



K-12 COVID-19 Testing Project FAQ

Updated November 19, 2020



Opt-in Application Process

1. What is the eligibility requirement for our school to submit an opt-in application for testing?

- Eligibility: School systems are only eligible to receive this testing support if they are providing on campus instruction to all of the students who wish to attend on campus, currently or within the next two weeks.

2. Are permission slips required to administer tests on students or staff?

- Permission slips are not required for individuals over 18 years old.
- Permission slips for students under 18 years old are required. You can find a sample permission slip within [TEA's Public Health Orders Card](#), which lays out all the basic information needed to register an individual for a test. If your school is using a QR system to streamline the test registration process, a shortened permission slip might be more appropriate.
- Much of the information provided on the permission slip will be needed to appropriately register an individual for test administration.

3. Do we have to use the tests in a specific way or on specific populations?

- It is recommended that school systems conduct testing in two ways:
 - **Targeted Testing**
 - Test administrators may conduct testing on staff or students who present symptoms of COVID-19 while on campus
 - All test administrators must receive a parental authorization form for any individual under 18 years of age to be tested
 - **Screening**
 - At every participating K-12 public and private school campus in a Trauma Service Region with a COVID-19 hospitalization rate under seven (7) %, school system test administrators may conduct testing on all campus staff every four (4) weeks.
 - At every participating K-12 public and private campus in a Trauma Service Region with a COVID-19 hospitalization rate from seven percent up to fifteen percent, school system test administrators may conduct testing on all campus staff every TWO (2) weeks.
 - At every participating K-12 public and private school campus in a Trauma Service Region with a COVID-19 hospitalization rate at or above fifteen percent, school system test administrators may conduct testing on all campus staff every week.
 - As the local/regional COVID-19 hospitalization rate changes, the school system coordinator will be notified of any change in test frequency for their campuses for the following month.
 - Each school system will, however, determine the testing strategy that will meet the needs of their schools within the following limitations:



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- All testing in school systems as a part of this program will be conducted on a voluntary basis;
- Tests will only be conducted on staff and students of the K-12 public or private school;
- No allocation of additional test materials and/or PPE is required beyond the monthly allocation;
- Individuals under the age of 18 will be required to have a signed legal guardian permission slip to conduct the test;
- All individuals conducting the testing will have complied with the training requirements outlined above;
- Individuals tested will not be charged for the test; and
- All results of the tests will be reported through the app.txrapidtest.org application.

4. What determines our test distribution allotment? Updated November 19, 2020

- The distribution will be based on various factors, including the availability of testing materials received from our federal partners and the number of school systems that have chosen to participate at that point in time.
- Initial Allocations will be based on the number of staff and students as well as the October 16th Trauma Service Region COVID-19 Hospitalizations as a percent of total hospitalizations. Trauma Service levels will be updated two weeks before the end of each month to determine the following month's allocation numbers.
- TEA provided TDEM with fall 2019-20 PEIMS counts which is the most recent data available at the state level. The staff counts include teaching staff, support staff, auxiliary staff, administrative staff, paraprofessional staff, auxiliary staff.
- For allocations starting with January, school systems will be required to have reported results for a minimum of 50% of the tests previously distributed prior to receiving a new allocation.

5. Is there a set number of tests that will go to the school testing program?

- The number of BinaxNOW test kits provided by the federal government and the level of participation in the program by school systems will determine the amount used in the K-12 testing effort. The BinaxNOW test kits will be provided to K-12 testing and will also be used to support other health initiatives across the state as needed.

6. How will tests kits and PPE be distributed to multi-region charter schools?

- Each Charter School System will designate one test coordinator and provide their contact information to TEA by emailing COVIDCaseReport@tea.texas.gov



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- Test coordinator will determine the test kit allocations to each of their geographical regions based on the total test kit allocation to the Charter School System
- Test coordinator will identify 1 location by region to which delivery of test materials and PPE will be made
- Test coordinator will notify TDEM logistics at k-12logs@tdem.texas.gov regarding the locations for delivery and coordinate the timing of the deliveries with TDEM and the Regional location.

7. Can we require a student or staff member to take the BinaxNOW test?

- Schools cannot mandate the use of the Abbott BinaxNOW Ag Card Tests on their staff or students.

8. Can I use these to test my athletes for extracurricular activities?

- TEA and TDEM are providing school systems with multiple testing strategies for their consideration. Ultimately, it will be up to the school system to determine which testing approach will be most beneficial on their individual campuses.
- Schools cannot mandate the testing for their student-athletes using the Abbott BinaxNOW Ag Card Tests.

9. Can relatives of school system employees or students be tested?

- Testing allotments are based upon staff and student counts. You must be a student or staff member employed by the school system, or a school board member to be eligible to receive testing. For every positive case, a whole household is potentially affected. Please refer those individuals to the TDEM and DSHS COVID-19 Test Collection Sites Map at <http://www.covidtest.tdem.texas.gov>.

10. Can we charge students or staff to take this test?

- No. These tests are being provided free of charge from the federal government, and school systems cannot charge for administering the tests.

11. My school system is in a region with a high hospitalization rate, will we get more tests?

- For the initial distribution TDEM will distribute one (1) test per staff member per month for each school system in TSA regions with Covid-19 Hospitalization Percentage below 7%
- For the initial distribution TDEM will distribute two (2) tests per staff member per month in TSA regions with Covid-19 Hospitalization Percentages at or above 7% and below 15%
- For the initial distribution TDEM will distribute four (4) tests per staff member per month in TSA regions with Covid-19 Hospitalization Percentage at or above 15%
- TDEM will distribute additional tests for Targeted testing of symptomatic and close contact individuals on campus at 5% of total staff and student counts

12. How long is this testing program slated to run?



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- The testing program duration will be dependent on the number of BinaxNOW test kits that are ultimately provided by our federal partners and the level of participation from school systems.

13. Are private schools required to report on the COVID Case Reporting form?

- No. Private schools are not required to use the DSHS COVID Case Report form.

14. Is the school system responsible for contact tracing of the tests administered?

- School systems should work with their local health authority to support contact tracing requirements.

15. I am a private school but do not appear on the current allocation list. Does this mean I cannot apply?

- All private schools are welcome to apply. The current list that is posted was our best effort at identifying private schools across the state. Please fill out the private school application and we will include your school in the system.

16. My school system or private school is not shown in the allocation, how many tests will I receive? **New November 19, 2020**

- The Texas Division of Emergency Management will calculate the number of tests that you will receive in the same fashion as the other schools and will notify you of the number of tests that you will receive separately.

17. If we are hybrid at high school, does this mean meet the eligibility requirements to opt into the testing project?

- Yes, hybrid instruction at a school meets the eligibility requirements for the testing project

18. Can we offer these tests to students who are currently choosing online learning if they come on campus to take the test?

- We recommend that you use these tests to facilitate greater levels of on-campus instruction. If bringing off-campus students in for testing is a step to increase on-campus instruction, that is consistent with the intent of the tests. School systems may choose to use the tests for students who will remain off-campus learners if the school system deems it otherwise necessary

What kind of test is this?

1. What type of rapid antigen tests will be provided by the state, who is the manufacturer?

- The state is using [Abbott BinaxNOW Ag Card Tests](#). These credit card-sized rapid tests can potentially be largely self-administered through a nasal swab and deliver results in 15 minutes.



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- The ABBOTT - BinaxNOW Antigen Immunoassay Test detects the presence of a specific viral antigen, which implies current viral infection. This test kit is a screening tool that identifies the presence of viral antigens (SARS-CoV-2) in the body.

2. What are the differences between an antigen, PCR and antibody test?

- The antigen tests identify the virus by detecting the proteins from the virus.
- The molecular test (RT-PCR) detects the virus's genetic material to see if you have an active coronavirus infection.
- An antibody test looks for antibodies that are made by your immune system in response to a threat.

3. Does a school system need to obtain their own Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendment (CLIA) authority to administer the tests?

- The Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) has obtained a CLIA waiver (#45D2193699) which allows for testing at multiple locations including school systems across the state. TDEM's CLIA information, along with the provider of record will automatically populate in the test registration system and should not have to be manually entered by test administrators.

4. Is there an expiration date or shelf life for the BinaxNOW Test?

- Tests have an expiration date that is printed on the outside of each box of test kits. The test kits have a six-month shelf life if stored between thirty-six (36) and eighty-six (86) degrees Fahrenheit.

