



ELC Reopening Schools Testing Plan

Recipient

CO

ELC Reopening Schools: COVID-19 Award Reporting

Updated ELC Reopening Schools funding guidance now explicitly includes both detection and prevention of COVID-19 in schools, with a continuing focus on screening testing as a mitigation strategy. Recipients are expected to utilize CDC guidance to implement the appropriate strategies for detecting and mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in K-12 schools. All recipients must provide support to districts for the explicit purpose of implementing screening testing as advised by CDC guidance. **Below are the questions that recipients are being asked to answer to provide details about Fall 2021 K-12 plans. Responses should be entered into REDCap no later than September 10, 2021.**

Fall 2021 K-12 Testing Plan Details

Key Contacts

1. In addition to the Project Director, who is serving as lead for the ELC Reopening Schools activities within your jurisdiction?

Name	Title	Email	Phone
Edward (Ed) Piersa	Program Manager	edward.piersa@state.co.us	720.281.9496

Roles/Responsibilities

2. Please describe how your health department coordinates with the Department(s) of Education or equivalent within your jurisdiction and what the roles and responsibilities are for each as related to the activities in the updated ELC Reopening Schools guidance.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) coordinates with the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) frequently via meetings. Information is shared between the two departments.

CDPHE oversees all activities related to the School Screening Testing Program and works closely with CDE on aspects of the program related to assistance with communications to school leadership and disbursement of financial support to participating schools.

CDPHE proposes to utilize CDE for the disbursement of \$9,969,400.80 for COVID-19 screening testing financial support to participating schools districts, Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI), private schools, and tribal schools. CDE has established funding disbursement capabilities with these entities.

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3. Please describe the role your health department plays in directing and managing the activities related to this award and check all that apply below.

CDPHE oversees all activities related to this award from establishing contracts with contractors who provide the Full Service and Direct Ship Testing at schools, to enrolling schools, to coordinating with schools, to ensuring incentives are provided.

Suggested Character Limit: 1000

The health department provides:

- Guidance on detection and prevention of COVID-19 in K-12 schools (Please indicate who guidance is provided to below)
 - Technical assistance (Please describe below)
 - Staff (Please list the type of staff support (e.g., school nurses) below)
 - Funding (Please indicate how districts receive funding below)
 - Reimbursement of expenses (Please indicate whether reimbursement occurs by invoice, ClassWallet, etc. below)
 - Supplies
 - Centralized support for testing (e.g., management of a vendor contract for testing)
 - Other (Please describe below)
-
- Directly to school districts
 - Directly to schools (Please indicate the type of schools below)
 - Directly to Local Health Departments
-
- Public
 - Charter
 - Private
 - Tribal

[Continuation] The health department provides guidance on detection and prevention of COVID-19 in K-12 schools, including:

[Continuation] The health department provides guidance on detection and prevention of COVID-19 in K-12 schools directly to schools, including:

[Continuation] Please list the type of staff support provided by the health department:

CDPHE provides staffing via a contracted testing vendor to those schools who select the full service implementation model. These contract staff are present at the school to implement testing.

Suggested Character Limit: 1000

[Continuation] Please indicate how districts receive funding from the health department:

Participating school districts, the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI), private, and tribal schools will receive \$2.50 for each COVID-19 test that is administered and reported through this program. School districts or schools will receive financial support retroactively and on a monthly basis. For example, in October, a participating school district or school will receive the financial support of \$2.50 per test for tests that were administered in September. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) will be working closely with school districts and schools to deliver this financial support. The financial support payments are designed to reimburse schools for their administrative costs related to the testing in schools program including but not limited to staff or contractor time and communications resources.

Suggested Character Limit: 1000

[Continuation] Please indicate whether reimbursements from the health department occurs by invoice, ClassWallet, etc.:

Contractors will submit invoices for payment for services/supplies provided.

Suggested Character Limit: 1000

Approach and Implementation

4. According to [CDC guidance](#), decisions regarding implementation of screening testing in K-12 schools should be informed by community transmission levels of COVID-19. Please describe your overall plan for supporting school districts' implementation plans to detect, prevent, and control COVID-19 in K-12 schools and how screening testing is included as a part of those plans.

<https://covid19.colorado.gov/practical-guide-for-operationalizing-cdc-school-guidance>

Because many students have yet to be vaccinated and students under 12 are not yet eligible, we must continue to remain vigilant, take important mitigation steps that can reduce transmission of COVID-19, and address outbreaks in a safe and thoughtful manner. Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) will adopt and elaborate upon CDC school guidance, which was released on July 9, 2021.

