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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MEMO

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**TO: PCCS COMMUNITY**  
**SUBJECT: UPDATE TO OUR PCCS COMMUNITY**  
**DATE: MARCH 12, 2021**

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Dear PCCS Community,

Here we are in the homestretch - before we pause for a summer break, a pause that we all need and deserve.

To start, I want to recognize our amazing staff for the hard work and commitment to providing top quality education throughout a year that had many shifts and pivots – this remarkable team kept their focus on safety, connection, and education better than anyone, anywhere.

This isn't a school without our *Natural Leaders* - our students endured and continued to push through an unfathomable year with eyes wide open and a bounce in their step. Through their resilience, we are reminded why PCCS is such a special place and why, more than anything, *we believe that children are our best hope to improve the world.*

Thank you to our parents, we asked a lot from you this last 15 months, we have agreed and disagreed throughout the year. Yet as sustainable communities do, we left our differences in the rearview mirror, and worked towards what's best for our children. As a result, I believe we are stronger than before and have the foundation set to build even more capacity as a thriving community.

### **Next Year**

Over the last few weeks, there has been a lot of speculation throughout the State as to what schools may look like in the Fall. We anticipate receiving much more guidance and detail from the State over the summer but here is what we know right now.

### **Background**

Last week, The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) unanimously approved a resolution in support of a declaration of the return to fully in-person learning when the school year begins in the Fall.

The resolution states the Illinois State Board of Education supports Illinois State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen I. Ayala in making the following declaration after the conclusion of the current academic school year, subject to favorable public health conditions at that time: *Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, all schools must resume fully in-person learning for all student attendance days, provided that remote instruction be made available for students who are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine and are under a quarantine order by a local public health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health.* Students who do not meet these criteria may be eligible for home/hospital instruction pursuant to [105 ILCS 5/14-13.01](#).

In her presentation to the Board, Superintendent Ayala mentioned that the resolution seeks to provide school districts as much clarity as possible as superintendents make important staffing and budgetary decisions and develop programming to support learning renewal. Superintendent Ayala went on to state, in most cases, in-person learning is in the best interest of students.

Before the vote, ISBE Board members discussed at length the need of providing clear implementation guidelines for school districts to ensure the safety of families who are not ready for their children to return to in-person learning for various reasons. Superintendent Ayala stated that ISBE will be releasing Q&A documents and webinars on this resolution.

It's worth noting that this resolution does not impact whether school districts may use remote instruction while the Governor's disaster declarations are still in effect, and the Governor may continue to issue such disaster declarations in the coming months. When a disaster declaration is no longer in effect, pre-pandemic provisions of the *Illinois School Code* for e-learning plans and "remote educational programs" will still be available to school districts. Illinois legislation currently allows school districts to provide individual students remote learning through [105 ILCS 5/10-29](#) or to create blended programs consisting of a combination of face-to-face and online learning through [105 ILCS 5/10-19.05\(k\)\(4\)](#).

Governor Pritzker's last *Disaster Proclamation* was issued on April 30 and is set to expire on May 29, as they are only valid for 30 days. Given that the Governor's recent statements of "*Phase 5 by June*" it will be interesting to see if another proclamation is issued later this week.

What all this means right now, is that PCCS will continue to have multiple plans and approaches to how we will conduct in-person learning in August. It may mean that next year could look a lot closer to full classrooms; limited (if any) social distance, perhaps the elimination (or modified) mask protocol and, except for exigent circumstances, students may not have a choice of being in-person or remote. All of this will become clearer in the next few weeks and we will continue to provide you with updates once we learn more.

Please continue to check your emails over the summer as well as our [Latest News](#) section of our website.

On behalf of our entire PCCS Team, I wish you a safe and relaxing summer.

Hopefully, one filled with adventure and wonder as... *Outside is Always Open.*



Geoff Deigan  
Executive Director