

PUBLIC COMMENT – SPECIAL BOARD MEETING 7-16-2020

Questions/Comments

Question:

If someone tests positive with Covid19 in the school what is your course of action?

Answer:

Please see the section of our District 118 Return to In-Person Instruction Safety Plan entitled, “Responding to Infectious Disease Symptoms (COVID-19).” <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>

Question:

Will Ivy League continue to host before and after school care on site for students who would otherwise be bus riders?

Answer:

We have contacted Ivy League regarding their willingness to provide services and will inform parents of their decision in the near future.

Question:

What is Palos 118’s specific guidelines, policy and procedure for COVID-19 symptom screening, testing, contact tracing, and isolation? Who is authorized and trained to properly oversee and facilitate the policy?

Answer:

Please see the section of our District 118 Return to In-Person Instruction Safety Plan entitled, “Responding to Infectious Disease Symptoms (COVID-19).” <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>

All staff members will receive training on our new safety procedures prior to the start of school. District and building administrators will be responsible for overseeing and facilitating the policy.

Question:

Who will be checking temperatures?

Answer:

Staff members appropriately trained in checking temperatures using touchless thermometers will be responsible for checking temperatures.

How quickly will that information [reported case of COVID-19] be reported to administrators, parents, and district?

Answer:

The school community will be notified the same day school administration becomes aware of a confirmed case.

Question:

What is the policy for teachers, admin, support staff PPE? How will this be enforced?

Answer:

Please see the section of our District 118 Return to In-Person Instruction Safety Plan entitled, "Health and Safety Protocols." <http://www.palos118.org/return2020> In addition, our school nurses will be provided specialized PPE due to their specific job responsibilities.

Question:

What if a teacher disagrees with the face mask policy and allows students to remove masks/shields?

Answer:

In our staff survey, teachers overwhelmingly reported being concerned about students not wearing face masks in their classes. Through our survey data and conversations with our teachers, it is highly unlikely any teacher would disagree with the importance of consistent and correct use of face masks at all times as outlined in our safety plan.

Question:

Who will be providing appropriate PPE to school staff?

Answer:

The school district will provide appropriate PPE to school staff. Additionally, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency is provided a supply of PPE to school districts.

Question:

Will there be an increase in support staff to sanitize and disinfect surfaces? What if students transition during the day? How will surfaces be sanitized between classes?

Answer:

Yes, additional staff will be required to implement our cleaning protocols. Please see the section of our District 118 Return to In-Person Instruction Safety Plan entitled, "Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols." <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>

Question:

At the identification of the positive COVID (staff or student or direct family member) what is the isolation criteria and who would that impact (i.e., if a teacher contracts COVID and has been with other teachers, in team meetings, teaching undisclosed number of students)? Would all people involved have to be quarantined?

Answer:

According to IDPH and ISBE guidelines, only individuals that come into "close contact" with the individual should be quarantined. Close contact is defined as within 6 ft. of the individual for 15 or more minutes.

Question:

What is the face mask/shield, Covid testing and tracing policy for different age levels (i.e. developmental and support needs for elementary vs 8th grade, students with special needs, students who require interventions)?

Answer:

Please see the section of our District 118 Return to In-Person Instruction Safety Plan. <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>. Each school has created a school based safety committee that will provide further grade level detail for implementing the safety plan at each school. This information will be made available in the coming weeks.

Question:

What were the results of the Back to School Parent Survey and how closely does the District's reopening plan reflect the Parent's desired reopening plan?

Answer:

Please see our Return to In-Person Instruction Board Presentation.

<http://www.palos118.org/return2020>

Question:

For teachers who are uncomfortable returning to school to teach students, what consideration was given to a structure whereby these teachers only teach students who want full-time remote learning or teach students in a classroom setting by 'zooming' into the classroom?

Answer:

The availability of remote only teaching positions is dependent upon the number of families enrolling in the remote only option.

Question:

What criteria will be monitored/measured in determining when the structure will move to 5 days a week in school instruction?

Answer:

The criteria includes but is not limited to:

- An emergency order by the Governor
- Outbreaks of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a school or multiple schools
- Confirmed community spread of the virus
- Directives from IDPH, ISBE and/or the Governor's Office
- Staffing shortages

Please see our Return to In-Person Instruction Board Presentation.