This guide to operationalizing CDC guidance is

aimed at disease control and minimizing the risk of exposure in education settings. But, we know students' wellness extends well beyond just disease control. Schools, educators, parents, and students must balance all of the needs of our students in order to achieve wellness and create a productive learning environment. With this in mind, the state has let all statewide school-based health orders and mandates expire and instead has adopted a guidance model designed to empower local public health and local leaders to protect their communities using the mitigation strategies most appropriate to local conditions. The guidance provides practical tools to assess the risks of COVID-19 and minimize those risks. The guidance does not constitute statewide requirements, but instead outlines evidence-based best practices for local governments and schools to implement together to manage the next stage of the pandemic. The state continues to recommend a layered approach of best practices to COVID-19 prevention. This outline of best practices describes in detail in the Back to School Roadmap, including ventilation, maximization of outdoor activities, mask-wearing, testing, spacing, cohorting, symptom screening, cleaning and disinfecting, and handwashing. It also includes information for local public health agencies, schools, and parents about community transmission and layered precautions.

Suggested Character Limit: 2000

5. Is your health department providing recommendations to districts that align with current [CDC guidance](#) for screening testing?

- Yes
 No

6. Please describe the data being collected, evaluated, or analyzed that inform decisions for scaling up/down testing in schools.

Our voluntary program requires that enrolled schools make testing available to all students and staff who provide. The Full Service program includes once a week testing, the Direct Ship program recommends once a week testing, but allows schools to test on a cadence determined by the school. In addition to the data fields that are required for Colorado's Electronic Lab Reporting (name, dob, race, gender, etc), the data that is being collected includes:

Grade, County, School name, school code, school district, district code, collection date, test result, test name, test type, school users with active consent, total students tested, total staff tested, PCR follow up conducted total.

By collecting these data fields, CDPHE is able to better understand and analyze disease transmission at each school. Based on positivity rates and number of outbreaks per school, CDPHE will be able to implement diagnostic PCR testing, scale up testing more broadly in the school, or make additional disease control recommendations to the Local Public Health Agency and school leadership.

Suggested Character Limit: 1000

7. Is outreach and/or support to schools or school districts prioritized in any way, for example, by utilizing Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) or areas of low vaccination coverage?

- Yes
 No

8. What type of screening tests will be offered? Please check all that apply.

- Rapid antigen tests
 NAAT/PCR tests
 Pooled PCR tests

[Continuation] If rapid antigen tests will be provided, will reflex testing be offered?

- Yes
 No

9. Please briefly describe actions taken when a positive test result is obtained.

CDPHE's contractors provide the notification of the rapid test results to the parents/guardians via email/text/phone, and in the case of a positive result, the Contractor will inform the school nurse/school POC. The individual schools determine next steps based on local public health recommendations or orders, as well as state guidance.

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10. Understanding that conditions may evolve and participation may change, how many school districts do you estimate will be willing to participate in screening testing by the end of September 2021?

# of school districts offering screening testing to students & staff	Total # of school districts	Proportion of school districts offering screening testing
50	178	28.1 %

11. Assuming community transmission rates indicate screening testing in schools would be recommended, please note the individual(s) that would be tested and the frequency.

Individuals included in testing (Select all that apply)	Testing frequency (Times per week)
Staff: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Staff tested <input type="text" value="1"/> /week
Students: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Students tested <input type="text" value="1"/> /week
Athletes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Athletes tested /week
Other (Please Describe below): <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="text"/>	Other tested /week

12. Scalability/flexibility - Will schools have the option to opt-in or opt-out of screening testing at any point during the school year?

- Yes
- No

[Continuation] If yes, what is the process and the approximate time-frame for onboarding a new district or adding schools within a district?

Approximately, 10 days for full service, 5 days for direct ship. Once enrollment is complete and MOUs are signed, CDPHE provides a warm introduction between the contractor and the school. The school must provide the times to meet with the contractor. The process for opting out is 14 day notification.

Suggested Character Limit: 1000

13. Is support to schools or school districts prioritized in any way, for example, by utilizing SVI or areas of low vaccination coverage?

- Yes
- No

14. Are you aware of any school districts within your jurisdiction that are planning to hold testing events associated with this award?

- Yes
- No

[Continuation] If yes, will the events be offering testing to community members and/or family members?

- Yes
- No

15. Will diagnostic testing be offered?

- Yes
- No

[Continuation] If so, what type of diagnostic tests will be offered? Please check all that apply.

- Rapid antigen tests
- NAAT/PCR tests

16. What mechanisms (contractual, jurisdiction-provided, etc.) will the recipient use to implement screening testing? Please check all that apply.

- Jurisdiction contracts with vendors for a menu of testing options. The school districts can choose the jurisdiction-contracted vendor that best suits their needs.
- Jurisdiction provides testing supplies for schools to use to implement their own testing program.
- Jurisdiction awards funds to school districts (or Local HDs), who are then responsible for establishing their own contracts for testing services.
- Jurisdiction will reimburse school districts for testing services and/or supplies
- Other (Please describe below)

17. What mechanisms will the recipient use to support schools that are implementing diagnostic and/or screening testing programs? Please check all that apply.

- Personnel hired at the jurisdiction but assigned to a local health department or school district
- Funding provided to local health department to support staff

[Optional] Please include any context relevant to your response to Question 17.

Colorado is contracting with 2-4 vendors who are experts in operationalizing testing. Through these state-contracted vendors, CDPHE is providing all necessary resources for schools to implement weekly screening testing. There are two options:

Full Service: State contractor provides all services needed to implement screening testing including staffing, collecting/tracking parental consent, registration, supplies, sample collection, and reporting. This option requires minimal assistance for school personnel.

