, after consultation with public health authorities, will be able to request a state sponsored mobile testing unit to test a group of students and/or staff when a potential cluster of COVID-19 cases has been identified and transmission occurred within the school

- The purpose of the mobile rapid response unit is to provide testing of asymptomatic individuals who are not known to be a close contact, when there is evidence that COVID-19 transmission may have occurred within a classroom or school in the past 14 days
- School administrators must contact their local board of health before reaching out to the Department of Public Health. The mobile response unit can be requested by a school administrator or the local board of health and may be deployed by the COVID-19 COVID Response Center after consultation with a DPH epidemiologist
- Any youth under the age of 18 must have the written approval of their parent or legally authorized representative in order to be tested
- DESE and DPH will put out detailed guidance in the coming weeks on how and when testing can be requested, as well as testing and resulting protocols
- Students who develop COVID-19 symptoms or who are close contacts should be tested by their healthcare provider or at a COVID-19 testing [site](#). Testing for symptomatic individuals and close contacts is covered by insurance with no out-of-pocket costs. If an individual does not have insurance testing, it is the responsibility of the health care provider to bill through the federal portal.
- *School administrators should consult with public health authorities to determine if a request for mobile testing should be made. The mobile response team would be deployed if the following minimal conditions applied:*
 - staff if two or more students/staff within the classroom group develop COVID-19 within 14 days and transmission/exposure occurred in the classroom
 - if more than 3% of the cohort/grade (at least 3 individuals) develop COVID-19 within 14 days and transmission/exposure occurred in the school
 - if more than 3% of the school develops COVID-19 within 14 days and there is evidence of transmission within the school
 - if 3 or more staff within the same school develop COVID-19 within 14 days and there is evidence of transmission among the staff
 - if two or more students on the bus develop COVID-19 within 14 days

Stop the Spread

The Stop the Spread (STS) initiative was launched on July 10th. STS is a data-driven initiative that currently provides free testing in 20 communities, through September 12th, that have high rates of COVID-19. The Stop the Spread initiative will be extended through Sept. 30 in select municipalities with the highest rates of COVID 19.

Over the summer, there were a handful of positive cases among staff members teaching summer classes in a few communities. Those school districts were able to handle it quickly and prevent further spread.

Across the Commonwealth, schools will open in a few weeks, and we will be ready to handle positive cases with testing and contact tracing.