

In-person Instruction Update

September 11, 2020

From the Desk of
Dr. Mary Henderson



[2020-21 School Year Calendar](#)

Curriculum Night for RMS (Virtual): Tuesday, September 15 at 6 p.m.
Next SMART Day is Wednesday, September 23

Weekly DuPage County COVID-19 Metrics for Schools

Last week I shared the metrics and framework that are used by school districts in DuPage County as part of our decision-making process on school opening. Our metrics for this week keep us in the "moderate level of transmission" category. Our number of cases across the county per 100,00 people saw an increase; however, our percent positivity of tests has decreased to below the 5% target.

You may hear on the news that DuPage County has "gone orange" or into the warning category. The data they use for this categorization is slightly different than the metrics for schools. One of the categories they use for this is deaths and, sadly, our deaths in DuPage County increased from four last week to six this week. I know that using different metrics can be confusing, and that is why superintendents across the county are now engaging with our county health department twice a week in order to review data and discuss guidance for our schools.

We currently have not had any cases of COVID-19 among our students and staff.

Updated Guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health

Late last evening, our state health department revised the guidance for schools on exclusion due to COVID-like symptoms. I have attached the guidance to this document. You will see the symptoms listed at the top of the chart. The notable changes are the change from "cough" to "new cough" and the use of the word "new" in front of other symptoms. This is an effort by the state health department to differentiate symptoms related to known, chronic health conditions and new and/or unfamiliar symptoms that may be due to COVID-19. Our symptom certification tickets are being updated with this revised language and will be included with the next batch of tickets sent out.

In addition to the symptom revision, the state health department provides guiding questions and additional guidance for exclusion on page two of the document in order to balance excluding children from school as necessary for safety without being heavy-handed.

Maintaining Vigilance

We are so pleased and proud of our return to in-person instruction progress! Most importantly, though, is our commitment and desire to remain in school. For this to happen, we must remain vigilant with our safety procedures and when all of us are away from school. The trend in data around our county is rising and falling periodically instead of the steady decreases we want to see. As a community, I ask that we all commit to being vigilant and thoughtful when we leave our homes. The county health department shared that in spaces such as restaurants, even outdoors, or any areas where it can be more difficult to hear people you are with, there is an increase in numbers, as the louder we talk, the more droplets may spread at a time when people are not wearing masks.

Parent Survey

Next week all families will receive a survey to share your thoughts on how the start of the school year has gone. We will ask that you fill out a survey for each of your children as we know experiences may vary. Please look for this in next week's update.

I continue to be so pleased with the learning taking place across all of our classrooms. I see close connections between teachers and students already formed, and our students' unique personalities shining through, masks and all!

Sincerely,
Dr. Mary Henderson, Superintendent



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