

PRAIRIE CENTRAL COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER 8

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June 29, 2020

Greetings Parents & Guardians –

On Tuesday afternoon, June 23rd, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) released updated guidance regarding our return to school for the 2020-2021 school year. We have begun to dissect all of the information included and will continue working diligently to plan for a safe and successful return to school in the Prairie Central School District. At an initial reading of the new guidance, we were encouraged about the possibility of students returning to in-person learning in August in each of our schools. Throughout the past few months, we have been closely following guidance from the Governor, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Illinois Department of Public Health. Please be aware that our number one priority is always focused on the safety and well-being of our Prairie Central students, families and staff.

In the days ahead, I would ask for you to give us some time to clearly understand the new mandates and use this most current information to continue forward in developing a plan which will not only help to ensure the safety & well-being of everyone, but will also be truly beneficial for our students socially, emotionally, and educationally – while remaining respectful of the concerns and needs of parents & guardians. I understand that everyone is very anxious for some final details and direction, but we are all still dealing with a new reality with many unknowns and uncertainties unfortunately. As soon as possible, we will be sharing additional information with you in order to provide families with sufficient time to plan for an effective and positive beginning of the new school year. Thank you in advance for your understanding and support as we all continue to work together through this challenging situation. The staff and faculty of Prairie Central are extremely excited to connect again in-person with our kids!

The newly received ISBE guidance will be shared with a Return to School Committee which is comprised of teacher representatives and building & district administrators. This group will gather together next week. The new details have also been shared with the Board of Education. As soon as we have any new information to share about the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, we will be sharing with each of you to assist with any planning or coordination that will be needed by our parents and families.

Being a public school district, it is important for us to understand and follow the mandates of the Illinois State Board of Education. This most recent round of guidance was extremely comprehensive, with nearly 60 pages of information included. As we continue working through the full document, there are many items included which are recommendations, allowing for some local control and decision making. We will

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continue researching all available options to safely and effectively return to in-person learning. At this time, I also wanted to share a few of the state-driven requirements which have been documented for all Illinois school districts to follow during the upcoming school year:

- Students and Staff must wear cloth face masks or clear plastic face shields, unless they are younger than 2 years of age, have trouble breathing or are unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance;
- No more than 50 individuals can be in one space at the same time;
- Social distancing should be observed, whenever possible;
- Individual students (parents) and staff will likely be required to conduct self-symptom screenings and possibly temperature checks, self-certifying each day that they are symptom-free... healthy, well & safe to attend school; and
- A requirement for an increase in schoolwide cleaning and disinfection.

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Part-3-Transition-Planning-Phase-4.pdf>

Please remember that these requirements are state-driven by the ISBE and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), not being created or developed here locally by the Prairie Central School District. If you have any personal concerns regarding these items or anything else included in ISBE Guidance, it would be best to contact the state board of education or the Governor's office to share your concerns.

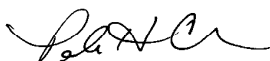
We will continue working on an updated remote learning plan with a clear goal of returning to in-person teaching & learning in August. As we learned earlier this spring, we must also be prepared to effectively shift to remote learning at any time, if that course of action is again required by the state. Of course, this situation may continue to evolve in the days and weeks ahead as we continue to plan for the new school year, but we wanted to send out an update after Tuesday's release of new guidelines.

In order to make the best possible decisions, your input and feedback is desired. Please take a few minutes to complete the brief survey at the link below to help provide vital information which will guide our continued planning for student learning for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year. We know that our parents & guardians may have different opinions about this next school year depending on their child's health, grade level, and additional family-specific factors. Please know that your feedback is crucial in helping us to ensure that both students and staff have a healthy, safe and welcoming learning / working environment throughout the year ahead. The survey will be open until the end of the day Friday July 3rd.

<https://tinyurl.com/yc35t2rz>

Thank you again for your patience and understanding! We will continue working together to successfully tackle the challenges ahead. Please know that we are committed to working hard to develop the best possible plan for the kids of Prairie Central.

Sincerely,



Paula Crane,
Superintendent