

# Lincoln Public Schools

## Pooled Testing Program Overview

*Presented to School Committee 2/11/21*



# Why Pooled Testing?

- Build staff and family confidence in the safety of in-person learning
- Provide an additional level of mitigation
- Identify asymptomatic individuals
- Provide equitable access to testing at no cost to individuals
- Provide opportunity to respond to potential community spread
- Support the continued community desire to provide in-person learning

# LPS Pool Testing Team

- Pool Testing Advisory Group
  - Faculty- Kerriann Gilman, Rebecca Gerner, Kathy O'Connell, Alyssa Rosenfeld, Matt Reed
  - Parents-Eshita Bakshi, Peter Hussey, James Young
- Participating in a DESE pilot with support from the Shah Family Foundation
- Working with Concentric by Ginkgo Bioworks
- Testing Coordinator and Primary Point-of-Contact: Mary Emmons
- Central Office Testing Team: Mary, Rob, Becky, and Buck

# What is Pooled Testing?

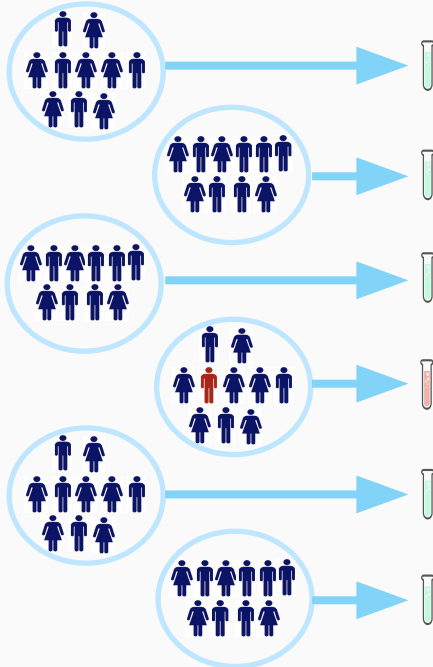
Pooled testing reduces test resources by grouping participant samples together

## Test method



PCR test with high sensitivity (24-48h turnaround time) will be sent out

- All members of a classroom cohort “pooled” together in a single test
- Tutors, secondary learning coaches, and instructional assistants will join the classroom pool they are with on the testing day/time
- Additional staff will be assigned to specific pools



If a pool tests positive, follow-up testing will be done to find positive individual

A positive pool will test individuals to initiate contact tracing and alert close contacts



Abbott BinaxNOW Rapid Antigen Test will be used on-site as a Point of Care Test (POCT)

- Results in 15-30 minutes
- Less sensitive than PCR testing but high specificity
  - High specificity is good to minimize false positives

Existing contact tracing procedures followed once positive individual identified:

- Classroom cohort members and siblings of the positive individual enter quarantine.
- “Additional staff” in the pool that are not close contacts will not require quarantine.
- If one of the “additional staff” is identified as the positive, the classroom cohort will not need to quarantine, if there was no close contact with the staff member.

# Who does the testing?

## Classroom teachers:

- Organize the testing in the classroom and provide a familiar and supportive face as an observer during sample collections. Many teachers will also model self-swabbing themselves in their classrooms.

## Students (grade 2-8):

- Students in grades 2-8 will self-swab to collect their own samples.

## Sample collectors:

- Designated Sample Collectors with specialized training will swab students in grades PK-1, and handle and process collected samples at all grades.

## Testing Lab:

- Concentric by Gingko BioWorks is the lab that will conduct the testing.

