



## PUTNAM COUNTY COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #535

400 E Silverspoon Avenue - Granville, IL 61326  
(815)882-2800 x 5

Dr. Clayton J. Theisinger  
*Superintendent*

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July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dear PC #535 Families & Community:

The purpose of this letter is to provide more detail on the message included in last week's introductory letter on planning for the upcoming school year. As stated in that message, I know there are several questions and concerns regarding the requirements and operations of our schools for 2021-2022. One of the questions that continues to be unanswered is whether or not masks will be a requirement.

At this moment, ISBE and IDPH have not released any sort of guidance for us to plan for the upcoming year, including guidance related to masks. Per their communications, they are awaiting the CDC to finalize guidance this month, which will then allow them to finish state-based guidance to share with school districts. Further, on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Governor Pritzker signed an executive order that renews the executive orders in place up to that day, including requirements for schools. These requirements are the same that were in place the previous school year. However, this order is set to expire on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The timing of this order means that we may not have a clearer answer until the end of this month.

The PC #535 Board of Education and I have the same frustrations as many of you. Throughout the past year, we have taken the requirements forced upon us while also making local decisions when possible to do what we found to be the best for our students. Those decisions allowed us to keep the schools open to in person learning to the greatest extent possible. We adjusted whenever we needed to do so and kept in focus the safety and security of both students and staff. We were able to have a great year despite the pandemic because of the collaboration between all stakeholders in our District. However, we now sit in limbo with the year ahead.

In response to these delays, I have contacted the state superintendent and requested that the state move at a faster rate to release communications for us to plan for the upcoming school year. There was also a recent letter signed by superintendents all across the state urging officials at the state-level to return local control to districts for planning.

Regardless of the eventual guidance and requirements by the state, there are going to be some difficult decisions that will have to be considered within our district. Of primary concern is the safety and security of our students and their learning, but there are also legal, financial, insurance, and official recognition considerations. Once the direction is provided to us, we ask that you please be patient as we review all factors and analyze the impact on our students, staff, and schools.

In the meantime, I encourage you to contact our state officials to voice your concerns about reopening requirements, including any potential mask mandates, if you have them. The offices of the governor, deputy governor, and IDPH are of most influence on these decisions.

If you have any other questions, do not hesitate to contact me at [theisingerc@pschools535.org](mailto:theisingerc@pschools535.org) or (815)882-2800 ext. 5.

Sincerely,

Dr. Clayton J. Theisinger, *Superintendent*