<http://www.palos118.org/return2020>

Question:

On remote instruction days, will instruction be synchronous (e.g., students will be expected to be actively working/listening/learning during the assigned class period)? If not fully synchronous, how will the school district ensure that students are participating in instruction?

Answer:

Remote learning days will include both pre-recorded lessons and live interactions with teachers. Attendance will be taken during remote learning days and student learning will be accessed. For

more on how remote learning has changed since last year, please see our Return to In-Person Instruction Board Presentation. <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>

Question:

How will attendance be handled? Will students be expected to connect with each of their teachers/subjects on remote learning days?

Answer:

Attendance will be taken daily. School committees are exploring options for recording attendance during remote learning.

Question:

Educationally-supportive child care on remote learning days is a major concern for working parents. Some working parents may not be home on their child's assigned remote learning days, or if they are working from home, may not be able to work and support their child during remote learning. As an additional complication, some students may not be in their own home on remote learning days, nor have access to tools needed for success (wifi/printer/adult assistance/etc.). What actions is the district taking to support remote learning given these challenges?

Answer:

Actual lessons will be pre-recorded so students and their families can access them at a time when their schedule allows. We understand the difficulty working families face with remote learning. That is why our plan calls for a very limited use of the hybrid model, i.e. only the first four and a half weeks of school.

Questions:

How will the effectiveness of the remote learning plan be measured? How will learning be measured?

Answer:

Remote learning will never be as effective as in-person instruction. That is why our plan calls for returning students to in-person learning as soon as it is safe to do so.

This year, students will be assessed during remote learning. Their individual progress will determine the effectiveness of their remote learning experience. Some students excel at remote learning and others struggle. Some students have a parent or trusted adult at home to support their learning, however, we know that almost half of our students do not. There is no one size fits all measurement model for remote learning. Each student has a different experience dependent upon their own unique set of circumstances.

Question:

What tools will be in place to monitor and measure student and teacher engagement?

Answer:

Student attendance will be taken during remote learning and student work products will be graded.

Question:

How will the district deal with covid-positive students, teachers and their cohort? Will these teachers/students be moved to a 100% remote learning format, so that they can quarantine at home? What will be required to re-enter school?

Answer:

Please see the section of our District 118 Return to In-Person Instruction Safety Plan entitled, “Responding to Infectious Disease Symptoms (COVID-19)” and “Responding to Confirmed Cases of Infectious Disease (COVID-19).” <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>

Please see our Return to In-Person Instruction Board Presentation. The presentation also addresses this question. <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>

Question:

How will this policy apply to bus riders? Are bus riders being grouped into the same cohort as their classroom? If not, what is the plan for contact tracing and quarantine when one of the bus rider students is found to be positive and students on the bus are disseminated into multiple classrooms? Will all affected classrooms be placed in preventative quarantine (100% remote learning for 14 days) due to the positive case?

Answer:

Quarantine is reserved for individuals coming into close contact with an individual having a confirmed case of COVID-19. Close contact is defined as within 6 ft. of the individual for more than 15 minutes. Using this definition (IDPH), it would not be necessary to quarantine an entire bus or “all affected classrooms.”

Please see the section of our District 118 Return to In-Person Instruction Safety Plan entitled, “Responding to Infectious Disease Symptoms (COVID-19)” and “Responding to Confirmed Cases of Infectious Disease (COVID-19).” <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>

Question:

What will be the return-to-school policy for students who have contact with a positive case? Will they require a negative test result in order to return to school?

Answer:

Please see the section of our District 118 Return to In-Person Instruction Safety Plan entitled, "Responding to Infectious Disease Symptoms (COVID-19)" and "Responding to Confirmed Cases of Infectious Disease (COVID-19)." <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>

Question:

Is the school going to be able to open August?

Answer:

The school district is implementing a phased-in approach to reopening schools. From August 26 to September 25, students will attend in-person instruction two days a week. Starting September 28, all students will return for five days of in-person instruction.

Please see our Return to In-Person Instruction Board Presentation at <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>

Question:

Surrounding school districts are providing a full 5 day in-class instruction. If district 118 moves to a limited in class instruction, how does the district guarantee that our children do not fall behind due to lack of educational management with less in-person instruction? A limited in-person schedule seems like it would provide a sub-par education to our children so please explain how it will not?