<https://www.concentricbyginkgo.com/>

# Pooled Testing Sample Collection

- Weekly in the classroom
  - Testing days: Tuesdays in Lincoln, Wednesdays at Hanscom, starting 2/23 and 2/24
  - End of Connections block in 2-8
  - Scheduled times for PK-1
- Quick and easy lower nasal swab
  - Like rubbing the inside of your nostril with a Q-tip
  - Self-swab in grades 2-8
  - Swabbed by Sample Collector in grades PK-1
  - Estimated at 10-15 minutes or less per classroom
- Teacher's role
  - Varies by grade level, but always just logistics and observation
  - **Classroom teacher never handles the student samples directly**
  - Sample Collector with specific training and PPE will collect and process samples from each classroom

## What does pooled testing in a school look like?



# Nasal Swab Self-Collection Instructions for Pooling

1

## Clean Hands

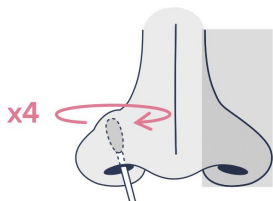
First, make sure that your hands are clean (by using soap or hand sanitizer).



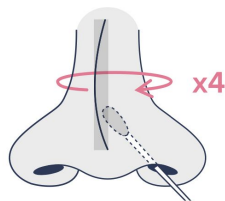
3

## Swab Nose

Gently insert the entire soft tip of the swab into one nostril until you feel a bit of resistance. Using a circular motion, rub the swab around the inside of your nostril **4 times**. You should use medium pressure to push the swab against the inside of your nostril. The swab tip should be touching the inside of your nose throughout. Repeat the process with your other nostril using the same end of the swab as before.



The swab should push against the inside and outside wall of the nostril.



Swab BOTH nostrils.

2

## Open Swab

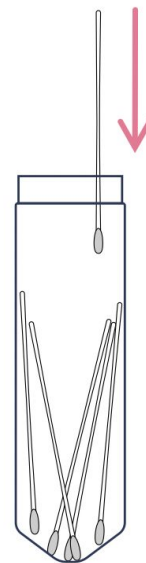


Remove the swab from its packaging. Be careful not to touch the tip with your hands.

4

## Put Swab in Tube

Put the swab into the collection tube indicated by the supervisor. Finally, sanitize your hands thoroughly.





# How to self-swab from a 2nd grade student



*Courtesy of York Academy Regional Charter School, York, PA*

# Pool Testing Process Overview - Prior to sample collection

- Families and staff must provide consent
  - To participate must have consent and have not tested positive in the past 3 months
  - Consent tracked in PowerSchool
- Coordinator orders material and manages assembly of testing kits and pool tracking sheets
- Morning of sample collection, the kit is delivered to each classroom:
  - Collection tube
  - Swabs
  - Sample bag
  - Tracking and instruction sheet

## Pooled Testing Process Overview - Sample collection in PK-1 classrooms

- 1) Sample Collector arrives
- 2) Teacher marks any absent students on the tracking sheet and lists any adults participating in the sample collection
- 3) Teacher coordinates students for whom consent has been provided approaching Sample Collector one at a time
- 4) Sample Collector swabs each student, places each swab in collection tube
- 5) Teacher and other staff in the cohort self-swab and add swabs to the collection tube, then sanitize their hands.
- 6) Sample Collector closes and bags collection tube, and leaves

## Pooled Testing Process Overview - Sample collection in 2-8 classrooms

- 1) Teacher marks any absent students on the tracking sheet and lists any adults participating in the sample collection
- 2) Teacher places open collection tube in a designated Collection Station by door with swabs and hand sanitizer and grabs a swab for themselves
- 3) Teacher calls students for whom consent has been provided and participating adults to the Collection Station in groups to sanitize hands and grab a swab, before returning to their desk
- 4) After all students have returned to desks, teacher observes students self-swabbing. If teacher is participating in pool testing, they can model self-swabbing for students
- 5) Teacher calls on students and participating adults to place their swab in the collection tube one at a time, then sanitize their hands
- 6) Sample Collector comes to each classroom, closes and bags collection tube, and takes the sample bag and tracking sheet for processing

**Teacher never handles the collection tube once swabs have been added.**

# Pooled Testing Process Overview - After sample collection

- Sample Collector processes samples and arranges for pickup. Additional non-classroom staff samples will be collected at this point.
- Results obtained 24-48 hours from 4pm of the pickup day
- If positive results for a pool:
  - Notification to families and staff in the pool that tested positive
  - Follow up with the Abbott BinaxNOW Rapid Test to identify the positive
    - Administered on-site
    - 15-30 minutes for results
  - Identify close contacts at school and implement existing protocols for close contacts and positive cases, including mandated reporting to DESE, Town Nurse (Lincoln), and Hanscom Board of Health (Hanscom AFB) for contact tracing outside of the school
- Weekly pool testing notification and dashboard will inform families and staff of results

# Consent to Participate

Participating in the program is a choice, and families must provide consent for their child to participate.

