
Letter to Parents: Consent for COVID-19 Pooled Testing

Date: 3/31/2021

Dear parents, caregivers, and guardians,

Thank you for your continued partnership during this unprecedented school year. In an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we have been working closely with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) to implement a **free COVID-19 pooled testing program for students and staff at our school.**

The purpose of this letter is to ask your permission to regularly test your child as part of a pooled testing program at our school. Pooled testing involves mixing several individuals' test samples together into one "pool" and then testing the pooled sample for COVID-19. This approach increases the number of individuals that can be tested at one time and allows us to regularly test our school community for COVID-19.

The pooled tests will be performed at least once per week with a shallow nasal swab for all participating students and staff members. Schools will receive the pool results within 24-48 hours. If the result of the pool is negative, then all individuals are presumed to not have COVID-19. If the result of the pool is positive, then all individuals in the pool must be retested individually. Because pooled testing does not give individual results, you will only be notified if your child requires follow-up testing. Our school will be providing the Abbott BinaxNOW Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests for follow-up testing, so that students or staff in a positive pool can be tested as soon as possible and receive individual results in 15 minutes.

Our staff has been thoroughly trained on how to administer pooled testing, as well as the Abbott BinaxNOW Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests, if they are needed for follow-up testing. The High School of Commerce will call you if your child is part of a positive pool and requires follow-up testing. The High School of Commerce will also notify you of the individual follow-up test results and if your child is positive or negative and what to do in each scenario.

The High School of Commerce will report all follow-up test results to DPH. The High School of Commerce will also provide positive follow-up test results (without names or other identifying information) to DESE's Rapid Response Help Unit.

To give permission for your student to participate in the COVID-19 Pooled Testing Program at our school, including consent to transmit student information via the pooled testing technology



platform, consent for any necessary follow up tests, and consent to share the test result information with the Department of Public Health and Concentric by Ginkgo (a third party [non-profit] organization contracted to compile consent for testing and to share test results). Please navigate to <https://testcenter.concentricbyginkgo.com/minor-consent>. The access code you will need on the second screen is **sp-honorsacademy**

At the High School of Commerce, we are extremely grateful to our committed staff and families that continue to show great flexibility and resilience as we navigate through this school year. It takes all of us working together to contain the spread of this virus. The High School of Commerce is excited to add pooled testing as another mitigation strategy for our school community, as we continue to work together toward the safe return of all students and staff to school.

If you have questions regarding the COVID-19 Pooled Testing Program, please reach out the school nurses at 413-787-7220 ext. 48860. Or, via email at reyesja@springfieldpublicschools.com and haspeslaghm@springfieldpublicschools.com

Thank you,

Paul Neal
Executive Principal
High School of Commerce