

Dear Palos 118 Families,

Thank you for your partnership this week as we reopened schools after our winter recess. If you have been following the news, you may have heard of a few school districts that have canceled in-person learning due to staffing shortages. Palos 118 did have adequate staffing to reopen on Wednesday, but staffing will be our biggest challenge in the weeks to come. Guidance from ISBE on school closures due to staffing shortages has been unclear and school districts continue to seek clarification on whether e-learning days can be used in lieu of in-person learning when schools cannot operate safely due to unfilled staff positions.

I received a few emails this week asking me to declare an adaptive pause and transition to remote-only learning due to increasing positivity rates. Local school superintendents no longer have the authority to declare an adaptive pause. This power was stripped from us at the beginning of this school year. Only IDPH (Illinois Department of Health) and CCDPH (Cook County Department of Public Health) can approve an adaptive pause if they deem schools to be unsafe.

### **New Reporting Procedures for Positive COVID-19 Cases**

We anticipate an increased level of parents reporting positive students in the next few weeks. To expedite the reporting process, we are asking parents to self-report positive cases of students and household members using this [Palos 118 – Student COVID Self Reporting Form](#).

### **Updated CDC Guidance for K-12**

Yesterday, CDC updated its guidance for K-12 schools by reducing the recommended time for isolation and quarantine periods. We anticipate IDPH will adopt CDC's updated guidance soon and are prepared to implement immediately.

### **Reducing the Potential for Transmission in School**

The most effective strategy for reducing the risk of transmission and outbreaks in our schools is limiting the potential for the virus to enter our schools. To do that, we need your help by observing the following:

- Keep symptomatic children at home until symptoms resolve.
- Keep children who test positive at home and contact the school nurse for return to school dates.
- Report any COVID positive household member to the school nurse prior to sending children to school.
- Consider getting children vaccinated or speaking with your family physician if you have concerns regarding vaccinations.
- Consider participating in the school district's onsite COVID-19 testing screening programs. You can receive more information about the programs by contacting the school nurse or emailing [jveihman@palos118.org](mailto:jveihman@palos118.org).

Thank you for your continued cooperation and partnership as we navigate the ongoing challenges of COVID19.

**Portrait of a Graduate Community Forums January 10 & 11**

We will be hosting a series of community forums for the public on January 10 and 11 as part of our first phase of strategic planning. To kick it off, the school board is engaging the entire school community in discussions that will lead to identifying the attributes and skills all Palos South Middle School graduates need to be successful in high school and beyond. Public feedback will become part of the District's *Portrait of a Graduate*.

**Arabic & Polish translation services will be provided at both in-person forums**

The forums will be held in-person and via Zoom and at various times to accommodate a range of schedules:

**January 10**

- **Virtual:** 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.
  - Login at <https://palos118-org.zoom.us/j/84286413097?pwd=aUE5SIErMitoa05ISnUvbHZYMy9pQT09>
  - Meeting ID: 842 8641 3097
  - Passcode: 070911
- **In-Person:** 7-9 p.m. at Palos South, 13100 S. 82nd Ave., Palos Park, IL.

**January 11**

- **In-Person:** 9-10:30 a.m. at Palos 118 Central Office, 8800 W. 119th St., Palos Park, IL.
- **Virtual:** 12-1:30 p.m.
  - Login at <https://palos118-org.zoom.us/j/84286413097?pwd=aUE5SIErMitoa05ISnUvbHZYMy9pQT09>
  - Meeting ID: 842 8641 3097
  - Passcode: 070911

More information about *Portrait of a Graduate* is available online at <https://www.palos118.org/quick-links/portrait> where you can also submit feedback through an online survey. Questions about the project can also be sent to [palosportrait@palos118.org](mailto:palosportrait@palos118.org).