



February 25, 2022

Hello District 161 community,

The wintery weather remains for a bit longer and I look forward to putting it behind us. The main focus of this week's update is on our updated recommendation for changing the District 161 mask guidelines. Specifically, at Monday's Board of Education meeting, we will discuss moving to a mask optional policy on Tuesday, March 1st.

### **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	2	16%
Heather Hill	2	22%
Serena Hills	0	17%
Western Avenue	1	39%
Parker Junior High	1	37%
Normandy Villa	0	N/A

### **\*UPDATED\* COVID-19 Protocols**

At Monday's Board of Education meeting, we will be discussing making face masks optional on Tuesday, March 1st. We are making this adjustment based on several factors, including: our current COVID-19 dashboard data, the removal of the state and local indoor mask mandates, feedback from the District 161 community, and consultation with local school districts. If approved on Monday evening, the following COVID-19 protocols will be implemented, beginning Tuesday, March 1st:

1. Face masks and face shields are recommended, but optional for students and adults, with the following exceptions:
  - a. Pre-K and Early Childhood will remain masked.
  - b. Extra-curricular sports will continue to follow the Illinois Elementary School Association rules for face masks when competing. In addition, teams will follow all local guidelines when competing in other school districts.
  - c. Face masks are mandatory on all school buses, pursuant to federal guidelines.
2. Physical distancing in classrooms / other learning spaces
3. SHIELD testing / 5 day quarantines / Test to Stay
  - a. Weekly SHIELD testing will continue. All students and staff who are participating in SHIELD testing must wear a face mask while they are in the testing environment.
  - b. All students/staff participating in the test to stay program must wear a face mask for 5 days upon returning to school after quarantine.
  - c. All students/staff who are positive for COVID-19 must wear a face mask for 5 days upon returning to school after isolation.
4. Hand Washing/Cough Etiquette will be reinforced.
5. Contact tracing of positive cases will continue.
6. Encourage vaccination for all those eligible.

### **Community SHIELD Testing Information**

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, Serena Hills, and Parker Junior High, Guest Teachers, Guest School Nurses, and 2nd Shift Custodian. For the 2022-23 school year, we have the following positions available: Special Education Resource Teacher at Western Avenue, 4th Grade Teacher and Art Teacher at Serena Hills, Music Teacher at Flossmoor Hills, .5 FTE Speech Language Pathologist for Western Avenue and Flossmoor Hills, F/T Speech Language Pathologist and Heather Hill, and a 5th Grade Teaching position at a school to be determined later.

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!

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.

I am thankful for everyone who has shared feedback with me regarding our COVID-19 protocols and the potential changes. We will continue to monitor our data dashboard to determine if additional changes are needed.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dana Smith, Superintendent