Your consent includes agreement to:

- Allow your child to be tested weekly
- Allow your child to participate in required follow up testing if the pool returns a positive result
- Share individual positive test result information with the Department of Public Health and Concentric by Ginkgo, the testing lab
- Allow transmittal of student information via the Concentric test processing platform

Full details are found in the consent form:

- **LPS Pooled Testing Consent Form for Families**
- **LPS Pooled Testing Consent Form for Staff**

# What can you do to prepare your child?

- Explain to them that when they are tested they are making a really big contribution to keeping everyone in their school safe and healthy.
- Watch the video linked in the presentation to give them an idea of what it will look like to self-swab (2-8)
- “Practice” at home, by having them swab the inside of their lower nostril with a Q-tip.
- On testing days (Tuesdays in Lincoln and Wednesdays at Hanscom), tell them how proud you are that they are contributing to the safety and health of everyone in their school by participating in the testing program.
- If you or your child has questions, reach out to [pooltesting@lincnet.org](mailto:pooltesting@lincnet.org) or contact their teacher.

# Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Does the swab hurt? I've heard COVID-19 testing swabs can be painful.

A. Unlike other COVID-19 tests, the sample collection swabbing will just be in the very lower part of the nose, and is not painful.

Q. If my child doesn't have symptoms, why bother testing them?

A. Individuals can be completely free of COVID-19 symptoms (or asymptomatic), but still capable of transmitting COVID-19 to others. By participating in pool testing you are helping protect others in the school who may be more vulnerable, and you are helping to limit asymptomatic spread and keep our schools open.

Q. Is there a cost to participate?

A. No, there is no cost to individuals to participate.

Q. Will it be disruptive to school?

A. The sample collection will be short and occur only once a week. The time invested in a weekly 10-15 minute sample collection process will help protect against far more disruptive school closures that could result from asymptomatic spread.



# Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Does my child have to participate?

A. No. Participation is a choice, and while we hope everyone in our community chooses to contribute to this effort to keep our schools safe, health, and open, we will respect every family's decision, and no child will be made to feel stigmatized or singled-out for not participating.

Q. If we do pool testing, do we still have to wear masks and socially distance?

A. Yes. Pool testing is designed as an additional layer of mitigation and is not sufficient alone to protect our students and staff.

Q. Can a pool test satisfy a negative test requirement under a state travel order?

A. No. The pool tests are group results only, and are not appropriate to satisfy requirements for a negative test result.

Q. Can remote students participate?

A. No. This is not logistically possible due to all sample collection occurring within the classroom. In addition the DESE and Shah Foundation funding for the project launch is specifically tied to supporting in-person learning.

# Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How will I receive notification of test results?

A. You will receive a direct notification and information about scheduling the follow-up testing if your child's pool tests positive. A general notification will be made each week when all pool test results have been received and no further results are outstanding. Results of follow-up tests will be communicated to families as soon as they are received.

Q. What will the pool test results tell us?

A. The test will tell us if COVID-19 was detected in any of the samples provided by the members of the pool.

A **negative** test result means that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, was not detected in any of the samples.

A **positive** test result means that SARS-CoV-2 was present in at least one sample in the pool, and individuals will be contacted to schedule reflex (follow-up) testing using the Abbott BinaxNow test to identify the positive individual(s).

Q. Is there a potential for false positives?

A. Yes, all COVID-19 tests have the potential for a false positive, but in a pilot program false positives were found to be very rare.

# Q&A

Email questions, suggestions, and  
feedback anytime to:  
[pooltesting@lincnet.org](mailto:pooltesting@lincnet.org)