



February 11, 2022

Greetings District 161 students, families, and staff,

This is an exciting week in District 161! Congratulations to the 8th Grade Boys Basketball Team for winning Sectionals and advancing to the state tournament this weekend. We will be there to cheer them on to victory and I know they will represent their families and their school very well. Also, our COVID-19 numbers continue to remain low, our quarantines are decreasing, and there appears to be a light at the end of this tunnel. At Monday's Board of Education meeting, we will be discussing the next steps in our COVID-19 mitigation efforts, which include plans to stop quarantines for "close contacts" and to go mask optional on March 14th if our numbers continue to stay low. I am thankful for everyone who has reached out to me with feedback on this topic and I believe that our plans are reflective of the District 161 community's input.

COVID-19 Metrics

As of today, we have 6 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	0	15%
Heather Hill	1	21%
Serena Hills	0	16%
Western Avenue	1	37%
Parker Junior High	4	37%
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](#).

Employment Opportunities

Interested in becoming a part of the D161 team? We are currently seeking individuals to fill the following positions for this school year: Art Teacher at Parker Junior High, Lunchroom Supervisor at Serena Hills, School Support Aide at Parker Junior High, Special Education Paraprofessional at Western Avenue and Parker Junior High, 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.

The hard work of our students, staff, and families is paying off and I appreciate how our community works together to keep each other healthy and safe. As a community, there are varying perspectives on how to proceed with our COVID-19 mitigations, but one item is clear, the safety of our children and staff is most important to everyone. Early next week, I will send an update with the finalized COVID-19 plans, so that everyone is on the same page.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dana Smith, Superintendent