



Dear Palos 118 Families,

On Monday, we pause to honor the legacy of civil rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. King dedicated his life to the pursuit of racial equality, the elimination of poverty, and the end to international conflict. Throughout his adult life, Dr. King demonstrated to the world the power of nonviolence and civil discourse. These are two important hallmarks of democracy. As we prepare for next week's presidential inauguration, let us all reflect upon and embrace the ideals espoused by Dr. King.

With the recent terrifying assault on the Capitol Building and news reports of potential violence connected with next week's presidential inauguration, some children may be feeling scared, confused, or angry. Parents may be struggling with how to help their children process these destabilizing events. In response to recent requests, I have asked Dr. Cozza to email parents a list of resources that provide strategies for helping children cope with difficult events. As always, I encourage parents to reach out to their child's school principal as an additional resource. Principals can put parents in touch with our outstanding social workers and middle school guidance counselor or provide a list of community-based providers.

The mental health of our students is important to us. Please mark your calendars for an important upcoming event. On February 9 at 6:30 p.m., Palos 118 will be hosting a virtual parent information night with Dr. Christopher Higgins, licensed clinical psychologist, and founder of Palos Behavioral Health Professionals. Dr. Higgins' presentation will address what effects the events of 2020, such as the Covid-19 pandemic along with other national events, have on children. His presentation will focus on how children have been affected, what parents should look for when determining how their children are coping, and how to build their child's resiliency. He will provide parents with strategies to build their child's resiliency and to engage in meaningful conversation with their child. Dr. Higgins has presented in the past to our parents and has provided important information in understanding our children and practical, smart strategies to assist them with coping when faced with difficult situations. I hope you can join us on February 9.

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. 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**
There have been no new directives this week.
- **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**
You can view our updated COVID Dashboard by visiting our website. www.palos118.org.

Sincerely,

Dr. Anthony M. Scarsella
Superintendent of Schools