Answer:

Every school district will select an instructional model based on their own unique set of circumstances. Our plan takes into account the possibility of students falling behind, which is why we intend to bring all students back as soon as we can in the safest manner possible.

Please see our Return to In-Person Instruction Board Presentation. The presentation also addresses this question. <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>

Question:

Will the kids be broken down into different academic levels in the class room since they will not be able to change classes so they won't fall behind and still be challenged? (Such as higher math class and ALPS)

Answer:

Teachers will differentiate instruction based on individual student needs. Our hybrid model will allow more individualized support for students by reducing the number of students in classrooms the first four and a half weeks of school.

Question:

I would just like to know if there is any child psychologist attending the meeting and if so, I would like to hear from them on what the effects of all of our opening plans will be.

Answer:

We are unaware if a child psychologist attended the meeting.

Question:

How will the safety of faculty and staff at all levels of the district be ensured, especially teachers and custodians?

Answer:

No safety plan can eliminate all risk of transmission of COVID-19 in a school. Our safety plan was designed to incorporate best practices for reducing the potential for transmission.

Please see our safety plan at <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>.

Question:

If we determine that the risk is too great for our daughters to attend in person class, will we be allowed to CHOOSE remote learning as an option? For additional context, we do have concern for the health of two elderly family members.

Answer:

Yes. Please see our Remote Learning Only Request Form at <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>

Question:

I have recently heard that other school districts are considering phases of returning to school has that concept been considered?

Answer:

Yes. Our plan is a phased-in approach to opening school. Please see our Return to In-Person Instruction Board Presentation at <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>

Question:

With younger children less likely to contract or pass on Covid, is there any consideration to applying different plans to younger students who need to be in class and have a more difficult time with online learning?

Answer:

Some students will attend school four days a week in our hybrid model. Please see our Return to In-Person Instruction Board Presentation at <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>

Question:

Will eLearning be actually taught by teachers or is it self-taught?

Answer:

Remote learning in the hybrid model will include both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities and will vary between elementary and middle school. Please see our Return to In-Person Instruction Board Presentation at <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>

Question:

I wanted to ask what is the plan for air cleaning and filtration in classes.

Answer:

Fresh air ventilation will be increased in classrooms. Detailed information can be found on the [Return to In-Person Safety Plan](#).

Question:

What about all the chemicals that will be used for the deep cleaning. Is there a harm to students?

Answer:

The school district will follow all recommendations from CDC, IDPH, and ISBE for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. The school district will utilize cleaning products that are known to combat COVID-19 and are approved by the EPA for safe use in schools.

Question:

Do you imagine students will be able to socialize and bond with their classmates with all the safety restrictions? You've painted a harrowing (but 100% necessary) view of in-person schooling and I can't imagine being in school in that environment being better than being at home? (From a social aspect)

Answer:

Our professional staff is working on a plan to ensure the social emotional well-being of our students. This includes finding creative ways students can socially interact, even while social distancing.

Question:

Can we arrange for students who are doing 100% remote learning to have the same worksheets and paperwork available? Competing assigned work for 1st grade on an iPad is not at all ideal, even my daughter didn't like it.

Answer:

Yes. Buildings will work with families to the greatest extent possible to ensure a successful remote learning experience. The district sees value in both digital and print materials for elementary aged students.

Question:

I assume those of us who prepaid for full day kindergarten will get a refund?

Answer:

Yes, per the letter sent to all full day kindergarten families on May 20 any day where a full day of in-person instruction is not taking place, full day kindergarten families will receive a reduction in tuition in the amount of \$10 per day.

Question:

I missed the meeting. Please tell me if students will be returning back into the classroom or will they continue remote learning and what are new students instructed to do? I have two children whom are new to the district, please advise.

Answer:

Students are returning to school in a hybrid model that will have them in-person learning 2 days per week and remote learning 3 days per week. The hybrid model will occur for the first 4.5 weeks of school and then we plan to move to bringing all students back to full in-person instruction. Students new to the district will also begin the school year on the hybrid model. An overview of the plan is posted on the District website at <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>

Question:

As a mother and a teacher (in a neighboring school district) I applaud the hard work that went into this plan. Thank you all for putting the safety of our children FIRST! With that said, could you please elaborate on what lunch will look like for the students? I am aware that they will eat in class. Will they eat in shifts so that all masks aren't off at the same time? What will mask breaks look like during inclement weather? Once again, thank you all for creating a return to school plan to keep the students and staff safe while ensuring that our kids learn!

