

COVID-19 School Testing Announcement

Today the Minnesota Department of Health, in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education, announced that it has improved its first-in-the-nation statewide education testing program. Schools will now have a variety of testing options available to them as they work to develop local testing programs to keep kids and staff safe and maintain in-person learning this school year. MDE will also provide grants to support testing efforts in schools.

This school year, schools will have access to individual PCR tests, pooled PCR tests and rapid tests—both antigen and PCR. Districts, charter schools, tribal schools, and nonpublic schools will be able to assess which tests work best for their school community and have autonomy in developing their individual testing program.

Based on current levels of community spread across Minnesota, the CDC and MDH recommend that all **unvaccinated** school-age children and school staff should get tested for COVID-19 regularly throughout the school year based on community transmission of the virus. **Unvaccinated** children involved in any extracurricular activities or sports should be tested more frequently. **Vaccinated** students and school staff should get tested if they are experiencing [symptoms](#) or were exposed to someone who has COVID-19. Testing should be used in addition to other prevention strategies as outlined in [Best Practice Recommendations for COVID-19 Prevention in Schools for the 2021-22 School Year \(PDF\)](#).

Schools will be able to choose from the following tests to create their own testing programs:

- **BinaxNOW Professional and Over-the-Counter:** individual, rapid antigen test.
- **Cue:** individual rapid molecular nasal swab test.
- **Vault:** individual molecular saliva test.
- **Battelle:** pooled molecular nasal swab test.
- **Hot Spot Testing:** Schools can work with their local public health or MDH to request a temporary testing location in response to local outbreaks.

More information about individual test options will be posted on MDH's website.

Grants to support COVID-19 testing in schools will be made available through MDE. Every school district, charter school, tribal school and nonpublic school offering a testing program is eligible for a grant. Grant money can be used to fund staff to support, administer, or execute testing, or to purchase tests through a vendor.