



Palos School District 118

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

Dear Palos 118 Families,

The Thanksgiving holiday is a time to pause and reflect upon that for which we are truly thankful. This year, I'm most thankful for our dedicated, talented, and compassionate staff. In the midst of an ongoing pandemic, their students' academic, physical and social-emotional well-being remain their priority. Next week is American Education Week. Please take a moment to send an email to the staff to thank them. I think we can all agree that our teachers and staff deserve praise for the individual sacrifices they make each day to support our in-person and remote students. I am so thankful for each and every one of them.

Thanks to the tremendous efforts of our staff, our schools remain safe to operate for in-person instruction. To date, our schools have not contributed to the increasing transmission rates in the communities we proudly serve. However, I want to reiterate the concerns I shared with families last week regarding the upcoming holiday. As the Thanksgiving holiday approaches, I'm extremely worried about a spike in new positivity rates as young adults return from college, and families make individual decisions about holiday gatherings and travel.

A flurry of new positive cases would most likely overwhelm our operations by making it impossible to adequately staff our buildings not just with substitute teachers but bus drivers, custodians, supervisors, administrators, and other support staff we count on to implement our safety plan. We also anticipate that we will need to support a significant number of students required to quarantine after the Thanksgiving break. I'm asking all families to please fill out a very brief anonymous survey to help us predict what circumstances we may find ourselves in after the holiday. Thank you in advance for your participation. [Click here for the survey.](#)

I'm also asking families to please continue to report positive cases even when schools are closed for parent-teacher conferences and the Thanksgiving holiday. You can do so by calling your child's school nurse (East: 708-761-3504, West: 708-761-3804, South: 708-761-3904). It is vitally important we continue to receive this information.

Due to the troubling trends in our COVID-19 metrics, the school district is in regular contact with the Cook County Department of Public Health. CCDPH continues to advise the school district to be "ready to adaptively pause and transition to remote learning." An "adaptive pause" means one or more schools transitioning to remote learning for a period of no less than 14 calendar days. I have asked our staff to be prepared for the possibility of an adaptive pause at any time now, and I am asking families to do the same. We are doing our best to keep our schools open and we will continue to rely upon the professional advice of our public health officials.

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

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 "substantial." Youth Case Increase is "substantial." 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

CCDPH has advised Palos 118 to be "ready to adaptively pause and transition to remote learning." IDPH issued new recommendations for the next three weeks that include working from home if possible, leaving your home for essential activities only, and limiting travel and gatherings. IDPH stated their goal, "is to reduce transmission as we head into the holidays so businesses and schools can remain open." Schools are exempt from these new recommendations.

District 118 Staffing

As the number of staff quarantines rise, the school district will have greater difficulty filling positions with our limited substitute pool. As of 11/12/20, thirty-six staff members are in quarantine. 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


The percentage of positive students this week is 0.5%. The staff positivity rate is 1.3%. Precautionary student quarantines are up again. 388 of our in-person students are now under quarantine, evenly split between our elementary and middle school students. Staff quarantines are also up. Almost 12% of staff members are in quarantine. Source: District 118 www.palos118.org

We continue to encourage families to consider having children tested if they have been in close contact with an individual that is a probable case (known contact with a confirmed case and is symptomatic) and confirmed case of COVID-19. Below is a list of testing sites in our area.

Possible Testing Sites.

[Physicians Immediate Care](#)

Urgent care center · Orland Park, IL · (708) 675-7070

 COVID-19 testing center

- ! Appointment required
- ✓ Referral not required
- ✓ Testing for all patients

Instructions: Testing for COVID-19 is on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

[UChicago Medicine at Ingalls - Tinley Park](#)

Medical Center · Tinley Park, IL · In Ingalls Family Care Center · (708) 429-3300

- ⚠ COVID-19 testing center
- ! Appointment required
- ! Referral required
- ✓ Testing for all patients

Instructions: You must be screened by the triage team before you can be tested. To be screened, call the COVID-19 triage hotline or current patients should log in to MyChart to complete a virtual screening questionnaire. Nurses and healthcare providers are staffing the triage lines and will determine if you should schedule an appointment to be tested at a curbside testing clinic.

[CVS](#)

Drug store · Tinley Park, IL · (708) 444-4256

- ⚠ COVID-19 testing center
- ! Appointment required
- ✓ Referral not required
- ! Tests limited to certain patients
- ✓ Drive-through

Instructions: CVS Health is conducting drive-up coronavirus testing (COVID-19). Limited appointments are available to patients who qualify. Patients must legally reside in the state where the test is given and be 18 years of age or older. Patients being tested are required to stay in their vehicles and surfaces are sanitized after each visit.

[ARCpoint Labs of Orland Park](#)

Medical laboratory · Orland Park, IL · (708) 963-1200

△ COVID-19 testing center

! Appointment required

✓ Referral not required

✓ Testing for all patients

Instructions: COVID-19 testing available today. Book your appointment by clicking on our website or calling our lab. Rapid results available at select locations.

[Family First Medical Group](#)

Medical Clinic – 10260 W. 191st Street – (708) 572-7575

- COVID-19 Testing Center
- Appointment required.
- Referral not required.
- Testing for all patients.
- Drive-through

Instructions: medical personnel stated patients who need to get testing will set an appointment up by phone, they will email a link in which at the time of the appointment you will video chat with a doctor. If the doctor feels the patient needs testing, they will send you to one of the following two drive through locations to get tested. Either at Evergreen location or Mokena for swab test in vehicle.

Stay well.

Sincerely,

Dr. Anthony M. Scarsella
Superintendent of Schools