



Palos School District 118

8800 W. 119th St. | Palos Park, IL 60464 | 708-448-4800 | www.palos118.org

Dear Palos 118 Families,

At last night's special board meeting, the Board of Education approved a plan to return students to classrooms for in-person instruction beginning October 7. Under the school district's Modified Full Return Plan, all students will have the opportunity to attend school five days a week. The school day for Grades 1-8 will be approximately five clock hours. Kindergarten students will attend for 2.5 hours on a traditional AM/PM schedule. The shortened school day was designed to avoid any requirement to serve lunch, which poses the greatest risk for COVID-19 transmission in schools. Families uncomfortable or unable to send students to in-person instruction under the Modified Full Return Plan will have the option of continuing with remote only services. Parental choice is an essential component of this plan.

The safety of our students and staff remains our priority as we return students to the classroom in October. At this time, there is no community-wide spread of COVID-19 in the Palos area. Few new cases are being reported in the communities we serve. Youth cases in Cook County remain at minimal levels. We have always maintained it is safe to reopen our schools and these statistics confirm it remains safe to do so.

Additional safety precautions will be taken as we reopen our schools. The school district is adding nursing support at each school to supplement our three full-time school nurses. We have purchased COVID-19 rapid antigen tests to quickly assess symptomatic students. Air filters that trap viruses have been added to HVAC units and new air purification equipment will be installed in all of our classrooms. Plexiglas and plastic barriers will be available for every desk. These measures are in addition to our already robust In-Person Instruction Safety Plan we shared with parents this summer.

Later today, you will receive an important email from Dr. Cozza asking all families to re-elect either in-person instruction or remote-only instruction, regardless of the election made prior to the start of the school year. To aid parents in making informed decisions, a narrated presentation of our Modified Full Return Plan will be posted online tomorrow morning. Additionally, the school district will be holding informational meetings this Wednesday, September 23, and Thursday, September 24, at Palos South Middle School. These informational meetings will be live-streamed on Zoom and recorded for later viewing.

More information about these informational nights is included in Dr. Cozza's letter. We want families to have all the information they need to make this very important decision, which cannot be changed until after the end of the first semester in early February. **Please do not fill out the election form until you have watched the narrated plan presentation posted online tomorrow morning or attended (in-person or virtually) an informational meeting.**

We are pleased to have overcome the challenges that required us to begin the school year with remote only instruction, and we are extremely excited to return students to the classroom. Over the past several days, we have received numerous emails from parents asking how they can help reopen schools. Now that this decision has been made, I ask parents to help us keep our schools open. When students are not in school, please remind them to wear their mask, watch their distance, and wash their hands when in public or in crowded settings. If we can minimize transmission in our homes, on our blocks, and throughout our communities, we will be able to keep our schools open. If we cannot minimize community transmission, it is highly likely we will be forced to revert back to remote-only instruction.

There will be more information coming out over the days leading up to October 7. In the meantime, please be vigilant in keeping your family safe and healthy. I look forward to seeing you in the car rider lines soon!

Sincerely,

Dr. Anthony M. Scarsella
Superintendent of Schools