



COVID-19 Testing in K-12: Wellesley, MA Public Schools

In Oct. 2020, Wellesley Public Schools began weekly viral testing for all staff and for all middle and high school students. In the first 10 weeks of testing, the WPS program performed 18,083 tests and identified 19 positive cases through the program, including one cluster of in-school transmission. Spread was contained through a 2-week targeted school closure. Baseline testing reassured parents (39% prior to 87% post baseline testing) and staff (12% prior to 82% post baseline testing) of the safety of in-person learning. 97% of staff reported that they are more comfortable with in-person learning due to the weekly testing of staff and students. Here's how Wellesley does it.

Testing Partners

COMMUNITY



SCHOOL & STAFF

Full buy-in from school committee, superintendent, teachers union, and nursing staff.

FAMILIES & STUDENTS

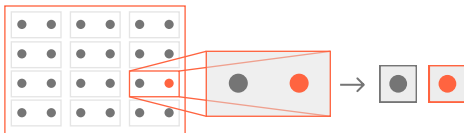
Used webinars/ communications to create buy in: 90% of students participated in baseline testing, 80% in weekly testing.

LAB & DATA MANAGEMENT



LAB: MIRIMUS

A pooled Saliva RT-PCR Test with the option to ID positive individuals without additional sample collection. Samples are tested in pools of 24. In the event of a positive result, the pool is retested into pairs, and positive pairs are then individually tested.



Positive pool Positive pair Positive individual

DATA MANAGEMENT: IN HOUSE

Students manually register test kits using Google Form developed by the Technology Department. Superintendent and Director of Nursing access data as needed.

LAB & DATA MANAGEMENT COST

- Pooled test list price:** \$15/individual tested
- Positive pool reflex testing:** \$800 for a pool of 24
- Shipping:** Approx. \$8 for a pool of 24
- Data management:** \$0

SAMPLE COLLECTION OPERATIONS



At home sample collection minimizes collection operations. Underutilized staff and parent volunteers assemble test kits.

FUNDING

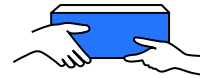


Initial pilot funded by local education foundation with support from Mobilizing Foundation.

Weekly Testing Logistics



Thursday/Friday



PICKUP TEST

Students and staff pick up testing kits at school.

Weekend



REGISTER TEST

Individuals register their kit at home via Google Form by entering a bar code number.

Monday/Tuesday



COLLECT & DROP OFF SALIVA SAMPLE

Students and staff collect their saliva samples at home in the morning. Saliva is collected using a saliva straw, collection tube, alcohol wipe, and tube bag. Samples are dropped off to designated locations (eg. receptacles outside the Nurse's Office). Samples are shipped overnight using FedEx.

Tuesday/Wednesday



RESULTS

Within 24-48 hours from arrival of samples at lab, results are returned to the Director of Nursing who works with families to understand positive results and contact trace in close collaboration with the local Board of Health.

Regular testing is just one piece of the COVID-19 safety puzzle



- Mandatory masks, except lunch (outdoors when possible)
- Frequent hand sanitizing
- 6 ft distancing
- Reduced density, hybrid schedule: Cohort A: Monday & Thursday, Cohort B: Tuesday & Friday
- Daily symptom survey for staff and high school students. Parents of K-8 students also required to monitor symptoms
- Ventilation improvements
- Contact tracing
- Baseline testing offered to all staff and students upon reopening