

# Phase One School-Based COVID-19 Testing/Screening Playbook for School Districts/Schools. Mississippi, September 7, 2021

## Introduction:

With funding from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) is supporting voluntary asymptomatic screening testing for COVID-19 in kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) school settings. The goal of this program is to slow the spread of COVID-19 in these settings and maintain in-person education through implementation of frequent serial testing of teachers/staff and students.

**Phase 1**-rapidly initiate school-based screening for the remainder of the school year and in school-sponsored summer activities through directly providing COVID-19 rapid tests kits to each school district. This is voluntary for both the school districts, and voluntary for students and teachers.

MSDH will implement the school-based screening in coordination with interested Mississippi School Districts on an individual basis in a phased approach, with the initial phase (**Phase 1**) intended to rapidly initiate school-based screening for the remainder of the school year and summer through the direct provision of COVID-19 rapid test kits by MSDH to each interested school district. MSDH will provide support to maintain this rapid initiative.

## Phase 1

To support the Phase 1 school-based testing initiative, MSDH and the individual School Districts will enter into an agreement with each District and to establish the responsibilities of each party, to accept the COVID-19 rapid test kits provided by MSDH, and for MSDH to provide financial support on a per test basis for each interested school district to successfully implement this program.

## Phase 1 Planning assumptions:

1. MSDH will provide Rapid Antigen Tests Kits to each school district based on enrollment/employee census.
2. Each School district will be required to receive a CLIA certificate of waiver to conduct the school-based screening utilizing the tests provided.
3. MSDH will facilitate CLIA waiver application and pay for the application fee.
4. MSDH will provide guidance on the recommended frequency and target population for screening.
5. Each school district will be required to report to MSDH aggregate testing data on the number of total tests conducted and total number of positive tests conducted weekly. MSDH is working on a solution to eliminate this requirement.
6. Each school district will be required to report to MSDH specific individual information for each positive and negative test conducted.
7. MSDH will provide support for both aggregate and individual test result reporting.
8. Each school district should identify individuals responsible for conducting the testing at each school.

9. Each school district should identify individuals responsible for reporting to MSDH.
10. Each school district will determine whether testing will be a requirement for school-sponsored extracurricular activities.
11. Through agreements with each school district, MSDH will provide reimbursement for each test conducted to support testing and reporting (may be personnel and other needs).
12. MSDH will provide access to training and training support.

## Section I—Tests

MSDH will provide BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card Tests to each school district interested in participating. This test is a rapid antigen test that provides rapid results in 15 minutes. Antigen tests can be an important tool in an overall community testing strategy to reduce transmission.

The BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card Tests do not require a medical professional to collect or conduct the tests. While a school district or school-based nurse is preferable, any staff member can be easily trained to conduct the tests.

The test is well tolerated by all age groups and uses a non-invasive collection procedure by inserting a swab a short way in the anterior nose.

Training and informational links:

- Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card Test Training and Training Videos  
<https://www.globalpointofcare.abbott/en/support/product-installation-training/navica-brand/navica-binaxnow-ag-training.html>
- Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card Test Product Insert  
<https://ensur.invmed.com/ensur/contentAction.aspx?key=ensur.523747.S2R4E4A3.20200905.10292.4363018>
- Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card Test Collection Information/Tech Tips
- [120007199 v01 BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card Nasal Swab Tec.pdf](#)

## Section II—CLIA Certificate of Waiver

In order for schools to perform COVID-19 screening with the BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card test, a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certificate of waiver must be obtained for each participating school district in order to perform tests that are categorized as simple laboratory examinations (see information at [CLIA Waiver by Application | FDA](#)). If your district has already obtained a CLIA certificate of waiver, your district does not need to reapply.

Instructions—Each interested school district should complete the attached the prefilled CLIA Certificate of Waiver Application as follows:

1. Complete only one application for each school district.
2. Complete only the highlighted demographic information on page 1.
3. Skip to page 5 and have someone from the school district administration office print, sign and date the highlighted section and return the entire application. This should be an original signature. (There are no requirements for a Director of Laboratory, just someone who will verify that the testing performed is waived).
4. When the applications are complete, please scan and email to [CLIA-MSDH@msdh.ms.gov](mailto:CLIA-MSDH@msdh.ms.gov) .

**MSDH will expedite the approval process and will pay for the application fee.** Each school district will receive notification when the CLIA certificate of waiver is approved. This process usually only takes a few days.

### **Section III—Screening Testing**

**MSDH recommends routine screening testing of all *asymptomatic unvaccinated* students, teachers, and staff as an additional measure to prevent further transmission.**

Screening testing can identify potential cases and prompt rapid isolation and quarantine of individuals exposed to COVID-19 who are not fully vaccinated.