5. How accurate is this type of test?

- [Abbott evaluated](#) its test in 102 patients who had shown COVID-19 symptoms for less than 7 days and compared the results with a PCR test . This analysis showed that BinaxNOW has a:
 - sensitivity (true positive rate) of 97.1%
 - specificity (true negative rate) of 98.5%.

6. Could this rapid test be used to shorten the 14-day quarantine period, or does the 14-day quarantine with close contact still stand as outlined by CDC regardless of the result of the test?

- A negative test cannot be used to shorten the stay-at-home period for an asymptomatic close contact, because that stay-at-home period covers the incubation period of the virus. During the entire 14-day quarantine period, an individual could potentially test negative and not have symptoms but still be incubating COVID-19.

Training

1. Do test administrators have to be medically trained?

- No, individual test administrators must complete the required training and report all results through txrapidtest.org.



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2. How do I obtain certification training?

- Certification Class: Only a certified test administrator is authorized to conduct the rapid ABBOTT - BinaxNOW test procedure.
- For non-medically trained personnel - [Covid-19 Testing Using the Abbott BinaxNOW Ag Card: \(Binax - 100 \)](#)
- For medically-trained personnel - [BINAXNOW Training Modules \(Binax - 200 \)](#)

3. I registered for the BinaxNOW Training, but the links are not active for the course. How do I access the course?

- Once you are registered for the course, click on the home button at the top left of the page. On the Home screen, you will see a list of "Registered Online Courses. Your BinaxNOW course should be listed and you will click on the link "Go To" beside the BinaxNOW course to access the training.

4. Who is the Test Coordinator?

- Test Coordinator: Each participating school system will identify one school Test Coordinator to TEA.
- One (1) single alternate contact is authorized to allow for continuity with the administration process.

5. Who will be administering the tests?

- Test Administrator: Only a certified test administrator is authorized to conduct the rapid ABBOTT - BinaxNOW test procedure
- Test administrators will be determined at the local level. A test administrator may be any individual identified by the school system who completes the required training and submits all testing results as required by state and federal law
- You do not need to identify the testing administrators to TEA or TDEM. The individual(s) identified by school systems will need to complete the training course *Covid-19 Testing Using the Abbott BinaxNOW Ag Card: (Binax - 100)* or the *BINAXNOW Training Modules (Binax - 200)* for medically trained personnel on www.preparingtexas.org. Upon successful completion, the test administrator's information will be automatically loaded into the reporting system within 24 hours, and they will be ready to begin testing.

6. Do we need to have a doctor's guidance or permission to perform these tests?

- Dr. Alex Lazar (https://faculty.mdanderson.org/profiles/alexander_lazar.html) has agreed to serve as the provider of record for the BinaxNOW tests in K-12. This information will be included in the data reported to DSHS on each individual's information and test results that are entered into the <https://app.txrapidtest.org/> portal by test administrators.

7. Can I contract out with a 3rd party provider (clinic, outside vendor) to perform our testing program?



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- Each school system can determine the testing logistics that make the most sense for them; however, third party providers are not allowed to collect a fee or copay for performing these services.

8. How many tests can be administered at once?

- This will largely be dependent upon the availability of test administrators identified by the school system and the testing logistics put in place at the local level.
- Depending on the population being tested, these tests can largely be self-administered for adults and older students. Tests must be reviewed and logged into the system within 15 minutes of administering the test.

9. If I need to change my test coordinator or alternate test coordinator, who should I tell? **New November 19, 2020**

- Please email COVIDCaseReport@tea.texas.gov with your school name and the contact information (name, email and cell phone number) of your new test coordinator and/or alternate.

Testing

1. Can staff and students enter the required information before they come in for a test?

- Yes. Have staff and students over 18 years of age go to: <https://register.txrapidtest.org/>. They will need to fill out the information required, and press submit. A QR code will be created that contains the information necessary to register. They may print out the QR Code, or take a picture on their phone to bring to the testing location.
- Legal guardians of students under 18 years of age may also use the QR Code generator for their children, but they must also provide a signed permission slip.

2. If a test administrator who successfully completed the training does not have a password for app.txrapidtest.org how can they get one?

- Select the "forgot password" link and follow the instructions.

3. How long does the test take?

- After the test is obtained using a sterile swab, the [ABBOTT - BinaxNOW Card](#) takes 15 minutes to return a result

4. How long after adding the reagent to the test card can I wait to insert the swab and conduct the test?

- Abbott Labs has indicated that the swab must be inserted into the card within 3 minutes of adding the reagent.

