



March 4, 2022

Greetings students, parents, and staff,

I am happy to report that our first week with a mask optional policy was uneventful. Overall, I am proud of how our students and staff handled the transition and I expect the positivity to continue. While masks are optional, we continue to implement our other COVID-19 mitigations, including physical distancing and isolation/quarantine as needed. The Board of Education is committed to monitoring our local COVID-19 data and if a change in protocol is needed in the future, we will make the proper adjustment.

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	17%
Heather Hill	4	24%
Serena Hills	1	18%
Western Avenue	2	39%
Parker Junior High	0	37%
Normandy Villa	0	N/A

COVID-19 Protocols

On Monday, February 28, District 161 implemented the following COVID-19 protocols:

- Students and staff who want to wear a face mask in school can continue to wear them.
- SHIELD testing will continue as scheduled [a mask is required to participate].
- Physical distancing will still be in place.

- COVID-19 positive students and staff will isolate for 5 days, and must wear a mask for 5 days after returning to school.
- Close contacts to a positive case in school may participate in testing to stay or quarantine for 5 days and must wear a mask for 5 days after returning to school.
- Students and staff with COVID-19 symptoms will be assessed by the nurse and may be required to wear a mask while waiting to leave the building.
- Students and staff with COVID-19 symptoms should not enter the building and will be required to show proof of a negative PCR test prior to return.

The administration will continue to monitor both the community and district data and will make changes to our protocols if necessary.

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](#).

***NEW* Free Internet Access Opportunities Through AT&T**

Households can confirm their eligibility for the new ACP benefit and get approved with the federal government's National Verifier at www.acpbenefit.org. More information on this program can be found [here](#).

***NEW* Upcoming Dates**

Monday, March 7	Casimir Pulaski Day - No School
Tuesday, March 15	Summer Academy Registration Opens
Monday, March 28 - Friday, April 1	Spring Break - No School
Monday, June 6 - Tuesday, July 19	Summer Academy in Session [No school on June 20, June 28, or July 4]

***NEW* Summer Academy Information**

The D161 Summer Academy program will begin on June 6, 2022 and end on July 19, 2022. The program will provide free learning opportunities for pre-K-7th-grade students. Please review the Summer Academy brochure [here](#) for additional details. Parents will receive the registration forms on March 15, 2022. Please contact Ms. Karen French at 708-647-7017 or kfrench@sd161.org with any questions.

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: Lunchroom Supervisor at Serena Hills, 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.

As we move into the coming months, you will notice several additional in-person events that had to be canceled last year. We are excited to welcome families into our schools for music performances, plays, academic nights, and sporting events. We will move forward safely, in recognition that the pandemic is still occurring, but with a focus on reconnecting with the great families and community members in our school district.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dana Smith, Superintendent