



July 15, 2021

Board Member:

RE: UPDATED 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Background on Return to Full In-Person Learning for the 2021-2022 School Year

At the March 18, 2021 Board of Education Meeting, District 211 presented its plan for a return to a traditional, all in-person school schedule at the start of the 2021-2022 school year. Palatine, Schaumburg, James B. Conant, and William Fremd High Schools will have an eight-period day and a four-period block schedule will be in place for Hoffman Estates High School. This scheduling has been implemented in the master schedule for students and faculty.

Following current Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) regulations, families with students who have a medical condition that does not allow for in-person learning, an alternative option will be provided in order for these students to remain on-track for graduation.

Safety Protocols

The information below pertains to in-person learning during the school day. Extracurricular and afterschool events will continue to follow the guidelines of the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) Guidelines. At this point, there is no indication by the IHSA or the IDPH of a delay in fall sports.

“The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued updated guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Kindergarten (K)-12 Schools on July 9, 2021. The State of Illinois has adopted the CDC guidance, which can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>. Schools should work with local public health officials to determine the prevention strategies needed in their area by monitoring levels of [community transmission](#) (i.e., low, moderate, substantial, or high) and [local vaccine coverage](#), and the use of screening testing to detect cases in K-12 schools.” (Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools)

Key Takeaways from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as of July 9, 2021:

1. **In-Person Learning:** Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction in the fall 2021 is a priority.

District 211 has implemented a full in-person schedule with a return to the traditional bell schedule with the use of lockers and locker rooms.

2. **Vaccinations:** Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports.

District 211 has held three vaccination clinics on-site and list available vaccination clinics on all its websites. Scheduling assistance is available for families if needed. Current guidance indicates that vaccinated individuals have lessor quarantine restrictions than unvaccinated individuals. Parents may share vaccine information with the school, but it is not required.

3. **Masks and Buses:** Masks should be worn indoors by all individuals (age 2 and older) who are not fully vaccinated. Consistent and correct mask use by people who are not fully vaccinated is especially important when indoors and in crowded settings when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

District 211 recommends that all unvaccinated individuals wear masks while in the school. Any individual is welcome to wear a mask on school property.

Masking is universally required on buses and school-related transportation. The [CDC's order](#) requires that regardless of the mask policy at school, passengers and drivers **must** wear a mask on school buses.

District 211 will require all individuals to wear masks on school buses or other school-related transportation per the CDC order and ISBE communication on July13, 2021. There are currently no COVID-19-related maximums for buses. District 211 will follow pre-pandemic busing practices, which is typically two per seat.

4. **Physical Distancing:** The CDC recommends schools maintain at least three feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing by people who are not fully vaccinated, to reduce transmission risk. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least three feet, such as when schools cannot fully re-open while maintaining these distances, it is especially important to layer multiple other prevention strategies, such as indoor masking.

District 211 will seat students three feet apart in classrooms and other school areas whenever possible.

Eating areas will have seating three feet apart with at least one designated eating area with seating six feet apart. Six-foot designated areas will increase or decrease in capacity depending on usage. Free breakfast and lunch are available for all students. A la carte food items may be purchased.

5. **Layers of Prevention:** Screening testing, ventilation, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection are also important layers of prevention to keep schools safe.

District 211 currently has BinaxNow COVID-19 tests available for optional student and staff use. BinaxNOW is provided free of charge by the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) and the IDPH. Parent consent is required for student COVID-19 testing. District 211 is seeking to finalize an agreement with SHIELD Illinois COVID-19 testing to allow for an optional screening testing program for employees and parents to choose for their children.

All ventilation systems in District 211 buildings meet or exceed current standards for airflow based upon occupancy, have increased frequency of filter changes and have undergone routine maintenance inspections prior to the start of the school year.

District 211 bathrooms are available for handwashing and hand sanitizer will remain available for use.

District 211 employees, parents and students will receive reminders every six weeks, or when information changes, regarding the IDPH-identified symptoms of COVID-19. Individuals who are sick or develop symptoms should remain home. Support contact will occur regarding their symptoms, contact tracing or quarantine and isolation as needed per the local health department.

District 211 follows daily cleaning and disinfecting using the recommended disinfectant products.

- 6. Illness:** Students, teachers and staff should stay home when they have signs of any infectious illness and should be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.

District 211 employees, parents and students will receive reminders every six weeks, or when information changes, regarding the IDPH-identified symptoms of COVID-19. Individuals who are sick or develop symptoms should remain home. Follow-up will occur from the school regarding symptoms, contact tracing or quarantine and isolation as needed per the local health department.

- 7. Under the Age of 12:** Many schools serve children under the age of 12 who are not eligible for vaccination at this time. Therefore, this guidance emphasizes implementing layered prevention strategies (e.g., using multiple prevention strategies together consistently) to protect people who are not fully vaccinated – including students, teachers, staff and other members of their households.

District 211 serves grades 9-12, but younger children and unvaccinated individuals are present throughout the school day and before and after school.

- 8. Prevention Strategies:** COVID-19 prevention strategies remain critical to protect people – including students, teachers and staff, who are not fully vaccinated – especially in areas of moderate-to-high community transmission levels.

District 211 currently has very low community transmission levels. Discussions of community transmission levels are consistently reviewed with the local health department.

9. **Monitoring:** Localities should monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies (e.g., physical distancing and screening testing).

District 211 monitors school community transmission through the District 211 COVID-19 Dashboard posted on all its websites. Community transmission, vaccination coverage, optional screening testing results and outbreaks are monitored in partnership with the local health department.

In partnership with the local health department (CCDPH), the monitoring of community transmission, school transmission, local vaccine coverage and screening test results provide data for recommended changes in the layers of mitigations presented above.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

That the Board of Education accept the safety protocols as presented and direct the superintendent to implement these protocols, as may be modified in the future to conform to the requirements of or guidance by the Illinois Department of Public Health and Illinois State Board of Education, and in consultation with the local health department, except that changes to masking requirements or in-person learning due to COVID-19-related issues may only be made by Board action, unless otherwise required by law.

Lisa Small
Superintendent