

Dear Palos 118 Families,

Happy Holidays! Winter recess is nearly upon us and the promise of a new year within our fingertips. As I look toward 2021, I'm filled with hope and optimism that next year will bring a return to normalcy and the opportunity to once again embrace the many joys of life that have been sacrificed during this pandemic. I am confident at this time next year, we will all be reunited at our annual holiday performances at Palos East, Palos West, and Palos South. I wish you all a very safe and cheerful winter recess and holiday season.

### **School Calendar Update – January 7 and January 8**

At the school board meeting on Tuesday, I informed the Board that a two-day adaptive pause to in-person instruction will occur after winter recess. All students will learn remotely on Thursday, January 7, and Friday, January 8. In-person instruction will resume for students on Monday, January 11. This very brief two-day pause to in-person instruction will provide families with nine days to monitor children for symptoms after the New Year holiday. According to the CDC, the time between exposure to COVID-19 and when symptoms start is on average six days. This extended monitoring period after the holiday is the same successful model the school district used after Thanksgiving, which allowed us to remain operational during the month of December without a significant spike in confirmed cases and mandatory quarantines. Thank you for continuing to support our safety plan and precautionary measures designed to keep our students and staff safe.

### **Second Semester Planning**

Prior to our return to in-person instruction in early October, we informed families that they would be given another opportunity to choose between remote only or in-person instruction for the second semester. The second semester will begin on February 8. Shortly after winter recess, parents will once again have the opportunity to choose between remote only or in-person instruction for the duration of the second semester. An election form will be sent to families electronically in January.

We encourage families to carefully consider the impact changing instructional models will have on their child. Please know that it is our intent to minimize any disruption to teaching and learning as we transition to the second semester, however; our ability to do so will be heavily dependent upon the percentage of families that opt to change to/from in-person or remote only. More information will be sent to families after winter recess.

### **This week's metrics:**

#### **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. This week, Governor Pritzker warned he may issue a stay-at-home order in the near future. Source: Governor's Office

#### **Outbreaks of confirmed COVID-19 cases in schools**

We are unaware of any reported outbreaks in area schools. Source: ISC-4 and media reports.

### **Confirmed Community Spread**

Test Positivity is "substantial." New Cases per 100,000 is "substantial." New Cases are "minimal." Youth Case Increase is "minimal." The 7-day rolling positivity rate is  $\leq 8\%$ . The 14 day rolling positivity rate is  $\geq 8\%$ . Source: IDPH and Northwestern University

### **Directive from IDPH, CCDPH, ISBE, or the Governor's Office**

CDC has updated quarantine guidelines; however, to date IDPH has not recommended implementation of these guidelines. The school district continues to review the updated CDC guidelines and will continue dialogue with IDPH and CCDPH on potential updates.

### **District 118 Staffing**

If you are interested in becoming a substitute teacher, visit the [employment page](#) of our website to see if you qualify and to fill out an online application.

### **COVID Dashboard Statistics**

Our COVID Dashboard has been updated and can be viewed by visiting our website at [www.palos118.org](http://www.palos118.org).



From the Palos School District 118 Board of Education and  
Dr. Anthony M. Scarsella, Superintendent