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## Overview of Tabletop Exercise Protocol for Implementation of COVID-19 Testing in K-12 Settings

As of February 15, 2021

This guidebook provides leaders with the step-by-step processes needed to design and implement district-wide testing. The information in this workbook closely aligns with the best practices outlined in The Rockefeller Foundation's comprehensive document titled *Covid-19 Testing in K-12 Settings: A Playbook for Educators and Leaders*.

For questions about this resource or to inquire about support in implementation, please contact Chiefs for Change at [cfcta@chiefsforchange.org](mailto:cfcta@chiefsforchange.org).

# Disclaimer

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# Introduction

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As the COVID-19 pandemic wears on, public education in America is at a crossroads. Superintendents and school staff have overcome significant challenges, but there is still difficult work ahead. During this national emergency, millions of children—particularly those who are most vulnerable—are experiencing tremendous learning loss and trauma, potentially on a scale our country has never seen. We must all work together to bring our children safely and quickly back into the classroom, where they learn best and can receive the critical supports they so urgently need.

With proper precautions, research has shown that schools are among the safest public places. They do not spark outbreaks or significantly contribute to the spread of the virus. While there has, rightly, been a focus on the need to vaccinate school staff, public health experts have stated that we do not need to wait for widespread vaccination before students return to in-person learning. To reopen, schools must use personal protective equipment, implement social distancing, and utilize robust COVID-19 testing programs. These programs are uniquely important because they allow school officials to detect even asymptomatic cases, to quickly quarantine students and staff who have been exposed, and to stop the spread. In this way, schools can stay ahead of the virus—safeguarding the health of their communities and ensuring school buildings stay open for critical face-to-face learning and supports. Districts that have implemented COVID-19 testing for students and staff have been able to keep their in-school transmission rates extremely low—even when rates have soared in the broader community. COVID-19 testing and other precautions are at the heart of a sustainable strategy for in-person learning during the pandemic.

The exercise contains the following:

- Guidance for convening a task force that will help get comprehensive testing established;
- Plug-and-play templates that allow the task force to operationalize testing quickly and effectively; and
- Links to world-class resources created by The Rockefeller Foundation and other public health experts.



# Overview of Tabletop Exercise Protocol

There are a number of key decision points to ensure a successful use of testing in your community. These resources are intended to help task force teams navigate the choices in this effort.

## What it is:

A process to manage and effectively execute discrete aspects of a testing program

## What it's for:

Identifying gaps and individuals both within and outside of the taskforce who can use their experience and comprehensive resources to help solve problems

## How it works:

Members of the task force break into small groups to tackle discrete projects. These groups of 4-8 participants engage in sessions of up to an hour to review resources and complete the provided tool

## Who is involved:

Tabletop participants should involve key decision-makers within a school system (e.g. department leaders). Sessions can also involve students, families, teachers, staff, school administrators, community members, and/or other stakeholders depending on the context and goals



# Step-by-Step Explanation of Task Force Tabletop Exercise Protocol



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## Step 1 Pre-Planning

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- Which member of the task force will take the lead on this project?
- Who are other district or school staff that will be involved?
- What non-district stakeholders will be involved and how?
- What is the timeline for completion and how often will the task force be updated?



## Step 2 Review & Use Resources to Inform Planning

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Districts do not have to start from scratch to prepare for effective testing programs. The Rockefeller Foundation, partner organizations, and school districts all over the country have built tools that can be adapted and implemented by your task force.

*For a comprehensive resource library, please [visit our website](#).*

## Step-by-Step Explanation of Task Force Tabletop Exercise Protocol

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Step 3

### Identify Obstacles

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Testing students and staff can be complex logistically but it is an attainable goal and crucial for returning to school.

To help address logistical challenges, members of the task force should identify obstacles that will arise for each of the five exercises.



Step 4

### Overcoming Obstacles

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Once obstacles have been identified, members of the task force and other stakeholders can be innovative in solving problems before they start.

Brainstorm a list of options for addressing issues before they become obstacles.



## Step-by-Step Explanation of Task Force Tabletop Exercise Protocol

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### Step 5

#### Identify Support

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Now that obstacles have been identified, who are other district staff, health, or community stakeholders who can help you execute plans?

Contact those individuals from outside the task force and ask them to review the available resources and help problem solve on the project in question.



### Step 6

#### Share Plan for Feedback and Prepare for Roll-Out

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Share the completed template for your project with the rest of the task force. Are there items missing? Are there other individuals who can help?

Take feedback from the task force and prepare for roll-out.