Recommended algorithm for schools and school districts engaged in screening testing:

- Weekly screening of all interested **asymptomatic unvaccinated** teachers, staff, or students.
- Weekly screening of **asymptomatic unvaccinated** students (and teachers/coaches) participating in school sponsored extracurricular activities of any type, including sports, as a condition of participation (school district decision).
- **Schools receiving BinaxNOW Rapid Antigen tests through Phase 1 (see below) of the MSDH School Based Screening Testing Initiative may also utilize these tests to:**
  - **Test asymptomatic students/teachers and staff who are on quarantine at day 5, 6, or 7 of their quarantine period.**
  - **If the test is negative and the individual remains asymptomatic, they may return to the school setting after 7 days of quarantine.**
- **Considering the highly infectious Delta variant circulating and the increased impact on transmission, MSDH is NO LONGER RECOMMENDING a modified quarantine for exposed individuals with every other day testing as an option to continue in-person for exposed persons. All unvaccinated individuals exposed to COVID-19 are recommended to be quarantined and excluded from the school setting during the quarantine period.**
- **See the Mississippi State Department of Health Public Health K-12 Recommendations [Isolation, Contact Tracing, Quarantine, and Identifying Exposed Individuals](#) section for allowable alternatives to the full 14-day quarantine period in individual exposures.**

Additional Considerations:

- ***Fully vaccinated students and teachers/staff (2 weeks after completion of one-dose or two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series) do not require weekly asymptomatic screening.***
- Screening testing is not designed for symptomatic individuals. Any symptomatic student or teacher/staff should continue to be excluded from school/school district and be evaluated by their primary medical provider.

### **Managing Positive and Negative Tests in School Based Screening Testing**

Positive Screening Tests

- Asymptomatic individuals who test positive with screening test should be excluded from the school setting for 10 days from the date of the test as long as they remain asymptomatic. If they

develop symptoms, they should be excluded for a full 10 days from the onset of symptoms and are fever free for 24 hours before returning.

- Asymptomatic individuals with a positive rapid antigen test who have a negative molecular based COVID-19 test within 48 hours of the rapid positive do not require further exclusion and may return to the school setting. This only applies to molecular based tests (i.e., PCR) and does not include an additional antigen test or antibody tests.

#### Negative Screening Tests

- Asymptomatic individuals with a negative rapid screening test may continue in-person classes and extracurricular activities.

### **Section IV—Reporting**

Initially there will be two components of required reporting: aggregate test totals and individual test results for each person tested.

#### **Aggregate Test Reporting**

Each week, the participating school district will report the total number of tests conducted in the school district on teachers and students, and the total number of positives. This reporting will be through a survey monkey platform <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5DH67CP>

#### **Individual Test Result Reporting**

Reporting of individual results for all positive and negative tests is required and will be entered into the CDC data collection tool called Simple Report.

Simple Report allows each school district to create its own account as a facility. School districts may also choose to add schools as additional testing sites underneath the main school district account. Each school district that registers will need to identify an administrator for their account. Once this administrator is verified with Simple Report, they will be able to add additional users for the school district (facility) account as well as set up additional testing sites (schools).

Reporting through Simple Report provides several benefits to school districts:

- Once a school district or test site (school) is set up in Simple Report, the address, phone number, and other facility identifying information will pre-populate each report that is created.
- Once a student, teacher, or staff member is entered into Simple Report for the first time, that individual's demographic information (address, phone, DOB, etc.) will prepopulate anytime they are pulled up for re-testing.
- Lab reports (both positive and negative) that are documented in Simple Report will be sent automatically to MSDH to satisfy the individual lab test reporting for COVID-19.

Registering your school district for Simple Report:

1. Identify the primary administrator for your school district's Simple Report account.
2. The administrator will go online to <https://simplereport.gov/sign-up/> and complete the registration form. (Note: If you choose to add each school (facility) in your district (organization)

as a testing facility site, you will either need to complete the form once for each facility or have the administrator add sites once the account is created.)

3. The initial application allows the administrator to specify details about the school district (including CLIA number and type(s) of tests that will be used for testing-in this case BinaxNOW will be the test type).
4. Once the application is completed, Simple Report will verify the administrator's identity and guide them to online training videos.
5. The administrator can then create additional users or sites as needed.
6. Start testing and enter patients and test results. (Remember, each student, teacher, and staff member's demographic information will only need to be entered the first time they are tested. After the first test, their account can be pulled up from the existing list of patients in your system and the new test result added.)

Additional info about creating a new account with Simple Report can be found at <https://simplereport.gov/resources/getting-started/testing-facilities/onboard-your-organization/>

## **Section V—Parental Consent**

It is recommended that parental consent is obtained to conduct the periodic screening tests. **Please see the attached draft parental consent template at the end of this document for school districts to modify to fit their needs.**

Important points of the school-based COVID-19 screening to include in parental consent.

