



December 7, 2021

Dear Blue Ridge Families,

The 2021-2022 school year is nearly at its halfway point, which means that it is time to review our Return to Learning Plan that was last updated in August 2021. As you are well aware, we join all other school districts in recognizing that we continue to function in a fluid environment. What we can predict is that change in conditions, guidance, and mandates is to be expected.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank the board and every staff member for their efforts during the first semester of the 2021-2022 school year.

As of the date of this letter, the district's current plans include:

#### Building Routines

- We know that in person instruction is best for all students. We are operating in person five days per week with a 3:10 dismissal.
- Daily certification will not be required upon entry to buses or buildings; the expectation is that all staff and students will not come to school if they have a fever or any COVID-19 symptoms.
- In August, Governor Pritzker announced an Executive Order that supports safe in-person learning and **requires** that masks be worn indoors by all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Our district's highest priority is to keep our staff and students safe so we can continue to provide quality in-person instruction, therefore, we will continue to follow the guidance as provided by Governor Pritzker and the CDC.
- Masks are required for all drivers and students while on school district transportation, regardless of vaccination status.
- Daily sanitization routines will be maintained- buses, classrooms, common spaces.
- Social distancing will be maintained to the greatest extent possible.
- Hand washing and respiratory etiquette will be taught and encouraged.
- Water fountains will remain available as bottle fillers only.
- Breakfast and lunch routines have been established to create the most social distancing possible.
- Playgrounds are available for use.

#### Health Guidance-vaccination, screening, quarantine

- We join the CDC and continue to encourage students and staff to get vaccinated. As we are able, we will continue to host vaccination clinics and share information regarding other nearby vaccination opportunities.

Dr. Hillary Stanifer, Superintendent

Mr. Brian Easter, BRHS Principal   Mrs. Mary Diener, BRHS Interim Assistant Principal  
Mrs. Katie Nichols, BRIJHS Principal   Mr. Ryan Peyton, Ruth M. Schneider Elementary Principal





Blue Ridge CUSD#18  
411 N. John Street, Farmer City, IL 61842  
Phone: 309 928-9141  
#br\_u\_knighted

- 
- Current quarantine guidance states that vaccinated people who were in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but do NOT have COVID-19 symptoms do not need to quarantine or be tested.
  - Kirby Medical will discontinue its rapid testing for district staff or students as of the end of the first semester.
  - During registration, parents were asked to confidentially disclose their student's vaccination record; this will guide quarantine decisions. Parents were asked to give consent for their student to participate in the SHIELD-IL screening program. This is available for vaccinated and unvaccinated students.
  - SHIELD-IL testing will be offered at no cost to the student or district. With parental consent, we will screen students and staff once weekly. If there is a change to the frequency of the screening, based upon changing guidance, parents will be notified.
  - Once a student is signed up for screening, they are also eligible to receive diagnostic testing at their respective school, as needed. Without giving consent for screening, immediate diagnostic testing would not be available as the student would not be registered in the database system. Example: The parent of a third grade student consents to screening. One day that student develops a fever while at school. When sent to the nurse's office, the parent will be contacted to pick up their child. With parental consent, trained school personnel can administer the SHIELD-IL test before the student leaves the building. The diagnostic results will be shared with the family and the school within 24 hours. Counterexample: In the previous scenario, if the student has not previously consented to the screening program, the on-site diagnostic test will not be available.
  - Test to Stay is operational through SHIELD-IL. If a student is labeled a close contact and 1) has consented to SHIELD-IL testing, 2) is asymptomatic, and 3) has been consistently and properly masking, they may be eligible to remain at school and SHIELD test on days 1, 3, 5, and 7, as determined by the school nurse in collaboration with the local health department.
  - As a reminder, final quarantine decisions will be made in cooperation with our local health department officials.
  - Students and staff returning from illness related to COVID-19 must provide proper documentation to the school nurse prior to their return.

### Ongoing District Efforts

- We will continue to work collaboratively with the local health departments to monitor local transmission rates, vaccination rates, and the impact from any new variants to determine if increased mitigations might be necessary for the school setting. Our overall goal is to respond in a manner that allows us to keep the largest number of students safely in school where learning conditions are optimal.

Dr. Hillary Stanifer, Superintendent

Mr. Brian Easter, BRHS Principal   Mrs. Mary Diener, BRHS Interim Assistant Principal  
Mrs. Katie Nichols, BRIJHS Principal   Mr. Ryan Peyton, Ruth M. Schneider Elementary Principal





Blue Ridge CUSD#18  
411 N. John Street, Farmer City, IL 61842  
Phone: 309 928-9141  
#br\_u\_knighted

- 
- Remote instruction will be made available to students who are both ineligible for vaccination AND required to quarantine/isolate according to IDPH or local health department requirements. This remote instruction will be led by Blue Ridge staff and may include Google meets, recorded classroom lessons, Google classroom, or instructional packets.
  - As a board and administrative team, in collaboration with the local health departments, we will revisit the current mitigation measures on a regular basis to determine if we can decrease mitigation efforts.

#### Helpful Links

- For current updates, please refer to the following sites:

[CDC Guidance](#)

[IDPH Guidance](#)

[ISBE Guidance](#)

Respectfully,

Dr. Hillary Stanifer  
[#br\\_u\\_knighted](#)

Dr. Hillary Stanifer, Superintendent  
Mr. Brian Easter, BRHS Principal   Mrs. Mary Diener, BRHS Interim Assistant Principal  
Mrs. Katie Nichols, BRIJHS Principal   Mr. Ryan Peyton, Ruth M. Schneider Elementary Principal

