

Dear District 88 families and community members,

As we've previously shared, we have been actively seeking updated guidance for schools regarding COVID-19 prevention from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). Today, July 9, those organizations released new recommendations.

The ISBE State Superintendent Dr. Carmen Ayala issued the following statement:

"I'll highlight two major changes here that I know educators and families have been eager to hear:

- 1. Requiring masks only for individuals who are not fully vaccinated.*
- 2. Recommending at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, but not if this would be a barrier to in-person learning.*

Now that we have the public health requirements for this coming school year, I make the following declaration:

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 have not received a COVID-19 vaccine or who are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, only while they are under quarantine consistent with guidance or requirements from a local public health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health."

Below are highlights of the updated IDPH guidance:

1. Masks should be worn indoors by all individuals (age 2 and older) who are not fully vaccinated.
 2. CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing by people who are not fully vaccinated, to reduce transmission risk.
 3. Screening testing, ventilation, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection also are important layers of prevention to keep schools safe.
 4. The need for localities to monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing and occurrence of outbreaks is emphasized to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies.
- [CLICK HERE](#) to view the full updated CDC guidance.

While we are pleased to receive this information, we still have several questions that need to be addressed. We are awaiting the updated FAQ document from the IDPH and continue to advocate for consistent interpretation of the new guidance.

1. *What level of authority will be granted to local school districts/boards to implement policies regarding COVID-19 mitigation measures, including wearing masks?*

The new guidance reads, “CDC continues to recommend masking and physical distancing as key prevention strategies. However, if school administrators decide to remove any of the prevention strategies for their school based on local conditions, they should remove them one at a time and monitor closely (with adequate testing through the school and/or community) for any increases in COVID-19 cases.” However, currently, if we fail to follow guidance from the IDPH, potential consequences include negatively impacting our accreditation, federal funding and insurance coverage.

2. *What authority will be granted to local school districts/boards to implement a system to verify vaccination of students and staff?*

As shared above, the new guidance reads, “Masks should be worn indoors by all individuals (age 2 and older) who are not fully vaccinated.” With differentiated requirements for vaccinated and unvaccinated students and staff, we would need to implement a system to determine each individual’s status.

3. *What is the physical distance recommended in the cafeteria for meals? Below is the guidance, which doesn’t include a specific distance.*

“Maximize physical distance as much as possible when moving through the food service line and while eating (especially indoors). Using additional spaces outside of the cafeteria for mealtime seating such as the gymnasium or outdoor seating can help facilitate distancing. Note: students, teachers, and staff who are fully vaccinated do not need to distance while eating.”

4. *How will the ISBE define “remote instruction,” and what will be required of school districts to meet this requirement?*

The ISBE State Superintendent Dr. Carmen Ayala released the following statement today. Further details are needed to define exact requirements.

“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 have not received a COVID-19 vaccine or who are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, only while they are under quarantine.”

The health and well-being of our students and staff is the No. 1 priority at District 88. We look forward to returning to full in-person learning in August, and we want to ensure the safest

environment possible. We will continue to advocate for answers to the questions above, and we appreciate your partnership as we collaborate to accomplish our mission of working for the continuous improvement of student achievement. We are reviewing the updated guidance and will communicate updated procedures with staff and families when more information is available. Thank you.

Respectfully,
Jean Barbanente, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools,
DuPage High School District 88