

Dear Families,

In the lead up to school, every Friday I'll be providing weekly updates to keep parents informed of our reopening plans and to provide support to families in preparing for their children to return to school. I hope you find these messages informative.

As a reminder, Palos 118 is taking a phased-in approach to reopening our schools. The school district will utilize a hybrid model for the first four and a half weeks of school. Families have the choice of participating in the hybrid model (in-person instruction two days a week and remote learning three days a week) or a remote-only option (no in-person instruction and remote learning for five days a week). Parents have until the end of today, July 24, to elect the remote-only option. For more information on the reopening plan and remote-only learning, please visit our website at www.palos118.org/return2020.

When I presented our plan for reopening schools last week, I stressed that the plan is subject to change based on a number of variables outside the school district's control. Each week, I'll be updating the community on the status of some of those variables that may require us to revisit in-person instruction.

1. A return to Phase 3 of the Governor's Restore Illinois Plan

Suburban Cook County remains in Phase 4, which allows for schools to resume in person instruction. Source: Governor's Office

2. Outbreaks of confirmed COVID-19 cases in schools

Most Illinois schools are scheduled to resume in August. Source: Palos 118

3. Confirmed community spread of the virus

There is no confirmed widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the Palos area. Source: IDPH

4. Directives from IDPH, ISBE or the Governor's Office

There have been no new directives regarding school reopening issued by IDPH, ISBE or the Governor's Office. Source: IDPH, ISBE, Governor's Office

5. District 118 Staffing

The school district continues to watch staffing closely. Substitute teachers were difficult to staff prior to the pandemic. The shortage in substitute teachers will be an ongoing challenge for the school district. Source: District 118

Since the school district announced its plan for reopening schools, we have received a number of questions from parents regarding our plan. In addition to answering these questions, we've created an FAQ on reopening. You can view our FAQ at www.palos118.org/return2020.

The Illinois Department of Public Health requires the wearing of face masks by all students and staff within school buildings. In preparation for the upcoming school year, we encourage parents to assist their children in finding a face mask that fits their personal preference and is sized appropriately. It is more likely students will wear their face mask consistently and correctly if they can pick out a face mask they like, and the face mask selected fits them properly. For more information on the appropriate type of face mask for school, please visit the CDC's face covering webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>. Face masks are essential to keeping our students and staff safe during in-person instruction.

The Cook County Department of Public Health has issued emergency travel guidance recommending travelers from certain states quarantine for 14 days. The current list of states includes: Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Nevada, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Iowa and Oklahoma. An individual family's personal decision regarding summer travel can contribute to the spread of COVID-19 in our community and ultimately in our schools. As the beginning of school nears, we urge families to reconsider any travel plans to states listed above and any additional or emerging COVID-19 hotspots. We all share in the responsibility to keep our students and staff safe once school reopens. For more information on the Cook County emergency travel guidance, please visit https://www.jacksonlewis.com/sites/default/files/docs/CookCounty07.17.20_CCDPH-press-release_travel-guidance_final.pdf.

Please continue to send us any questions you have regarding our plan for reopening schools. Also, please regularly check our [Return2020 webpage](#) for the most recent updates regarding our plan to reopen schools.

Stay well.

Dr. Anthony M. Scarsella
Superintendent of Schools