
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MEMO

TO: PCCS COMMUNITY
SUBJECT: UPDATE TO OUR PCCS COMMUNITY
DATE: JULY 8, 2021

Dear PCCS Community,

This message serves to update you on the status of schools in Illinois.

Currently, all schools in the State are awaiting guidance and determination on what schools will look like in the fall. In italics below is a message that all districts received from State Board of Education Superintendent, Dr. Carmen Ayala on Wednesday afternoon.

“We have received hundreds of calls and letters, signed by hundreds of superintendents and parents, and we continue to share your concerns and suggestions with Illinois’ public health officials, who set public health policy for the state. I can assure you that all of us here at ISBE share your desire for the release of public health guidance as soon as possible. ISBE does not make public health decisions. We rely on the medical experts at the Illinois Department of Public Health, who in turn, rely on the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We will keep you posted, and the moment we receive the new guidance for fall, we will share it with all of you.”

While we await the information from ISBE and the health officials, here are a few things that we do know.

State Board Resolution

Upon their unanimous adoption of the Resolution Supporting In-Person Learning, ISBE received numerous questions about the Resolution and its implications. The Resolution, which was adopted on May 19, 2021, did not alter or supplement any existing policy. Instead, it expressed its support for the State Superintendent declaration that all schools must resume fully in-person instruction for all student attendance days beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, subject to an exemption for students who meet a strict, two-pronged criteria:

*“Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, all schools must resume fully in person learning for all student attendance days, provided that, pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/10-30 and 105 ILCS 5/34-18.66, 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. “*

Start of the School Year

We have been told that IDPH anticipates that the CDC will issue its updated guidance for schools in early July, which will then allow IDPH to finalize and issue updated guidance for Illinois schools. While we all wish this could come more quickly, we are hopeful that the CDC will provide additional insight into requirements for social distancing, mask wearing, and other mitigation strategies. Our staff is planning for both looser CDC guidance and the potential that our current in person learning plan will remain in place for the start of school.

I understand the urgency of having clarity so you can make decisions in preparation for the new school year. We too await this information so we can be better prepared in budgeting, staffing, scheduling, and other logistics. What we do know is that PCCS is ready to resume in person learning for every student enrolled at PCCS. We know that this will spark many questions and the truthful answer is - we don't quite have all those answers...yet.

We remain united in our shared desire for clarity and consistency as we educate and protect our PCCS students and staff. We also recognize that it is the prioritization of health and safety as our constant North Star that has allowed us all to get this point in our emergence from the pandemic. We believe Dr. Ayala when she says that we will have guidance very soon and when we do, we will share that information with our community.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Geoff Deigan', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Geoff Deigan
Executive Director