The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues to pose significant challenges for state agencies, districts, and schools, while also affecting us all personally. TIMSS representatives’ top priority is to protect the health and safety of students and staff.

Our COVID-19 mitigation protocols were developed using CDC guidelines with the input of doctors, public health experts, industrial hygienists, and other subject matter experts on RTI’s Infectious Disease Response Team. These protocols are intended to be flexible to adapt to the changing landscape presented by COVID-19. TIMSS representatives will work with districts and schools to ensure that their COVID-19 protocols are also followed.

TIMSS project staff will monitor local, county, and state public health restrictions weekly to determine whether in-person data collection is appropriate at that time and the level of PPE necessary to ensure the safety of field staff. All protocols integrate physical distancing, minimizing shared contact points, and provision of preventative hygiene supplies.

**Provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

TIMSS will provide field staff with the following PPE:

- Masks (Fit N95, cloth, and disposable)
- Face shields
- Disposable gloves
- Hand sanitizer
- Sanitizing wipes and sprays for equipment and surfaces

**Sanitizing and PPE Protocols**

Multiple times during the assessment day, field staff will follow protocols to:

- Sanitize testing equipment and equipment cases
- Replace gloves and masks between assessment sessions
- Discard used disposable PPE in TIMSS-supplied trash bags and remove them from the school
Field Staff COVID-19 Protocol Training

All field staff will be trained on COVID-19 protocols, including:

- Donning and removing PPE
- Proper disposal of used PPE
- Social distancing requirements
- Sanitizing equipment and equipment cases
- Other school protocols

Health Monitoring

Before in-person work, all RTI staff must sign a Workplace Health Pledge, which states that employees will not conduct in-person data collection if they or any members of their household have been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the past 10 days, if they or any members of their household have shown any COVID-19 symptoms within the past 10 days, or if they have had a fever in the last 48 hours.

In adhering to the pledge, staff will be required to use the thermometer provided by RTI to take their own temperature each day before reporting to work. Staff will not be permitted to work if they present with a fever.

Any field staff who do not successfully pass the daily health assessment will not report to school that day and will be required to either:

- Test negative for COVID-19 in accordance with CDC guidelines
- Be free of COVID-19 symptoms for a 10-day period before conducting any assessment in schools
- Provide written documentation from their healthcare provider releasing them to return to work

School Protocols

Field Staff will follow all school-specific required CDC protocols, which may include but are not limited to the following:

- Temperature checks and other symptom assessments by the school upon arrival at the school
- Social distancing guidelines of staff and students
- Additional school-required PPE
- Additional sanitizing requirements