



# PARKLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Educating For Success, Inspiring Excellence.*

## Administration Center

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ParklandSchoolDistrict



@ParklandSchools



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December 11, 2020

Hello Parkland Staff and Families,

A few weeks ago, schools were given a choice to close while the county stays in the category of “substantial transmission of COVID-19” OR remain open, but only if they agreed to comply with the state’s COVID-19 health and safety mitigation efforts and stay within newly identified thresholds for confirmed COVID-19 cases within a school building.

On November 25, Parkland announced its [decision to remain open](#) and signed the attestation form that promises to comply with the ordinance. There were several reasons for this decision. First and foremost, our schools have proven to be a safe and structured environment where in-person learning can occur. The daily wellness screener forms that staff and families fill out have been helpful, and in turn, Parkland School District nurses have been able to quickly identify cases, exposures and close contacts; instruct people to quarantine and seek medical assistance (as appropriate); and make timely decisions for sending students and staff home. This has mitigated the spread of the virus, which has always been our objective.

Our current data indicates that, because of our strong health and safety plans, children and staff are safe in our schools, even when there are rising cases in our community. We can say with confidence, when our District Health and Safety Plan is followed, we have not seen evidence of in-school spread of the virus to students or staff. This does not mean it will never happen. But it does mean that our District Health and Safety Plan is effective. Additionally, we believe it is important to keep the continuity of learning and routine that our hybrid model has provided thus far this year for students and parents.

Parkland was already complying with face covering, social distancing and cleaning measures, so the main item that changed for us under the attestation agreement to remain open was to follow the newly laid out thresholds that can force a school closure as follows:

**A COVID-19 confirmed case is counted as a student or staff member who is not living in the same household within a rolling 14-day period. When determining a confirmed case, the student or staff person must have been physically in one of the District’s school buildings during the infectious time (either 2 days before onset of symptoms or 2 days after a positive test in an asymptomatic person) to be counted as a case that impacts a school.**

***In buildings with fewer than 500 students (this includes all Parkland Elementary Schools, except Parkway Manor, which has more than 500 students):***

2-4 COVID-19 cases would require a 3-7 day closure

5+ COVID-19 cases would require a 14-day closure

***At Parkway Manor (a school with 500-900 students):***

4-6 COVID-19 cases would require a 3-7 day closure

7+ cases would require 14-day closure

***At Springhouse, Orefield and Parkland High School (schools with 900+ students):***

6-10 COVID-19 cases would require a 3-7 day closure

11+ would require 14-day closure

**In all cases stated above, if case investigations, contact tracing and cleaning and disinfecting can be accomplished in a faster timeframe, the length of closure time may be shortened.** The closure determination is made in consultation with the Department of Health.

Thus far, Parkland has had two school closures – one that resulted in a four-school-day closure of Parkland High School in November and a current two-school-day closure at Ironton, with intention to reopen on Monday. We monitor the situation daily and everyone’s compliance in filling out the [wellness screener forms](#) helps us immeasurably. School nurses have typically been getting into contact with any staff or family who answers “yes” to any of the six questions on the wellness screener forms by 1 PM. Anyone who does not receive a phone call by 1 PM is encouraged to call the school nurse to report information.

**With regards to the Governor’s announcement of new and tighter restrictions on activities made yesterday, all athletic and extra-curricular activities are suspended starting tomorrow through January 4<sup>th</sup>.** The East Penn Athletic Conference has already postponed the start of interscholastic competition to January 15<sup>th</sup>. More information related to the Governor’s announcement yesterday about targeted mitigation efforts can be found [here](#).

In Parkland, the indicators above are some examples of the various factors we must consider to maintain in-person instruction. The health and safety of our staff and students remains our top priority. The amount of people quarantining or sick may force a school closure simply because we don’t have enough staff on-hand to keep a building open safely. There is a vast substitute shortage across the state, and Parkland is challenged by this shortage as well. We all must continue to remain as resilient and flexible as possible.

In closing, I want to share that I have been so proud of how our staff has remained razor-focused on our students. I’m also so grateful to the Parkland families who have been supportive of our staff as we navigate this very challenging situation. I realize that this pandemic has caused a lot of anxiety, heartache, struggle, loss and so much more. As we continue to navigate the twists and turns that COVID-19 brings us, know that we are in this together and will continue to make data-based decisions that keep student and staff safety, health, education and well-being as our top priority alongside the

guidance of the Department of Health and local healthcare officials. Please reach out to any of our staff with concerns or questions and continue to visit the resources we have cultivated for you on our dedicated webpage: [www.parklandsd.org/coronavirus](http://www.parklandsd.org/coronavirus).

Sincerely,

Richard T. Sniscak  
Superintendent of Schools