



**Department  
of Health**

# **Interim Guidance for Classroom Instruction in P-12 Schools During the 2021-2022 Academic Year**

**Office of School COVID Support  
New York State Department of Health**

**September 2021**

# Agenda

During today's presentation we will provide an overview of the following:

- Review of President Biden's "Path out of the Pandemic" Action Plan
- ELC School Reopening grant & other testing resources
- Interim Guidance for Classroom Instruction in P-12 Schools During the 2021-2022 Academic Year (Updated September 2, 2021)
- Requirements for daily reporting to the School Report Card

# Path Out of the Pandemic

- President Biden's 6-pronged national strategy, employing science-based tools to combat COVID-19:
  1. Vaccinating the unvaccinated
  2. Further protecting the vaccinated
  3. **Keeping schools safely open**
  4. Increasing testing & requiring masking
  5. Protecting our economic recovery
  6. Improving care for those with COVID-19
- **Keeping schools safely open** with the provision of \$130 billion in funds via the American Rescue Plan: providing support to help schools reopen, accelerate students' academic growth, address inequities, implement CDC-recommended prevention strategies, and support student and educator social, emotional and mental health needs
- Learn more at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/covidplan/>

# ELC School Reopening Program

- Funded by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021; awards to states to support school reopening efforts
- In New York, funds were allocated to LHDs and/or BOCES by the NYSDOH; NYC received separate ELC School Reopening funds
- Funding supports detection and prevention of COVID-19 in K-12 schools, with a focus on screening testing as a mitigation strategy
- Allowable costs include:
  - Support for diagnostic testing
  - Testing events
  - Vaccination promotion as part of testing/contact tracing activities
  - Costs for portable HEPA fan/filtration systems

# ELC School Reopening Program

- Schools operating in counties outside of NYC that would like more information on participating can contact their LHD
- Schools/districts operating in the following counties can contact their respective BOCES:
  - Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES: for Montgomery and Fulton Counties
  - Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES: for Herkimer County
  - Madison-Oneida BOCES: for Madison County
  - Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES: for Oneida County
- Schools operating in NYC should contact NYCDOHMH for more information

# Updated Guidance

- NYSDOH Schools Guidance is aligned with CDC Schools Guidance: schools/districts should review and adopt all aspects of CDC Schools Guidance and have the authority to implement based on their local context and with input from their LHD, unless otherwise required specifically in regulation
  - The decision to adopt mitigation measures will be based on local circumstances, unless otherwise required in this document or other relevant guidance, regulations, or orders.
- Schools/districts should revisit the prior year's School Reopening Plans and update as necessary. NYSDOH does not review or approve school reopening plans.

# Updated Guidance

- Prioritizes a return to in-person learning while adhering to multiple mitigation strategies which include the following:
  - Vaccination
  - Appropriate use of face masks
  - Physical distancing
  - Screening testing
  - Ventilation & air filtration
  - Daily health screenings/temperature checks are an additional option
- All school administrators must engage in ongoing communications with their LHD to determine appropriate responses based upon levels of community transmission, vaccine coverage and use of screening testing

# Vaccines

- COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, and a critical component of public health response efforts
- All public school districts and non-public schools **should support opportunities for members of the school community to access vaccination clinics** in collaboration with local health partners



# Use of Masks

- In accordance with the Commissioner's determination issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.60, **all students, personnel, teachers, administrators, contractors, and visitors must wear masks at all times indoors, regardless of vaccination status.**
  - Medical exemptions continue to apply
- Masks do not need to be worn while eating, drinking, singing or playing a wind instrument; individuals should be spaced 6 feet apart when masks are removed for these purposes.
  - **Students should not be excluded from in-person learning in order to meet a minimum distance requirement**

# Return to School for Individuals Displaying Symptoms of COVID-19

- According to the Commissioner's testing determination issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.63, all students, teachers and staff with new or worsening symptoms **must be excluded from school, regardless of vaccination status** and either
  - provide a negative COVID test result, **or**
  - remain excluded from school for a minimum of 10 calendar days from symptom onset
- If symptoms are improving and an individual is fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, they may return to school with either
  - a note from a HCP indicating the negative test, **or**
  - a copy of the negative test result

# Quarantine and Close Contact

- All close contacts with someone with COVID-19 must quarantine ***unless they are fully vaccinated***
  - Fully vaccinated: do not need to quarantine after contact unless they also present possible symptoms of infection; however, they should be tested 3-5 days after exposure and must wear a mask indoors for 14 days **or** until they receive a negative diagnostic test result
- Local health departments may establish and enforce isolation or quarantine orders within local communities, including schools, based on local conditions
  - This includes cancellation of non-essential school activities when transmission levels are high and risk of transmission is present

# Close Contacts and Exceptions in P-12 Indoor Classroom Setting

- A close contact is anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.
- Exception: in the P-12 indoor classroom setting, **students who are within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student where both students were consistently and correctly wearing well-fitting masks are not considered close contacts**
  - This exception does not apply to teachers, staff or other adults in the P-12 classroom setting

