

November 12, 2020

Dear Vermont Educators:

As you may be aware, State of Vermont will be offering regular COVID-19 testing to all teachers and staff in Vermont SD/SUs and some independent schools, beginning next week. We are working directly with your school district leadership to implement this testing, and superintendents will be the primary authority for implementing this testing in their districts. These tests are voluntary, and it is your choice if you want to participate. You will receive a link from your district leadership to allow you to sign up for a testing event at your district or your school. You may have received this registration link already.

We are pleased to be able to offer this testing, as we know that many of you have been requesting it. We hope that this testing may offer you increased peace of mind, but please do not be concerned that this testing initiative reflects that you and other school staff are at particularly high risk for contracting COVID-19. School staff have been selected for this surveillance testing as part of a larger public health strategy. School staff represent a large group of individuals in an organized setting who are proportionally distributed throughout Vermont and reflect the makeup of our communities. This makes you an ideal population to provide a clear, statewide picture of COVID-19 activity. In short, while we hope this testing will be helpful to you, please also know that by choosing to participate you are helping all Vermonters in the fight against COVID-19.

Because this is a surveillance test, you will not need to quarantine; you should go about your daily activities as normal. If you test positive, contact tracers from the Vermont Department of Health will contact you provide you with more information about what you should do next. If you test negative, you will receive results by email within three days. Your district will not receive any information about your test results from the Health Department unless contact tracing determines you were infectious while at school.

Please note that this testing in no way alters any of the key prevention strategies that schools have implemented during the pandemic, including avoiding non-essential travel and out-of-school gatherings and staying home if you feel ill.

What to Expect from Testing

Your district will operate one or more testing sites, and will provide you with a registration link, as well as information about when and where the testing will occur. Additionally, the district will let you know the deadline by which you must register. Please note that because the State will assemble these test kits in advance,



walk in testing is not possible. The test kits are “self-administered,” which means that, after you collect your kit, you can go to another location, such as a classroom or your car, to collect the sample on your own. The kits include instruction materials, and we will also provide information sheets to your district to help you know what to expect. You will be asked to blow your nose, use hand sanitizer, swab your nostril (to collect the sample), and seal the swab in a small collection tube. Your test does not need to be performed by a medical provider, and you can collect the sample privately (i.e. you do not need to be observed collecting the sample).

Please note that you **must return** the test kits to your district’s testing site on the same day in order for us to conduct the test. Please follow any directions from your district, your COVID-19 coordinator or school nurse, or other test site staff, and be sure to return your kit promptly for collection.

Thank you very much for participating in this important testing. With your help, we will be able to increase our testing in every community around Vermont and get a good picture of how COVID-19 is spreading throughout our state. I am very grateful for your efforts on behalf your students, your fellow staff and your communities – on behalf of the Agency of Education, the Department of Health, and all of our other state government partners, thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,



Dan French
Secretary of Education

