



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of
Health and Social Services

DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Section of Epidemiology

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April 14, 2016

Dear Superintendent:

This letter describes NEW school tuberculosis (TB) screening requirements for students for the 2016/2017 school year, as required by 7 AAC 27.213 "Tuberculosis Screening of School Children". All school TB screening will be risk-based with significant changes being made to screening recommendations in areas of the state determined to have low TB risk. School categories – high risk or low risk – are determined based on evidence of current or historical increased risks of TB in the community served and are reviewed annually.

Additional guidance will be made available on our website during the next few months to help all districts and schools prepare for the 2016/2017 school year. It is the district's and nonpublic school's responsibility to assess the tuberculosis status of each student within 90 days of enrollment per the guidance below. Lists of school districts and communities by TB risk categories, documents, materials and additional school screening information can be found on our webpage: (<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/tb.aspx>).

- Schools in **high TB risk** areas of Alaska, formerly known as 'A' schools, and boarding schools will continue to provide tuberculin skin testing (TST) for **all students in all grades Kindergarten and higher annually**.
- Schools in **low TB risk** areas of Alaska, formerly known as 'B' schools, will do the following:
 - Use *The Tuberculosis (TB) Risk Assessment for Alaska Students* questionnaire for all students **NEW to DISTRICT in any grade Pre K-12**.
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Documents/TB%20School%20Screening%20Risk%20Assessment%20Tool.pdf>
 - Provide TST only to new students identified with risk factors.
 - Discontinue routine TB testing in 7th grade students.

We are requesting that superintendents forward this information to all schools in your district as soon as possible to ensure that schools are aware of TB screening requirements for the upcoming 2016/2017 school year. Schools **will not** be getting individual letters this year; it is your responsibility to relay this information.

Please visit our Alaska TB Program webpage for additional information on school screening or contact our program at (907) 269-8000 if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MC".

Michael Cooper, MD, MS
State of Alaska TB Controller