

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| DATE: | September 2, 2021 |
| SUBJECT: | COVID-19 Testing Availability Reminder |
| CATEGORY: | Informational |
| NEXT STEPS: | Share information with students' families |

This To the Administrator Addressed letter provides information for school systems to share with parents related to the availability of testing sites in schools and/or in the community.

With the surge in the COVID-19 Delta variant, we know that schools and parents are in need of COVID-19 testing, and nearly all school systems are providing testing in some form. If your school system is not providing testing, we encourage you to enroll in the [K-12 COVID-19 Testing Program](#).

We also know many students may need testing that is beyond your capacity to provide, and we wanted to share some resources to support that.

- 1) **Local testing:** There are many local testing options. The state has an [interactive map](#) that is updated daily and lists statewide COVID-19 testing sites that we encourage you to become familiar with and share with your students' parents.
- 2) **Federally funded programs for local governments to provide testing:** Additionally, some cities and counties have been receiving reimbursement for testing they provide via two federal funding sources: *Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)* and *Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CLFRF) – American Rescue Plan Act*. LEAs can reach out to their local county/city government to find out if federally funded or otherwise funded testing programs are available to partner with your school system

Finally, we'd like to note that in some cases, parents are choosing or being directed to go to community sites to obtain testing, including local hospital emergency rooms. These emergency rooms are reporting concerns with capacity to serve true emergencies, and, to help alleviate this issue, we are asking that you suggest other options to families that will preserve emergency room capacity.

We would appreciate your support in making parents aware of their options when it comes to COVID-19 testing. After this letter, you will find a sample communication to parents regarding COVID-19 test availability, and we ask that you adapt and share this letter with the parents in your district to inform them of local testing options. You can find an editable Microsoft Word template of the letter below linked on our [website](#).

Additionally, beginning September 15th and continuing through the end of SY 21-22, the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and TEA will be supporting school-based COVID-19 testing activities through the work of vendors funded by an \$800 million federal grant. More info will be provided on September 9 regarding the vendors and services that will be available, but:

- Schools will register with TEA to participate in the program.
- Schools will be provided a list of COVID-19 testing providers and will choose the provider that meets their needs.

- Schools will be provided COVID-19 tests from their selected provider using an allocation amount determined by DSHS and TEA.
 - Providers will bill DSHS directly, so school systems are not required to enter into contracts with COVID-19 testing providers.
 - A grant program will also be available to provide funds for LEAs to contract for additional services or products in testing, ventilation, and vaccination access.
 - Schools will continue to report data consistent with current reporting.
-

Dear [DISTRICT] Parents,

In [DISTRICT], we are committed to doing all we can to keep staff and students healthy and safe. If your child needs to have a COVID-19 test performed, below are some options for testing locally:

- [if your LEA is participating in the K-12 COVID-19 Testing Project and those tests are available at parent request, provide information on how to access them here.]
- The state has an [interactive map](#) that is updated daily and lists statewide COVID-19 testing sites.
- [List any other local option you are aware of that you would like to share with your school community]

This [link](#) will also help you identify vaccine availability, as well as therapeutic providers throughout Texas, should those be necessary.

We encourage you not to use your local hospital emergency room for this purpose, which can cause additional burdens on the hospital system during a challenging time, and instead use one of the local options listed above.

Thank you again for helping keep our students and community safe.

Sincerely,
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT