

Dear Palos 118 Families,

As the number of new cases in the community and surrounding areas increase, we are pleased to report that we have had no confirmed cases of transmission in any of our Palos 118 schools after three weeks of in-person instruction. Our commitment to wearing masks, keeping our distance, washing our hands, and not touching our faces has proven effective. Parents being proactive about notifying the school of confirmed positive cases and keeping students at home when required has been a tremendous help to us. Although a hardship for many of our families, precautionary quarantines have been the most effective tool thus far in minimizing any potential for spread within schools. The partnership between families and schools is what has allowed us to keep our schools open for in-person instruction even as positivity rates in Cook and suburban counties rise. Please continue to be vigilant in adhering to our safety procedures.

For our remote learning families, if you wish to participate in our new Remote Learning Family Directory, [please click on this link to sign up.](#)

The directory is designed to help reduce the likelihood of any family feeling isolated during this time by offering an opportunity for remote families to connect. Also, remote families received an email from Dr. Cozza last week with a link to a remote learning survey. If you have not completed that survey, please do so no later than Friday, October 23. If you cannot find the link, please email Dr. Cozza at rcozza@palos118.org.

Calendar Updates

Parent-Teacher Conferences:

Parent/teacher conferences are being moved to November 23rd and 24th. The rationale for this revision to the calendar is to provide teachers additional time to get to know their new students, as well as to hold conferences after report cards are distributed on November 20. It is important to note that Thursday, November 12, and Friday, November 13, will now be regular student attendance days. Students will not attend school on Monday, November 23, and Tuesday, November 24. As a reminder, schools are also closed on November 25th, 26th and, 27th for Thanksgiving.

This year, parent-teacher conferences will be held virtually over Zoom. Directions for conference sign-up and more information on conferences will be emailed out to parents later this month.

Summary of Calendar Revisions

Thursday, November 12th

Regular School Attendance Day

Friday, November 13th

Regular School Attendance Day

Monday, November 23rd

Parent-Teacher Conferences via Zoom - No Student Attendance
East/West/South 1:30-8:30 p.m.

Tuesday, November 24th

Parent-Teacher Conferences via Zoom - No Student Attendance
East/West/South - 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Election Day

The Illinois General Assembly has mandated that all school districts close on Tuesday, November 3, for Election Day. As a reminder, all Palos 118 schools will be closed on Election Day.

This week's metrics:

- 1. A return to Phase 3 of the Governor's Restore Illinois Plan**
Suburban Cook County remains in Phase 4, which allows schools to conduct in-person instruction. Source: Governor's Office and IDPH
- 2. Outbreaks of confirmed COVID-19 cases in schools**
We are unaware of any reported outbreaks in area schools. Source: ISC-4 and news reports
- 3. Confirmed Community Spread**
There is no confirmed widespread transmission of COVID-19 in our school community. As of 10/22/20, Test Positivity is "moderate." New Cases Per 100,000 is "substantial." New Cases are "minimal." Youth Case Increase is "minimal." The 7-day and 14-day rolling positivity rates are both $\leq 8\%$. source: IDPH and Northwestern University
- 4. Directives from IDPH, CCDPH, ISBE, or the Governor's Office**
There have been no new directives or guidance issued this week. Source: IDPH, ISBE, Governor's Office
- 5. District 118 Staffing**
The school district is seeking short-term and long-term substitutes. The Board of Education recently raised daily substitute teacher and school nurse rates to \$150/day. Please call 448-4800 if you are interested in becoming a substitute. Source: District 118
- 6. COVID Dashboard Statistics**
The school district will be monitoring statistics from our new COVID Dashboard as an additional metric in determining the safe operation of in-person instruction. This week,

we had no confirmed cases of transmission within district schools. Our staff and student positivity rates remain low. The percentage of students in **precautionary quarantine** is moderate. Whole class quarantines are the most effective strategy for minimizing the spread of COVID-19 in our schools. As a result, our quarantine numbers will be higher compared to other school districts with less aggressive mitigation measures. In the long run, these quarantines will assist greatly in keeping our schools safe and open for in-person instruction. Staff quarantines are not approaching levels that would impede the safe operation of schools. Source: District 118 www.palos118.org.

Thank you for your continued partnership, understanding, flexibility and grace. Please do not let your guard down in the coming weeks as we continue through this period of rising cases. Only our collective commitment to safety will make in-person learning a continued reality. We are all in this together.

Best regards,

Dr. Anthony M. Scarsella
Superintendent of Schools