**Weekly School ELC COVID-19 Screening Testing**

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), in collaboration with the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), has received federal funding and plans to offer a **no-cost** weekly pooled COVID-19 screening testing program in K-6 educational settings for unvaccinated students and staff. Unvaccinated students/staff in grades 7-12 may be considered based on funding.

**K-12 Screening Testing Facts**

* Testing partners will collect the swabs and transport the samples. Results will be available to the school administrators, parents of tested students, and the Department of Public Health within 24-48 hours.
* There will be **NO cost** to schools or program participants – DPH has received federal funding to pay for the testing. Insurance will not be collected
* An anterior nasal swab will be performed (lower nasal, not a “brain tickler”)
* Each participating child will be swabbed every week of school. If a positive is identified within the pool, the lab will be responsible for retesting the existing swab. No second visit to school required per week
* Districts will not be selecting students to participate, rather testing will only be completed on students whose parents have signed and submitted a consent form. Once signed, the consent form will cover testing throughout the year

**Schools will be responsible for:**

* Promoting and communicating program logistics to parents, students, and staff
* Soliciting and collecting consent forms for program participation – while testing will be completed weekly, only one consent form is needed
* Coordinating scheduling with testing partner – schools will be automatically paired with a testing partner. The testing partner will reach out to schools to determine scheduling.
* Designate testing place – this could be in the hallway during class time, cafeteria, gym
* Responding to positive cases – contact tracing, communicating relevant information with parents, students, and staff, and coordinating with their Local Health Departments
* Connecting with the DPH team on any testing or contact tracing support that is needed

***It is critical to continue to test in unvaccinated populations, vulnerable communities, and high-risk communal settings because…***

* **Cases may be identified sooner when screening testing is utilized**
* **Weekly surveillance testing of students and staff can help increase the time students spend in the classroom and reduce the number of days/times they are required to quarantine**
* **Screening testing reduces the risk of school-based COVID-19 transmission**
* **It allows parents, staff, and students to have confidence in school learning**