



February 4, 2022

Hello District 161 students, families, and staff,

I hope you all made it through the snow storms safe and warm! The decision to close in-person learning because of weather is difficult because of the impact that it has on our families. In cases of inclement weather, the safety of our students and staff members is of the utmost importance, so we check local weather forecasts and communicate with our neighboring school districts to make the best decision possible. As a reminder, we can use a total of five E-Learning Days per year, so we do have three left, in case the weather does not cooperate moving forward.

COVID-19 Metrics

As of today, we have 8 active COVID-19 cases between students and staff members in our 5 schools and district office. In addition, we have 0 outbreaks at this time. You can find our district and school metrics anytime by following [this link](#). Please make sure to keep your child home from school if they are ill and also notify your building nurse if your child does test positive for COVID-19. The breakdown of the active student and staff cases is as follows:

Location	Number of Active Cases	Student Vaccination Percentages
Flossmoor Hills	1	15%
Heather Hill	0	20%
Serena Hills	0	14%
Western Avenue	0	35%
Parker Junior High	7	35%
Normandy Villa	0	N/A

Vaccination Clinic / Community SHIELD Testing Information

Our next vaccination clinic will be held at Normandy Villa [District Office] on February 15th, so please see [this flyer](#) for details. In addition, we are offering community COVID-19 SHIELD testing on Saturdays, from 9:00 a.m. to noon at Parker Junior High School. Additional details can be found [here](#).

Vaccines: Flu & Meningococcal

The health department recommends an annual influenza (flu) vaccination for everyone 6 months and older with any licensed influenza vaccine that is appropriate for the recipient's age and health status.

Flu vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones against flu and its potentially serious complications. Meningococcal vaccines help protect against the bacteria that causes meningococcal disease. It is a required vaccine for students at age 11 and a booster dose at 16 years old. Please see [this information](#) for further details about these two vaccines.

Quarantine Guidelines

The Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Public Health have adopted the updated quarantine guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and that information can be found [at this link](#). In summary, the quarantine period has decreased to 5 days for unvaccinated individuals who are considered a close contact. **Students and adults who are up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations will not have to quarantine if they are only a close contact.**

Free COVID-19 At-Home Tests

Every home in the United States is eligible to order four free at-home COVID-19 tests. Please click [here](#) to order. A home test is not acceptable proof of absence of COVID-19 in symptomatic individuals, but it will provide you with important information about your infection status.

Employment Opportunities

Interested in becoming a part of the D161 team? We are currently seeking individuals to fill the following positions: Art Teacher at Parker Junior High, Lunchroom Supervisor at Flossmoor Hills and Serena Hills, School Support Aide at Parker, Special Education Paraprofessional at Western Avenue and Parker Junior High, Technology Paraprofessional at Serena Hills, Guest Teachers, Guest School Nurses, and 2nd Shift Custodian. For our online application, click [this link](#) and then the 'Apply' button next to the position. To find out more about what D161 has to offer, click [here](#). If you have any questions about the process to becoming a licensed substitute teacher, please contact our Human Resources department.

Illinois 5Essentials Parent Survey

All parents/guardians are encouraged to complete the Illinois 5Essentials Parent Survey. The survey is open now until March 11, 2022. All survey responses are anonymous. The survey results will help our schools identify areas of celebration and opportunities for growth! We truly appreciate your feedback!

The survey provides important data related to five indicators for school success:

- Effective Leaders
- Collaborative Teachers
- Involved Families
- Supportive Environment
- Ambitious Instruction

How to take the survey:

- [Click here](#) to take the survey.
- Select a 'Parent Survey'.
- You may enter your email address if you would like to receive confirmation of your submission, but it is not required.
- Enter 'COOK' into the county field and 'NAME OF SCHOOL' to find your child's school.
- Please remember to click 'submit' at the end of the survey.

There are a number of recycled information items in this letter, but I want to make sure that we continue to include the important content. If you have any feedback on how we can improve our communication practices for COVID-19, emergency closures, or any other topics, please let me know at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dana Smith, Superintendent