



**June 11, 2020**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope this note finds you and family doing well. Our staff is actively preparing for the 2020-2021 school year. As a parent, I know that what we experienced at the end of the last school year was unprecedented and nothing that any of us could have expected. While I am incredibly proud of the work that staff and students did during remote learning this spring, we could characterize what we did the last quarter of the year as triage and crisis teaching and learning as no one expected to experience what we experienced around the globe. As we shift to preparing for the 2020-2021 school year, we are committed to creating a robust teaching and learning plan that follows the guidance of the Governor's 5 phase "Restore Illinois" plan and pending recommendations from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), Illinois High School Association (IHSA) and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH).

Under the Governor's "Restore Illinois" plan, we are currently in Phase 3, "Recovery," with the expectation that the state will reach Phase 4, "Revitalization," in time for the opening of school in August. This plan would entail social distancing and health and safety precautions in our schools. Phase 5, "Illinois Restored," will only occur when an effective treatment or vaccine is widely available, our economy is fully reopened and full in-person instruction with no limitations or restraints on social distancing, traditional in-person large gatherings or activities is allowed. We do not anticipate we will be at Phase 5 at the opening of school in August.

As I'm sure you know, many medical experts and health organizations are predicting a second wave of COVID-19 for the fall and then perhaps another wave in the winter. As a result, we must create a plan that provides flexibility to address the needs of our students and staff in an in-person and remote setting. In all likelihood, the school day and student experience will look different this year. Our top priority is ensuring a safe and robust learning environment for all in District 214.

There are three primary scenarios for teaching and learning this fall that we are taking into consideration:

**Scenario 1: Phase 5, "Fully Restored."**

The first scenario is a situation where we are in Phase 5, "Fully Restored," with increased safety precautions and no restrictions on in-person gatherings or other limitations. We view this as highly unlikely during the first semester of the school year.

## **Scenario 2: Phase 2 or 3, “Flattening or Recovery.”**

In this scenario, we are in a fully remote environment. Unlike this spring, new content will be taught, students will be accountable for participating in their classes and they will be assessed on their proficiency of their knowledge and understanding of the content. We would be doing remote/virtual instruction in this scenario. Knowing that we may move between Phases, we want to develop a plan for the fall that is flexible enough to seamlessly move between in-person and remote/virtual instruction in a consistent manner to support families and provide academic rigor and social-emotional support for students and staff.

## **Scenario 3: Phase 4, “Revitalization.”**

In this scenario, schools would be open and we would follow the guidance of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), but our students could potentially participate in a blended or block type schedule with half or a quarter of the students physically in the building at a given time, potentially on certain days of a week, to ensure appropriate social distancing and the implementation of enhanced safety protocols. We have not received specific guidance about opening in the fall from ISBE yet, but we will follow recommendations from the CDC and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to inform our reopening plans.

Several of our goals in planning for Scenario 3 are to ensure appropriate social distancing and safety precautions for all students; to have a set schedule and expectations for students and staff each week; to allow for students to participate in-person or remotely if needed; and allow for a seamless transition to fully remote learning in the event we are not allowed to have in-person instruction come August or at any point in the first semester.

As the largest high school district in the state with 12,000 students, 7 buildings and 1,600 staff, the logistics of redesigning the high school experience for the fall to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff is complex - ranging from transportation and classroom design to meals and teaching pedagogy. I wanted to provide you with a general overview of what we are thinking about today regarding the fall and also ask for your feedback by taking this survey that will help us in our planning process.

The survey is a Thoughtexchange, based on a crowdsourcing platform, in which you will be asked to respond to a few questions and then mark the thoughts of others that you agree with or view as important. Through the process, we will be able to see points of agreement as well as ideas and perspectives from a wide swath of our stakeholders. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with us as we plan for the fall. Your insights and perspectives are invaluable.

You can access the Thoughtexchange at this link: <https://my.thoughtexchange.com/858581781>

We want to ensure we have a strong start to the school year - a strong first day, first week and first month - for all students, and as we welcome our new D214 Freshmen. Our motto for the fall will be “**Day 1, Week 1, Month 1.**” It is our belief that we can have a successful first day, first

week and first month, then we will be well on our way to an incredibly successful 2020 - 2021 School Year. It would be our hope to release our plan for the fall in July. As a parent myself, you have my personal commitment that we will do everything we can to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff while in our buildings and that students do not lose any instructional opportunities as a result of these uncertain times.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to help us prepare for the fall and for your review and consideration of this lengthy correspondence.

Sincerely,

David R. Schuler, Ph.D.

Superintendent