Direct Ship: State contractor provides all screening testing supplies, use instructions, reporting portal for consent collection, and screening testing implementation by the school. The school administers the screening tests, reports results, and manages the program for the students and staff.

The Full Service option provides schools and districts with the staffing/personnel needed to implement testing.

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18. Have you provided guidance regarding how results should be communicated to the health department?

- Yes
- No

[Continuation] Please briefly describe.

Results must be reported through Colorado's Electronic Lab Reporting System - within 24 hours for antigen tests and within 36 hours for PCR follow up tests.

Suggested Character Limit: 1500

19. Are you providing any incentives to encourage participation in screening testing?

- Yes
- No

[Continuation] If so, select all that apply.

- Monetary incentives (e.g., gift cards for individuals that get tested)
- Non-monetary or motivational incentives (e.g., relaxing certain prevention strategies requirements as long as a certain threshold of testing is met).

[Continuation] Monetary (e.g., gift cards for individuals that get tested) - Please Describe

\$25 for initial tests, \$10 for each additional tests, no more than one incentive per week. Incentives will be provided early in the month for the prior month's test events. Gift cards will be shipped to students' homes and gift cards are reloadable. School staff are not eligible for incentives.

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20. Are you evaluating the use of your incentives?

- Yes
- No

[Continuation] If so, please describe.

CDPHE will utilize a contractor (selected through a competitive procurement process) to manage the incentive program and issue incentives to students who have been tested. This contractor will not issue any student incentives without first receiving monthly student testing reporting from CDPHE. Furthermore, CDPHE will create safeguards for this program with a fiscal and program monitor that will audit reported test encounter numbers with issued gift cards.

CDPHE will work closely with the incentive management vendor to ensure gift cards are reloaded based on reported test results. CDPHE has hired an incentive lead to manage this aspect of the program, as well as a programmatic and fiscal monitor.

To evaluate if the incentive program is resulting in higher rates of screening testing in school settings, CDPHE will conduct the following data analyses described below. Results of these analyses will be presented to leadership to guide the use of incentives throughout the school year:

--Analyze screening testing rates to see how schools with incentives compare to schools using programs without incentives, and compare 2021-2022 school year testing to participation rates during the 2020-2021 school year.

--Track the number of students performing screening testing each week (at the aggregate and individual level) to monitor trends over time and determine if incentives are encouraging students to regularly test

--For the second semester of the 2021-2022 school year (January - June 2022), work with the CDPHE COVID-19 Surveillance and Data Team and Immunization Team to look at local (county level) incidence rates and school-aged child vaccination rates to identify communities where screening testing would be most impactful. Continued screening testing and offering incentives in areas with high incidence rates and/or low rates of vaccination will be proposed to leadership as a priority for continued testing and prioritization if demand is higher than originally predicted.

Suggested Character Limit: 1000

21. Please rank the observed barriers to school districts implementing screening testing within your jurisdiction, with "1" signifying the most frequently observed or most significant barrier.

Barriers	Rank (1= most frequently observed or significant barrier)
Lack of parental support	1 ▼
Lack of governmental and/or political will	4 ▼
COVID-19 Fatigue	3 ▼
Other (please describe): <input data-bbox="138 686 884 732" type="text" value="lack of school district willingness to participate"/>	2 ▼
Other (please describe): <input data-bbox="138 800 884 846" type="text"/>	▼
Other (please describe): <input data-bbox="138 914 884 959" type="text"/>	▼

22. Are you currently participating in HHS' Operation Expanded Testing?

- Yes
 No

23. Together with local public health officials, school administrators should consider multiple factors when they make decisions about implementing layered prevention strategies against COVID-19. What other prevention strategies are you encouraging or promoting in your guidance to school districts?

Colorado recommends schools administrators should take a layered approach for mitigation. CDPHE provides comprehensive guidance that aligns with CDC guidance, and is available for review here - <https://covid19.colorado.gov/practical-guide-for-operationalizing-cdc-school-guidance>.

Specifically, CDPHE is promoting:

- *Masking
- *Increased physical distancing
- *Serial COVID-19 testing
- *Contact tracing
- *Targeted quarantining
- *Limiting high risk activities
- *Getting a vaccine as soon as possible
- *Encouraging students and staff to stay home when sick or potentially contagious
- *Improving indoor ventilation
- *Practicing good hand and respiratory hygiene
- *Appropriate cleaning of shared spaces and objects

Suggested Character Limit: 1000

24. Please describe any success stories related to ELC Reopening Schools that you would like to highlight.

Colorado is very happy with the interest and participation we are seeing in the program. To date, 584 schools have expressed interest from 43 counties in the state. We also have interest and authorization from 50 school districts, an indication that school leaders are supportive of this program. The program launched on September 7th successfully.

Suggested Character Limit: 1000

[Optional] Please upload any additional materials you would like to share with us.

Form Status

Complete?

Complete 