Answer:

Building principals are working with teacher teams to determine the logistics of lunch in each of the buildings. We have not ruled out using the lunchrooms, but lunch in each building may look different based on the size of the physical spaces and number of students. These teams will also have plans in place for recess and face mask breaks. The district is exploring heated tent options to provide more space during inclement weather.

Question:

Hello to everyone, hope everyone is doing well. I can't imagine what is on your plate trying to figure out the school year, and it is greatly appreciated. As a mom and bus driver I have great concerns also. I was wondering with small space to work with on the bus and being able to allow 50 students, how safe will this be for the children and drivers. Was also wondering if we will have extra time to sanitize bus between routes along with proper cleaners. Thank you again for your time and all your hard work to everyone working at this stressful time to make schools safe for children to learn. I'm a bus driver and love my job, I love children and my main concern is the safe well-being of them and myself and family as well.

Answer:

For transportation, we are following the safety guidelines established by the Illinois State Board of Education in collaboration with the CDC and IDPH. Buses will be sanitized between routes to

the greatest extent possible and fully disinfected twice daily. The district will consider adding more time between routes or additional staff if necessary to accomplish these requirements.

Question:

Would you be willing to provide support with resources and materials for parents who want to and are able to homeschool their kids but would appreciate some direction from the school and to be able to keep up to par with their child's class? I don't think learning in-person is right for our family, but I'm also having trouble reconciling the fact that my daughter has to sit and learn for 5 hours every day in front of a screen (remote learning) when I am able and willing to provide that instruction to her myself. Maybe there can be quarterly tests/ submission of material to be graded to show the learning that is happening.

Answer:

The district is providing a remote only option for families, and will work to make sure it meets the needs of all learners. Unfortunately, the district does not have the resources available to support independent schooling programs should a parent choose to withdraw from District 118 and home school their child. The Illinois State Board of Education does have resources available for parents considering a home schooling option that can be found on the [ISBE Home School FAQ](#).

Question:

Where can the recording of the meeting be viewed/downloaded? Or, where can the documents presented during the meeting be viewed/downloaded?

Answer:

These items can be found on the District 118 website at <http://www.palos118.org/return2020>.

Question:

Will full day kindergarten still be tuition based with only attending two days a week?

Answer:

Per the letter sent to all full day kindergarten families on May 20 any day where a full day of in-person instruction is not taking place, full day kindergarten families will receive a reduction in tuition in the amount of \$10 per day. It is our hope that full day kindergarten students be in full attendance on September 28th.

Question:

For return to school Hybrid model of 4.5 weeks, do families have the option to select which group A or B considering their circumstances?

Answer:

The school district will not be able to accommodate specific requests for hybrid scheduling. However, we fully plan to keep siblings and families from the same household on the same schedule to the greatest extent possible.

Question:

What is the daily wearing mask timing/locations in school, side effect on students and recommended PPE during school?

Answer:

This information can be found in the [Return to In-Person Safety Plan](#).

Question:

Do families have the option to start full remote learning for the first couple weeks/month and then switch to in person?

Answer:

No. In order to adequately staff the building to meet the needs of all learners, we are requiring families to commit to the remote learning option for the first quarter of the school year.

Question:

For KG students how will their social distancing be maintained considering their self-aware absence?

Answer:

This is a great example as to why the district is starting with a hybrid approach that limits the number of students in a classroom/physical space. Our professional staff will work with students on age-appropriate ways to teach safe social distancing practices.

Question:

On what basis school will measure COVID cases increase in the community and decide to switch to full remote learning?

Answer:

The school district will coordinate with local health officials to determine if and to what extent the school's must move to remote learning.

Question:

While COVID-19 school policies can reduce risk, they will not prevent it entirely, home guidance for families is needed to mitigate the risk of virus spread?

Answer:

We agree and will continue to educate all members of the Palos 118 learning community during this pandemic.