5. If I test (+) positive, do I have COVID-19?

- Presumptive Test: This test is only an indicator of the presence of the COVID-19 virus



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- A formal medical evaluation and certified laboratory verification would be necessary to indicate a confirmed infection
- Presumptive-positive results also do not rule out bacterial infection or co-infection not related to COVID-19. Please refer to the consultation form provided by Abbott.

6. Does this test identify the common cold or strep throat?

- No: This is a specific test for the COVID-19 virus SARS-CoV2

7. Can the card show a presumptive-positive before the time is up?

- The result can ONLY be evaluated after 15-minutes and NO LATER Than 30-minutes after collection to determine the result

8. Can a faint line indicate a presumptive positive result?

- Yes: Faint but still readable, results are considered to be conclusive results – positive or negative
- Inconclusive results will include the blue control line not changing, only the sample line is displayed, or no line displayed at all
- The test is to be re-taken and the test administrator notified of the inconclusive result

9. What do I do if the test card is defective?

- No adhesive strip on the right side of the card – Scan the card, enter no information, press 4 at the top of the screen, select “Test Not Performed” and submit. Throw the card away, and use a new card
- Plastic well for the reagent is absent– Scan the card, enter no information, press 4 at the top of the screen, select “Test Not Performed” and submit. Throw the card away, and use a new card
- The test strip itself is displaced– Scan the card, enter no information, press 4 at the top of the screen, select “Test Not Performed” and submit. Throw the card away, and use a new card
- If a significant number of cards are defective (more than 5), contact Abbott Labs Technical Support at 1-800-257-9525

10. What do I do if I forget to put the reagent solution into the card before the nasal swab?

- Scan the card, under results enter “Invalid”, and press submit. Throw the swab and card away and begin the test again with a new card and swab. You will need to re-enter the information for the individual to be tested.

11. What do I do if the control line never turns pink/purple?

- Scan the card, under results enter “Invalid”, and press submit. Throw the swab and card away and begin the test again with a new card and swab. You will need to re-enter the information for the individual to be tested.

12. Who is liable if a student or staff is injured by the testing?

- Consult your school system’s legal counsel.



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13. Are the used test kits and used PPE considered medical waste for disposal?

- The used Test Kits are considered Medical Waste and must be disposed of according to TCEQ guidelines which may be found here: <https://tdem.texas.gov/k-12testing/>.
- PPE used while handling and administering the rapid COVID test kits are not considered medical waste.

14. Can these tests be used on asymptomatic individuals?

- Yes. The Center for Medicare & Medicaid Studies will allow testing on asymptomatic individuals during the public health crisis.

15. Do N-95 masks need to be fit tested? If a N95 mask does not go through fit testing does that make it less effective than a surgical mask?

- OSHA respiratory protection standards require initial and thereafter, annual fit-testing of N95 or any other tight-fitting respirators for staff who may be required to it. During COVID-19 public health emergency, OSHA has temporarily applied enforcement discretion for annual-fit testing requirement, as long as employers have made good-faith efforts to comply with standards and steps outlined in April 8, 2020 memoranda (<https://www.osha.gov/memos/2020-04-08/expanded-temporary-enforcement-guidance-respiratory-protection-fit-testing-n95>). This enforcement discretion is also applicable when an employer switches to an equivalent-fitting make/model/size/style of N95 or another tight-fitting respirator without performing an initial fit test.
- As per [CDC/NIOSH](#), "*Under **serious outbreak conditions** in which respirator supplies are severely limited, however, you may not have the opportunity to be fit tested on a respirator before you need to use it. While this is not ideal, in this scenario, you should work with your employer to choose the respirator that fits you best, as, even without fit testing, a respirator will provide better protection than a facemask or using no respirator at all.*"

Reporting

1. How are test results shared with the individual being tested?

- As part of the test registration process, the individual or their guardian's phone number and email address are entered into app.txrapidtest.org. Once the test results are put in the system by the test administrator, a text message and email are autogenerated to notify the individual.
- There is no auto-generated report to let the school system know who and when someone tested positive. Test administrators will also have access to this information as they are inputting the test results and should work with their school system test coordinator to determine if an additional process is needed.



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2. What happens when someone tests positive at school?

