



Palos School District 118

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

Dear Palos 118 Families,

I want to thank our school community for supporting our adaptive pause of in-person instruction this week. As I stated in my November 20th message to families, this one week pause provided additional time for parents and staff to monitor for symptoms prior to returning to in-person instruction on Monday, December 7. I also encouraged families to get their children tested prior to returning to school if they hosted and/or attended a holiday gathering or traveled for Thanksgiving. The goal of the adaptive pause is to reduce the potential for asymptomatic individuals entering school when in-person instruction resumes.

To keep COVID-19 out of our schools, we need everyone to continue to monitor for symptoms throughout the weekend and keep symptomatic students at home. If you traveled or gathered, we recommend that you follow the Cook County Travel Guidance that can be found here: <https://cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/covid-19/covid-19-travel-guidance/>.

In-person instruction will resume Monday, December 7. Two additional safety measures will greet students upon their return. First, the school district will add a mid-day temperature check for all students. Second, the school district has completed the installation of bi-polar needle point ionization units in district classrooms at all three buildings. These devices significantly increase the number of charged ions in the environment. The increased number of charged ions cluster around micro-particles, surrounding and deactivating harmful substances like airborne mold, bacteria, allergens, and viruses. These measures will supplement our already robust safety precautions.

By reducing the potential for asymptomatic individuals entering schools and enhancing our safety procedures, we hope to continue in-person instruction until winter recess scheduled to begin on Wednesday, December 23. We will, however, be closely monitoring our operations next week for any signs of a surge in positive cases and quarantines that would negatively impact our ability to adequately staff our buildings and/or sufficiently support students. We must work together to keep our students and staff safe so school can remain open until winter recess. This remains a fluid situation and the school district will continue to be prepared to pivot to remote learning if warranted.

As we prepare to resume in-person instruction, please remember to:

- Follow all of the existing safety procedures including completing symptom self-certification forms daily;
- Keep symptomatic students home;
- Keep siblings of symptomatic students home;
- Keep students home if they are awaiting a test result or if a household member is awaiting a test result;
- Keep students home if you believe they have come into close contact with a probable or confirmed positive individual and;
- Follow the recommendation regarding travel from the Cook County Department of Public Health available here: <https://cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/covid-19/covid-19-travel-guidance/>

Before providing an update on this week's metrics, I want to apologize to parents for any inconvenience resulting from yesterday's unexpected school closure. Our Technology Department is working hard to fully restore services. I'll provide a more detailed update on our technology issues in my weekly message next week. We are grateful for your understanding and continued flexibility throughout this incredibly unpredictable school year.

We look forward to our in-person students returning on Monday and wish our remote learners continued success at home.

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. Governor Pritzker's Tier 3 mitigation measures for our region remain in place. Source: Governor's Office
- **Outbreaks of confirmed COVID-19 cases in schools**
We are unaware of any reported outbreaks in area schools. Staffing shortages have impacted some south suburban school districts requiring them to remain in adaptive pause. Source: ISC-4 and media reports.
- **Confirmed Community Spread**
The transmission of COVID-19 is widespread throughout suburban Cook County. Test Positivity is "substantial." 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 $\geq 8\%$. Source: IDPH and Northwestern University
- **Directive from IDPH, CCDPH, ISBE, or the Governor's Office**
There have been no new directives.
- **District 118 Staffing**
The school district will monitor staffing closely as we return from our adaptive pause. 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**
In-person learning has been in adaptive pause. The Dashboard will be updated on December 11. Source: www.palos118.org

Sincerely,

Dr. Anthony M. Scarsella
Superintendent of Schools