

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Issued By: Superintendent Pasquale Scuderi  
Board President Mia Bonta  
Press Contact: Susan Davis 510-910-7305

**AUSD to Begin Weekly Testing of Employees This Week**

**Alameda, Calif. — Monday, February 1, 2021** — The Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) will initiate the first phases of a comprehensive COVID-19 testing program of staff this Wednesday, February 3. The testing is a key component of the district’s plan to re-open elementary schools for hybrid instruction on March 8.

Under Governor Newsom’s proposed “Safe Schools for All” plan, districts need to submit a plan to test all students and staff before re-opening their campuses to students once the county case rate falls to 25 cases per 100,000 residents. Under this plan, the frequency of testing depends on regional case rate for COVID-19:

- *Weekly* testing is required for **all staff and students** if the case rate is greater than 14 cases/100,000 residents
- *Biweekly* testing is required for **all staff and students** if the case rate is less than 14 cases/100,000 residents

As of February 1, the case rate for Alameda County is 28.9 cases per 100,000 residents.

AUSD staff have researched several testing companies since learning of this requirement January 14. At its January 26 public meeting, the Board of Education approved a contract with National Labs, Inc. to provide PCR testing, via nasal swabs, for all employees and all students - a total of about 10,700 people - once schools re-open. Testing will begin with employees who are regularly on campus. Plans are underway for testing students coming to campus for learning hubs and small group instruction.

“Initiating a large scale public health testing program is clearly a massive undertaking for a public school district,” says Superintendent Pasquale Scuderi, “one that requires considerable staff time and focus. We are determined to meet this new state mandate,

however, because we are committed to safely bringing students and staff back on campus as soon as possible.”

AUSD has also signed a contract with Curative Labs for testing services and may develop agreements with other testing companies if that is necessary to complete the mandate for testing.

“We are starting on a relatively small scale in order to pilot the program,” Superintendent Scuderi added. “This progressive build toward testing thousands of students and staff each week will require constant monitoring and adjustments. We are moving into a large-scale operation that is uncharted territory for our district and districts across the state.”

The first session of testing will take place 10 am – 4 pm at District Office on February 3. Employees, the superintendent, and the Board President will be available for comment and video/photographs.

In order to be cleared to open schools this spring, the “Safe Schools for All” plan also requires the submission of a CalOSHA plan and a completed checklist about elements included in the district’s [Re-Opening Plan](#) - such as protocols for masking, social distancing, hand-washing, cleaning and disinfecting, daily health screenings, and tracking and managing COVID-19 cases among students and employees.

“I am grateful for the hard work of staff, the continued advocacy of our families, and the collaboration of our educators,” says Board President Mia Bonta. “We want our community to know that as a Board we are committed to getting our students back to in-person instruction. We know the classroom is the best place for teaching, learning, and the social and emotional support our students need to thrive.”