- The school district is partnering with the Mississippi State Department of Health to offer school-based COVID-19 screening for asymptomatic students and teachers/staff.
- The purpose of this screening program is to provide an additional layer of prevention to protect teachers, employees, and students and to slow the spread of COVID-19 in these settings through frequent serial testing to prevent transmission through rapid identification of potential cases.
- The screening is for asymptomatic students only. Symptomatic students should still be evaluated by their medical provider.
- The screening tests are a rapid antigen test (BinaxNOW) provided by the Mississippi State Department of Health.
- Participating students will be screened weekly using the rapid tests.
- The test uses a non-invasive collection procedure by inserting a swab a short way in the anterior nose, and it is well tolerated.
- Schools may consider testing voluntary for students and teachers.
- Schools may consider weekly screening as a condition of participation in school-sponsored activities.
- All results will be reported individually by name and in aggregate form to MSDH.
- All results will be provided to parents.
- Students who test positive will be excluded from the school setting and participation in school-sponsored activities for 10 days from the date of the test as long as they remain asymptomatic.
- Students with a positive rapid who have a negative molecular based COVID-19 test within 48 hours of the rapid positive do not require further exclusion and may return to the school setting.

This only applies to molecular based tests (i.e., PCR) and does not include an additional antigen test or antibody tests.

- Students who are identified as contacts to a case **will not require exclusion** from school for quarantine if receive testing every two days and remain asymptomatic. At the end of 7 days, they will no longer require testing.
- This program is only for unvaccinated students/teachers.

## **Section VI—Guidance**

For guidance and assistance with the screening program, send an email to [COVIDSchoolReporting@msdh.ms.gov](mailto:COVIDSchoolReporting@msdh.ms.gov).

## **Section VII—Enrolling in the MSDH/School District/School Based Testing Initiative**

Steps to enroll in MSDH school-based testing initiative:

1. Complete registration for Simple report at <https://simplereport.gov/sign-up/>
2. Complete and email CLIA Certificate of Waiver application to [CLIA-MSDH@msdh.ms.gov](mailto:CLIA-MSDH@msdh.ms.gov)
3. Review and sign the attached MSDH School-Based Testing Initiative Agreement.

Once your CLIA certificate number is received (usually one to two days after applying):

4. Complete the online [COVID-19 School-Based Testing Initiative Application](#), and follow the directions to upload the signed MSDH School-Based Testing Initiative Agreement from above and enter the CLIA Certificate of Waiver Application number you receive.

After you have completed the application and uploaded the required documents, MSDH will be in contact with your school/school district to arrange for you to receive the initial allocation of test kits (after the initial allocation, MSDH will provide a mechanism for ordering additional test kits).

# PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

(template)

## Mississippi COVID-19 Testing Program (for K-12 Students)

Dear Parent/Guardian

Your child's School District is partnering with the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) to offer voluntary school-based COVID-19 screening (testing) for unvaccinated students. The screening tests (BinaxNOW antigen tests) are rapid tests provided to the School District by MSDH that provide results within 15 minutes.

There is no cost to you or your family for these screening tests.

The purpose is to provide an additional layer of prevention to slow the spread of COVID-19 in school settings and in extracurricular activities.

The screening program is only for unvaccinated students who do not have symptoms (students with symptoms should be evaluated by their primary care provider). Participating students will be screened weekly using the rapid tests. The test uses a simple collection procedure by inserting a swab a short way in the nose and, it is well tolerated.

All results will be reported individually by name and in aggregate form to MSDH and results will be provided to parents. Students who test positive will be excluded from the school setting and participation in school-sponsored activities for 10 days from the date of the test as long as they have no symptoms. Students with a positive rapid who have a negative molecular based COVID-19 test within 48 hours of the rapid positive do not require further exclusion and may return to the school setting. This only applies to molecular based tests (i.e., PCR) and does not include an additional rapid antigen test or antibody tests.

Additionally, students who are identified as contacts to a case will not require exclusion from school for quarantine if receive testing every two days and remain asymptomatic. At the end of 7 days, they will no longer require testing.

If you wish for your child to participate in this program, please complete the attached consent form.

**Student Name (please print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**School Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

As the parent/legal guardian of the above-named child, I hereby authorize \_\_\_\_\_ to administer weekly

(School Name)

COVID-19 screening/testing to my child. I understand that this authorization extends inclusively from the date of my signature through **July 31,**

**2022.** I understand that these weekly screenings are free, and I will be notified by the school/school district of my child's COVID-19 test results.

Parent/Legal Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Today's Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

For questions or concerns regarding your child's results, please contact the school district at (number here). School screening testing is supported by the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH).