

Safely Opening Schools

Rapid Antigen Testing in Schools

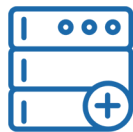
Safely Opening Schools (SOS) is piloting rapid antigen testing in California school districts to support schools' safer reopening. The project brings together CA educators and school health professionals to develop and share best practices for testing, including testing all on-site students and staff up to twice weekly using Abbott's BinaxNOW rapid antigen test.

SOS, a program of the Public Health Institute (PHI), is working in collaboration with the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to provide ongoing assistance to school districts at no cost and funded by California philanthropic organizations.

The data in this report is reflective of the pilot's implementation as of April 30, 2021.

Key Implementation Insights

The following insights emerged from early conversations with district officials, Public Health Institute, and Safely Opening Schools program staff:



Eliminating structural barriers supports a successful program launch. SOS, in partnership with CDPH and CDE, supported districts in launching the testing program by removing key barriers to scaling up. This included advocating for a statewide CLIA waiver, getting a statewide data platform in place, and eliminating constraints on who can perform the tests.



Communication is key to awareness and consent. Districts share that strong communication with families is important to obtain consent and increase student participation in the testing program. Some districts conducted personal outreach, such as phone calls and in-person communication, to help families understand the consent process and the importance of rapid antigen testing. Participation rates varied widely, with the highest at 95% in La Honda / Pescadero.



Staff are a critical resource. Staff capacity was a challenge in ramping up rapid antigen testing in schools. School site staff have limited bandwidth to facilitate testing among other responsibilities. Districts met this challenge by streamlining the testing workflow and partnering with outside organizations to conduct testing.



Training and support are important. Training is a key component of scaling up rapid antigen testing programs in schools. Staff need ongoing support with testing, using the data platform, and technical assistance if positives are detected. SOS has expanded its on-site and virtual training offerings to support schools in scaling up.

[It] is reassuring, being able to tell people who have been worried and fearful [that] the great majority of our employees have been tested multiple times since we've re-opened and every single test is negative.

– District Official

After spring break, the [rapid antigen] testing made everyone, staff and students, feel more comfortable, confident, and safer at school.

– District Official

Partners



SOS Pilot Statistics as of April 30, 2021



14,466 cumulative tests

3,106 unique individuals tested

20 positive tests total

0.74 average test reporting turn around (hours)

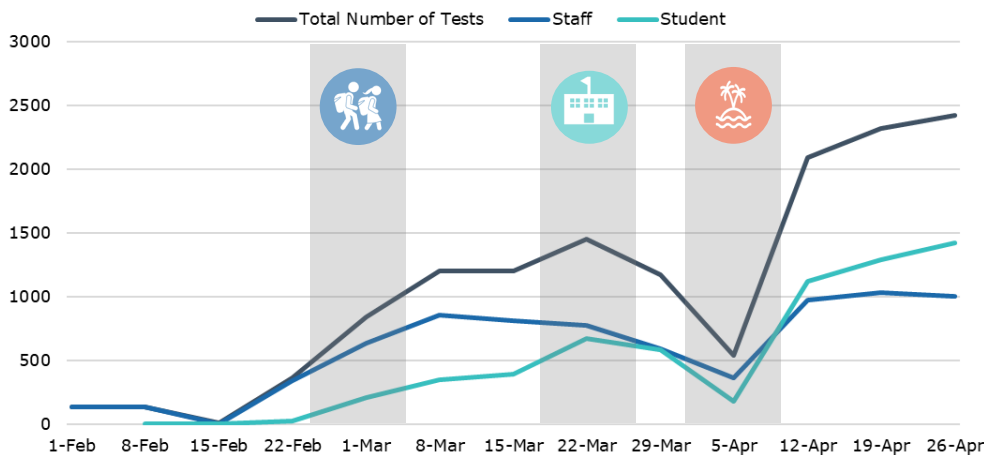
10 districts participating

Early Highlights

Low positivity rate: An overall positivity rate of 0.14% across all districts suggests schools may not be sites of high transmission.

No false positives: Districts reported that **none** were found to be false positives on 19 PCR follow-ups. Compared to an expected ~1% false positivity rate, this is early evidence of the testing protocol's effectiveness.

Testing Over Time



Key Dates

March 1, 2021

Many students begin to return to in-person learning.

March 22, 2021

All 10 districts are participating in testing.

April 5, 2021

Schools are on Spring Break.

District Level Testing Statistics

District	Weeks Testing	Testing Sites*	Overall Positivity Rate
McSwain Union Elementary District	17	3	0.2%
Planada Elementary School District	11	2	0.1%
Ravenswood City School District	10	7	0.0%
Rosemead School District	10	5	0.0%
Compton Unified School District	9	9	0.4%
La Honda-Pescadero Unified School District	9	2	0.0%
Redwood City School District	9	2	0.0%
Weaver Union School District	9	4	1.7%
Oakland Unified School District	5	3	0.3%
Fresno Unified School District	4	1	0.0%

*Due to inconsistent records, number of testing sites may not be accurate.