- This is a process that will be determined at the local level. It is recommended that schools follow public health guidance from DSHS and the CDC and that any positive case be removed from the campus and seek a PCR test to confirm the positive result.

3. If a student or staff member receives a positive test results, should we direct them to get a PCR (molecular) lab-based test?

- Yes, this is a presumptive positive test and is a mechanism for schools to immediately identify presumptive positive cases. People receiving a positive test should consider obtaining a more formal PCR (molecular) lab-based test.

4. How is my personal information used?

- All personal Health information collected in registration and results will be handled under local, state and national privacy rules
- Individual Level registration and results information in the registration application will only be shared with the Department of State Health Services as required by Law.
- Aggregate level information without personally identifiable information may be shared with school systems and the public.

5. How is the reporting system accessed?

- Login and register for www.preparingtexas.org.
- Complete **COVID-19 Testing Using the Abbott BinaxNOW Ag Card: (Binax - 100)** Course on preparingtexas.org. (includes almost all staff with no medical training) or Complete the **BINAXNOW Training Modules (Binax - 200)** Course in preparingtexas.org if you are medically trained. (includes any staff that have licensed medical training).
- Individuals who successfully complete the **Abbott BinaxNOW Ag Card** course receive login information for the testing application at <https://app.txrapidtest.org>. The registration process may take up to twelve hours before it is active. You will need this APP to report the results from each test.

Results

1. Does the test information get shared with the local health department and DSHS or do school systems need to report these cases to the appropriate authority?

- TDEM, through our partner agency, Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council (STRAC), will report staff and student registration of individuals to be tested, the entering of test results, and the report of test results to the Texas Department of State Health Services
- As required by law, all results – negative, positive, and inconclusive - from testing shall be reported daily to the Department of State Health Services DSHS through the provided test portal system *Texas Rapid Test app* - <https://app.txrapidtest.org/>



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2. Will we need to report this on our current weekly COVID-19 Case Reporting Form? How will the state use the data?

- Yes, the [COVID-19 Case Reporting form](#) will be updated to include questions around testing and will be publicly reported on the current [Department of State Health Services Texas Public Schools COVID-19 Data page](#).

Equipment

1. What will we use to register/test/input information related to testing?

- Every test administrator will need an iPhone, iPad, or Android device to scan driver's license information, ABBOTT - Binax Now Test QR Code, and/or manually enter additional personal information regarding the individual to be tested.
- This is a web-based portal and not an application that will need to be downloaded on a device.

Ordering

1. What type of storage capacity is needed to accommodate these tests?

- There are 40 tests and one (1) reagent solution in a shoebox-sized box. The Binax Now test kits must be stored below 86 degrees Fahrenheit at all times in order to maintain integrity.

2. Will we receive PPE to conduct these tests?

- TDEM will provide PPE for test administration in the form of gowns, surgical masks, N-95 masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer. The PPE you receive as part of your testing program can only be used to support Abbott Binax Now test and will be required to be reported in a weekly inventory tracking system.

3. How do I order more test kits or PPE?

- Equipment: TDEM has an inventory system that school systems will be required to update weekly. Each school system will receive a monthly allotment of tests and PPE that school systems can use to administer as they see fit throughout the month.
- Any need for more test kits or Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) by a test administrator used only for testing purposes should be routed to your testing coordinator.
- Additional supplies will be provided on a monthly basis contingent upon availability of testing supplies and PPE.



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<https://arcp.is/1Xv1H8>



Miscellaneous

1. **If our district would like support in media response regarding the testing program, who can we contact?**
 - Press inquiries for TEA can be sent to covidcasereport@tea.texas.gov and press inquiries for TDEM can be sent to media@tdem.texas.gov – Both Press Offices are in regular communications and are available to provide assistance answering media inquiries.

2. **What fund and object code does my LEA record for the personal protective equipment (PPE) and Abbott BinaxNOW test kits received from TDEM? New November 19, 2020**
 - The district would record the PPE and test kits as revenue to fund 199 and object code 5829. Depending on the LEA's fiscal year end and when it receives the items, the LEA may record the PPE as inventory.

PPE Item	Avg Price Per Unit
Abbott BinaxNOW Test Kit	\$5.00
Gown	\$3.00
Surgical mask	\$0.45
N-95 mask	\$3.00
Gloves (sets)	\$14.25
Hand Sanitizer (gallons)	\$14.50