# COVID-19 Testing Access

- According to the Commissioner's testing determination issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.62, all schools must have the capacity to offer COVID-19 testing to teachers, students and staff.
- Screening testing
  - **Requires unvaccinated teachers and staff working in a P-12 school setting to get tested once per week** when a school is operating in a geographic area identified by the CDC as having low, moderate, substantial or high transmission rates
  - P-12 schools are **required to offer screening testing to unvaccinated students once per week**, with parent and guardian consent for minors, when a school is operating in a geographic area identified by the CDC as having moderate, substantial or high transmission rates
- Diagnostic testing:
  - Requires that schools have the capacity, either directly or via referral, to provide diagnostic testing for students, teachers and staff regardless of vaccination status and level of community transmission

# COVID-19 Data Tracker

## COVID-19 Integrated County View

Maps, charts, and data provided by CDC, updates daily by 8 pm ET<sup>†</sup>

This site provides an integrated, county view of key data for monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. For the most complete and up-to-date data for any particular county or state, visit the relevant health department website.

### How to Find a COVID-19 Vaccine

State or territory:

New York

County or metro area:

Albanv Countv

[Reset Selections](#)

Time Period: Tue Sep 07 2021 as of 6:00am ET

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations-county-view>

## Albany County, New York

[State Health Department](#) 

### 7-day Metrics | [7-day Percent Change](#)

Community Transmission	<span style="color: red;">●</span> High
Cases	507
% Positivity	5.93%
Deaths	<10
% Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated	72.6%
New Hospital Admissions	51

### On this page:

[Cases & Deaths](#)

[Testing](#)

[Vaccinations](#)

[Hospitalizations](#)

[Community Characteristics](#)

# Physical Distancing

- Due to the importance of in-person learning, schools should implement physical distancing to the extent possible consistent with the following:
  - A distance of at least 3 feet is recommended between all students
  - A distance of at least 6 feet is recommended between students and teachers/staff, and between teachers/staff who are not fully vaccinated
  - Maximize physical distance as much as possible when moving through food services lines and eating
  - **Schools should not exclude students from in-person learning in order to meet a minimum distance requirement**

# Transportation

- Masking is required on public transportation in accordance with CDC recommendations
- Passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses
  - Including on buses operated by public and private school systems
  - Regardless of vaccination status
  - Subject to applicable exclusions and exemptions



# Sports & Extracurriculars

- Schools must consider mitigation measures outlined in CDC guidance
  - Vaccination
  - Screening testing
    - Of particular importance for activities with elevated risk, such as those involving exercise, singing or shouting, etc.
    - Schools should consider screening testing of participants who are not fully vaccinated up to 24 hours before an event
- High-risk sports and extracurricular activities should be virtual or canceled in areas of high community transmission unless all participants are fully vaccinated
- Masking is required for indoor sports, and when it is not possible, a minimum distance of 6 feet must be maintained

# New York State School Report Card

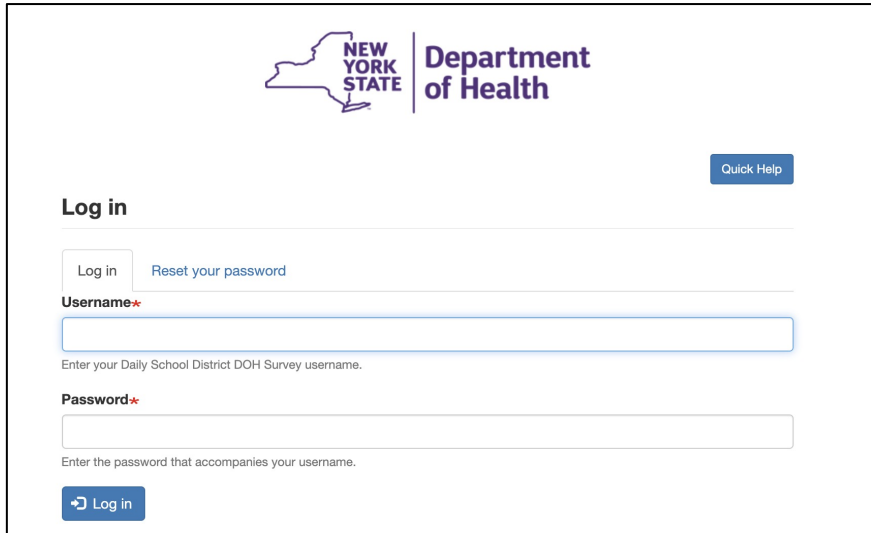
- As per Governor Hochul's recent announcement, daily reporting to the New York State School COVID Report Card has resumed.
- Reporting began on **Monday, September 13<sup>th</sup>**
  - All schools are required to log in and submit a daily report between the hours of **7am and 5pm** on each operational day of the school year.
- Please note: some aspects of the Report Card website are currently being updated; survey data will temporarily be unavailable to the public.

