



## **EAST PRAIRIE SCHOOL DISTRICT #73**

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Dear East Prairie Community,

I hope this letter finds you and your family well. Last week, the Illinois Department of Health (IDPH) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) finally released revised [public health guidance for schools](#), as we have been requesting for some time. These recommendations help us considerably as we continue to plan for next school year.

The key update in this guidance is that IDPH/ISBE has revised its recommendation for social distancing in schools, defining it as 3 to 6 feet in classrooms when students and staff are masked, instead of 6 feet as previously recommended. Some exceptions are noted that include when students are unmasked to eat, etc. We do not foresee a major change impacting East Prairie at this time as our model allows us to continue to maximize social distancing. This model has limited our students' and staffs' exposure to the virus by allowing us to uphold the highest standards for safety, training, staffing, and instructional practices. There is no doubt this model in concert with the incredible efforts of our students, families, and staff has made this school year as safe and successful as possible.

Based on our assessment from multiple reliable sources around the future of this pandemic and the guidance contained in the IDPH/ISBE document, we plan and look forward to returning to full in-person school days next school year. There will be modifications and many safety protocol to continue to follow, but we are very optimistic that this will be achieved. In the months to come, we will communicate as many details regarding these plans as possible.

The model we have been using this school year has and will continue to serve us well. It has allowed us to provide a similarly rich educational day for our in-person and remote learners, it has allowed us to maximize safety for our students and staff, and it has allowed us to adjust effectively to staffing considerations and changes caused by the pandemic. The model currently being implemented allows us to support our students academically and social-emotionally and ensures a level of consistency to our students that has been difficult to provide throughout the pandemic. As is always the case at East Prairie, we will continue to do everything we can to support our students, families, and community to the fullest extent possible.

Looking ahead, we will convene our Board-Parent-Teacher subcommittee to review guidance related to next school year. While the current guidance provides greater clarity for next year, we know this guidance will change again before our first day of school. Our goal is to adapt and evolve, providing our students the very best possible

learning environment. We look forward to continuing to partner with you in the best interest of our students.

If you have any questions, please let us know.

Sincerely,  
Paul Goldberg