

Dear Principal/Superintendent,

During the 2026-27 school year, Pennsylvania Coalition for Oral Health, with support from the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) is conducting a statewide assessment of the oral health of elementary school students. One or more of the elementary schools in your district have been selected to participate. Overall, 70 schools across PA are being contacted about this assessment.

The findings of this assessment will be used to assure that our preventive oral health programs are effective. Children need good oral health in order to speak with confidence, express themselves openly, and to be healthy, and ready to learn. You can [click here](#) to review the full report from the 2021-22 assessment and [click here](#) for a quick snapshot.

Schools throughout the state have been randomly selected for participation in the assessment, which will take place between September 2026 and April 2027. Third grade children, with passive consent from a parent or caregiver, will have a no-touch dental screening that will take less than one minute per child. The screener documents any treated or untreated cavities, any dental sealants present, and assesses the need for dental care. No x-rays will be taken, and no dental treatment will be provided. [Click here](#) to learn more about the screening process.

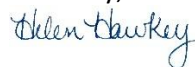
We understand that minimal class disruption is essential in the operation of your school and will work with you to find the best date(s). Each participating child will receive a letter to the parent or caregiver noting the results of the screening. All third grade children at the school, regardless of participation, will receive a free toothbrush and a fun sticker. Your school will incur no cost for participating; the screenings will take place on-site at the elementary school. Any overflow room, including the gymnasium/cafeteria or a classroom, can be utilized for the screenings. No protected health information or identifiable data will be collected on individual children.

The screeners utilized to conduct the survey will be licensed dental hygienists who are additionally certified as school dental hygienists or public health dental hygiene practitioners. All screeners will be trained and calibrated through multiple trainings provided through PA Coalition for Oral Health and the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors.

We would like to ask for your support and the support of your teachers/school nurses to carry out this important assessment of our children's oral health needs. The state coordinator for this project is PA Coalition for Oral Health (PCOH). The administrator who will be contacting you to answer your questions and to receive your approval for conducting the assessment is Amy Tice, Operations & Communications Coordinator for PCOH. Her telephone number is (717) 979-9591 and her email is info@paoralhealth.org.

Thank you in advance for making this contribution to the health and well-being of our children in Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,



Helen Hawkey
Executive Director, PA Coalition for Oral Health
<https://paoralhealth.org/smile-survey>