

BOARD OF EDUCATION – ILLINOIS SCHOOL DISTRICT U-46
RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION
FOLLOWING FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL HEALTH GUIDANCE - #2205

WHEREAS, Section 10-16.7 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/10-16.7) requires school boards to direct, through policy, the superintendent in his or her charge of the administration of the school district; and

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, Illinois Governor Pritzker declared all counties in Illinois as disaster areas pursuant to Section 7 of the Illinois Emergency Management Act (20 ILCS 3305/7) and directed implementation of the State’s Emergency Operations Plan in response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), and has continued to issue [Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamations](#) through August 22, 2021; and

WHEREAS, on May 18, 2021, the Illinois State Board of Education passed a [Resolution Supporting In-Person Learning](#) which states, “Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, all schools must resume fully in-person learning for all student attendance days, provided that pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/10-30 and 105 ILCS 5/34-18.66, remote instruction be made available for students who are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine and are under a quarantine order by a local public health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health; and

WHEREAS, on May 24, 2021, the U-46 Board of Education passed a new Board Policy 6.185 to allow for a remote educational program that aligns to Illinois statute 105 ILCS 5/10-29, the application for which was communicated to all U-46 families on May 25, 2021; and

WHEREAS, on July 19, 2021, the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) updated their guidance for the 2021-22 school year which, in addition to encouraging vaccinations for anyone aged 12 and older, also “recommends universal masking because a significant portion of the student population is not yet eligible for vaccines, and masking is proven to reduce transmission of the virus and to protect those who are not vaccinated”; and

WHEREAS, on July 27, 2021, the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) updated their guidance to recommend “universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to schools, regardless of vaccination status”; and

WHEREAS, on July 27, 2021, the [Illinois Department of Public Health](#) (IDPH) announced it had fully adopted the update from the CDC recommending that masks be worn in indoor settings regardless of an individual’s vaccination status in areas with substantial or high transmission, and recommending universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status; and

WHEREAS, on July 28, 2021, the [Cook County](#) Health Department updated its guidance for suburban Cook County school districts saying it “strongly endorses the new CDC guidance calling for universal masking in all schools, K-12 and is revising its School Masking Guidance,” and that “the expectation is that schools will follow the CDC masking guidance”; and

WHEREAS, on July 28, 2021, the [DuPage County Health Department](#) announced it “now strongly recommends school districts begin the school year requiring universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors in K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status”; and

WHEREAS, on July 29, 2021, the [Kane County Health Department](#) updated its guidance stating it “strongly supports recent (7/27/2021) CDC and IDPH guidance for school districts to begin the school year with universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students and visitors in K-12 schools regardless of vaccination status. This update is based on the impact of the B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant”; and

WHEREAS, on August 2, 2021, the Illinois State Board of Education updated its [guidance](#) stating "IDPH and ISBE endorse the CDC recommendation that all teachers, staff, students and visitors to K-12 schools wear a mask while indoors, regardless of vaccination status" and "Who should wear masks in schools? Everyone"; and

WHEREAS, on August 4, 2021, Governor JB Pritzker signed an [Executive Order](#) that requires that masks be worn indoors by all teachers, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status;

WHEREAS, both the Cook County Health Department and Kane County Health Department emphasize in their guidance that the use of the term “should” in the CDC guidance “does not imply that a strategy is optional”; and

WHEREAS, all federal, state, and local health authorities note that universal mask usage in schools regardless of vaccination status will decrease the number of persons who must stay home and quarantine as a result of any close contact with a COVID-19 case, thereby keeping more students learning in-person; and

WHEREAS, the U-46 Board of Education agrees that students should return to full, in-person learning, and that following public health guidance as it relates to COVID-19 prevention strategies is critical not only for the safe reopening of schools for in-person learning, but also to minimize the quarantine of students and staff as a result of the virus; and

WHEREAS, there is no policy or law compelling the Board of Education to vote on the reopening plans for any school year, the U-46 Board of Education wishes to express its support for the plans presented on August 9, 2021, by U-46 administration regarding the reopening of schools for in-person instruction for the 2021-22 school year which will include the universal use of masks within all schools and departments until such time as guidance from health authorities change, or until such time as local data suggests the layered prevention strategies can begin to be reduced;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Education of School District U-46, Kane, DuPage and Cook Counties of, Illinois, as follows:

Section 1: The Board supports the Superintendent and U-46 administration in following the recommendations and guidance issued by the CDC, IDPH, and our local health authorities in Kane, DuPage, and Cook counties, and expects U-46 administration to follow the guidance in order to reduce the likelihood of transmission of COVID-19 and protect our students, staff, and communities, while also reducing the likelihood of students requiring quarantine.

Section 2: The Board requests that administration continue to keep the Board updated when recommendations by federal, state, or local health departments change, or when there are significant changes to the prevention strategies being utilized in schools that vary from the plans presented to the Board on August 9, 2021.

Section 3: The Superintendent will finalize, in consultation with health authorities, a system to:

- a. Routinely test for COVID in schools using an opt-in system for families and unvaccinated staff members;
- b. Monitor the reporting of suspected cases among students and staff;
- c. Continue the monitoring of community transmission of COVID and other related metrics across all U-46 counties and zip codes; and,
- d. Track vaccination rates of students and staff by school or department.

The superintendent, in consultation with health authorities, will use the data listed above to develop metrics that can be used to determine when prevention strategies, including social distancing, mask usage, and limitation of visitors to schools, can be incrementally reduced when data suggests it is safe to do so.

Section 4: Execution of this Resolution is conclusive evidence of the Board's approval of the reopening plans presented on August 9, 2021. The Board warrants that it has, and at the time of this action, had full power and lawful authority to adopt this Resolution.

Adopted this 9th day of August, 2021.

Attested by: _____, Board President

Attested by: _____, Board Secretary