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Subject: NYSCOSS Advocacy Alert: Governor's Comments on COVID-19 Testing of Students
Date: Tuesday, August 04, 2020 2:38:15 PM

Good afternoon,

I have heard from many of you about the Governors statement yesterday regarding testing. I know that folks are upset about this and that is absolutely understandable. I also know that people now have their boards and communities asking this question. We will talk about this tomorrow in detail – but I would suggest that you may want to send your board an email with the information below on what the actual state DOH and SED guidance says about testing which I have included from Bob Lowry's Councilgram from yesterday (see below). Please make sure that you don't just forward Bob's message but integrate that into your emails. It is important that your boards understand that you have done exactly what has been asked with your plans.

Thank you all so much,

Anita

From: Bob Lowry <Advocacy@nyscoss.org>
Sent: Monday, August 3, 2020 3:08 PM
To: Anita Murphy <anita.murphy@neric.org>
Subject: NYSCOSS Advocacy Alert: Governor's Comments on COVID-19 Testing of Students

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The Council



August 3, 2020

Governor's Comments on COVID-19 Testing of Students

During a briefing today, Governor Cuomo repeated statements he made over the weekend

suggesting that schools need to be prepared to do regular testing of students for COVID-19.

For example, in a Saturday conference call with reporters, the Governor said that parents will want to know, "How are you going to test the students? How many are you going to test per day? How long will it take to turn around the tests and where are you going to get that testing capacity?"

He repeated those comments today.

Guidance from the State Health Department and State Education Department does not require schools to conduct regular testing of students for COVID-19.

The Health Department guidance says that school district reopening plans are to include a "process for the provision or referral of diagnostic testing for students, faculty and staff for COVID 19 ***in consultation with local health department officials, when needed***, which should include plans for testing of symptomatic individuals, close contacts of COVID 19 suspected or confirmed individuals and individuals with recent international travel or travel within a state with widespread transmission of COVID 19 as designated through the New York State Travel Advisory before allowing such individuals to return to in person to the school [emphasis added]."

Further, in order for a school district to conduct testing, it would need to apply and be approved as a "limited service laboratory."

Over the weekend, we advised the Governor's staff of the discrepancy between his comments and the state agencies' guidance and explained that it had provoked confusion and alarm in the field.

Below are pertinent sections of state agency guidance on this issue.

The Governor was also critical of the reopening plans that districts have submitted. We are considering a statement in response.

DOH Guidance

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Monitoring

includes protocols and procedures to track health conditions at schools. At a minimum plans must incorporate the following

-- Screening: Protocols and procedures for mandatory health screenings, including temperature checks, of students, faculty, staff, and, where applicable, contractors, vendors, and visitors to identify any individuals who may have COVID 19 or who may have been exposed to the COVID 19 virus. Responsible Parties should consider limiting the number of visitors permitted on school grounds or in school facilities, and, if visitors are allowed, screening of such visitors

-- Testing Protocols: Process for the provision or referral of diagnostic testing for students, faculty and staff for COVID 19 in consultation with local health department officials, when needed, which should include plans for testing of symptomatic individuals, close contacts of COVID 19 suspected or confirmed individuals and individuals with recent international travel or travel within a state with widespread transmission of COVID 19 as designated through the New York State Travel Advisory before allowing such individuals to return to in person to the school.

-- Testing Responsibility: Identification of who in the community is responsible for referring, sourcing and administering testing (e. local health department testing site, physician offices, hospital system) particularly in the event that large scale testing at the school is needed; and

-- Early Warning Signs Defined metrics that will serve as early warning signs that positive COVID 19 cases may be increasing beyond an acceptable level as established by state and local health departments define and deploy method(s) to monitor against such metrics

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B. School Health Offices

-- Responsible Parties may consider developing testing systems in school facilities or self testing systems in collaboration with local health departments or local health care providers, as able.

SED Guidance

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COVID-19 Testing

It is strongly recommended that schools comply with CDC guidance and not conduct COVID-19 testing or require testing or antibody testing of students or staff members. The decision of whether a test needs to be conducted should be determined by a healthcare provider or the local department of health. CDC Interim Considerations for K-12 School Administrators for SARS-CoV-2 Testing

Schools should identify who in the community is responsible for referring, sourcing, and administering testing (e.g., local health department testing site, physician offices, hospital system) particularly in the event that large-scale testing at the school is needed. Schools wanting to perform COVID-19 testing must apply and be approved as a limited service laboratory (LSL). Please refer to the instructions and application materials, and if applicable, the worksheet for multiple locations.





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