## COVID-19 Report Card

POSITIVE SCHOOL TESTS  
BY REGION

<https://schoolcovidreportcard.health.ny.gov/>

# Daily School Survey

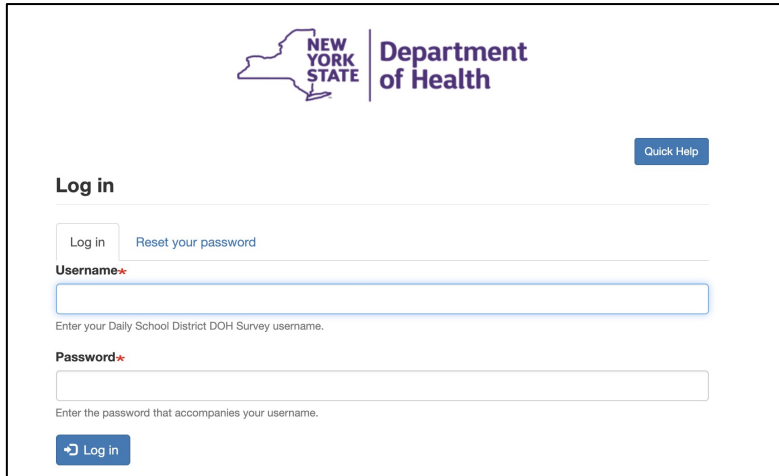



The screenshot shows the login interface for the Daily School Survey. At the top left is the New York State Department of Health logo. A "Quick Help" button is located in the upper right corner. Below the logo, there is a "Log in" section with a horizontal line. Underneath, there are two tabs: "Log in" (selected) and "Reset your password". The "Log in" tab contains a "Username\*" field with a blue border and a "Password\*" field. Below the "Username\*" field is a small instruction: "Enter your Daily School District DOH Survey username." Below the "Password\*" field is a small instruction: "Enter the password that accompanies your username." At the bottom left of the form is a blue "Log in" button with a right-pointing arrow.

<https://schoolsurvey.health.ny.gov>

- The daily school survey website and all existing log-in information for each school remains the same
- If you have trouble logging in, click on "Quick Help" in the upper right corner of the log in screen for troubleshooting tips
- To reset your password, click the "Reset your password" link next to the "Log in" tab

# Updates to the Daily School Survey



 | Department of Health

**Log in** [Quick Help](#)

[Reset your password](#)

**Username\***

Enter your Daily School District DOH Survey username.

**Password\***

Enter the password that accompanies your username.

<https://schoolsurvey.health.ny.gov>

- No longer a distinction between on-site, off-site and hybrid school population and testing numbers
- Lab information does not need to be reported
- New questions: breakdown of test type for both screening and diagnostic tests conducted
- Extended reporting window: 7am-5pm
- Please report data on a given test result on the day the result is received

# Resources

## Testing

- NYSDOH Find a Diagnostic Test Site Near You: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/find-test-site-near-you>
- Operation Expanded Testing: [https://www.affinitytesting.com/hhs/index.html?client=1468-4&campid=66&utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=cpc&utm\\_campaign=affinity-testing](https://www.affinitytesting.com/hhs/index.html?client=1468-4&campid=66&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=affinity-testing)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Testing for COVID-19 in Schools Toolkit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/school-testing.html>

## Vaccination

- NYSDOH "Vax to School": <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/covid-19-vaccines-school-aged-new-yorkers>

## Additional Funding Available:

- Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OSED) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund: <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/education-stabilization-fund/elementary-secondary-school-emergency-relief-fund/>



# Resources

- NYSDOH Novel Coronavirus(COVID-19) Website  
<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/>
- CDC Coronavirus (COVID-19)  
Website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- Guidance for ELC School Reopening Program:  
Program: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dpei/pdf/guidance-elc-reopening-schools-508.pdf>

Q: We have many essential educational individuals who are not employed by the school but will be in the “instructional environment.” (examples: Direct Service providers, Title I service providers, Special Education Service Providers, School Nurse, Security Guards)

*What is the requirement for these individuals in regard to vaccine or mandated weekly testing? Also, what about volunteers?*

Q: We have a fully vaccinated staff, so I understand we do not need to report weekly testing as all staff are vaccinated.

*Is this correct?*



Q: For the section, “Number and Type of Total COVID Tests Conducted (since last report)”:

*Does this mean tests conducted by our school?*

*Does this mean tests conducted outside of school? Should this information include the number of tests per day, or since the last report?*

Q: The NYS guidance is unclear if testing out of quarantine is an option, and the referenced Guidance on Quarantine is a somewhat outdated document which does not include the CDC recommendation for vaccinated persons to be tested following exposure.

*What approach should we take?*

# Questions?

[SchoolQuestionsCOVID@health.ny.gov](mailto:SchoolQuestionsCOVID@health.ny.gov)