



# Return-to-Learn

**2021-2022**

Kane County Regional Office of Education

March 14, 2022

# Kane County Regional Office of Education



The Kane County Regional Office of Education is committed to supporting our nine large unit districts in their efforts to provide in person instruction to their students in compliance with the advice of health experts from the CDC and IDPH.

We will continue to collaborate consistently with our local health department, public, and nonpublic school districts to support their needs as the pandemic continues.

The Kane ROE alternative programs including Regional Safe School Programs, Truancy, and Juvenile Justice Center will be supported by the ROE as well.

# Screening/Sanitation/Hygiene Etiquette Recommendations

A large, light green graphic of a tree is centered in the background. The trunk and branches of the tree are composed of stylized human figures with their arms raised, suggesting a community or a group of people. The overall tone is positive and collaborative.

- Handwashing stations, hand sanitizer, PPE will continue to be available free for students and staff.
- Cleaning and disinfection, and ventilation, protocols in place last year should continue.
- Screening for COVID-19 are suggested as a key strategy to identify cases.

# Instructional Model Expectations



- Pursuant to May 19, 2021, Declaration by the Illinois State Board of Education, we have supported our district leaders in preparing for in-person learning for full days every day.
- Students who qualified for the remote learning option due to inability to get a vaccination and have an underlying health concern will be addressed by our districts.
- The ROE will provide support to the districts and our families in navigating the expectations of varied instructional models.

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# New Guidance

IDPH and ISBE are expected to consistently release updated FAQs that may impact return to learn for our districts.

# Illinois Adopts CDC Guidance for Schools

“Our goal is to protect the health of students, teachers, and staff so that in-person learning can resume as safely as possible,” said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “The CDC is right: vaccination is the best preventative strategy. As school board members, parents, teachers and superintendents plan for a return to in-person learning in the fall, we strongly encourage those who are not vaccinated to continue to mask.”

***Both CDC and IDPH guidance issued on July 9, 2021.***

## CDC Guidance

- Masks may be worn indoors by all individuals (age 2 and older)
- Maintain at least 3 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 3 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.

# CDC Guidance

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



## CDC Guidance

- 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.

# CDC Guidance

- 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.
- 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, screening testing).

# Instruction During Quarantine

Pursuant to the Illinois State Board of Education's May 2021 **Resolution:**

“Beginning with the 2021-22 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.”

**The Kane ROE will provide instruction via Packets, iPads & Big Blue Button (LMS) for those students at the Juvenile Justice Center. Students in RSSP & ALOP will obtain instruction remotely through their local school district. We will also provide support to the districts as they navigate through instructional challenges.**

# Layered Prevention Strategies

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The Kane ROE acknowledges the guidance of IDPH and CDC in their recommendation for schools to follow a protocol of layered prevention strategies.

To support this, we will continue to offer and/or provide weekly meetings with the health department and the district superintendents. In addition, we will participate in biweekly meetings with the health department and directors of school wellness.

Our alternative programs will have access to layered prevention strategies in their schools when necessary.

**Vaccinations:**

Parents asked (Not required) to share child's vaccination status (helps avoid quarantine)

Parents of unvaccinated students asked to allow student to participate in regular COVID testing

Vaccines strongly encouraged

**Mask Requirements:**

Pre-K to through age 12 - Masks required until we begin our surveillance testing and have school-by-school data

Students 12+ and Staff - Masks strongly encouraged if not vaccinated.

Masks required while on buses.

**Social Distancing:**

3 feet to the extent possible plus mask is the best strategy.

Our inability to ensure 3 feet of distance in secondary suggests ALL students and staff should be masked pursuant to CDC.

We will strongly encourage mask usage for all. But especially for unvaccinated students and staff.

**Screening/Hygiene Etiquette:**

Screening will be conducted among unvaccinated students (with permissions).

Regular hand washing and respiratory etiquette (cover coughs).

Building cleaning and ventilation.

Stay home when ill.

**Monitor Data:**

Vaccination rates in community, among staff, and students.

Community transmission rates.

Reported cases in schools.

# Vaccinations

“Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic.” – Centers for Disease Control guidance

- Parents asked (not required) to share child’s vaccination status which will help with contact tracing and hopefully avoid quarantine.
- Parents of unvaccinated students asked to allow student to participate in regular COVID testing, also to help avoid quarantine.
- Vaccines will continue to be strongly encouraged.

The Kane ROE was instrumental in ensuring that all district employees were given the opportunity to be vaccinated in February & March 2021. Opportunities are available throughout Kane County for those individuals 12 and up to be vaccinated for COVID19.

Per Governor Pritzker’s Executive Order from August 26, 2021 with an update on September 3, 2021, school staff are required to be fully vaccinated or succumb to weekly Covid 19 screening.

# Masks

- Because our alternative schools are located with their home districts, our students will be expected to follow the site based protocols in compliance with IDPH guidelines.
- Students at the Juvenile Justice Center will continue to wear masks in compliance with IDPH and Kane County Court Services.
- Middle and High School - Masks are recommended
- Staff in our schools may model the appropriate mask usage
- All passengers and drivers on buses may wear a mask
- Bus drivers are not required to wear a mask.

# Mask Protocols Perspective

## Elementary (unvaccinated):

- Students not eligible for vaccines, thus CDC emphasizes the need to implement a layered approach.
- Start with masks, social distancing, and other strategies.
- Monitor data and use it to guide decisions regarding lifting or adding prevention strategies.
- Smaller environments and ability to ensure social distance.

## Middle and High

- All students eligible for vaccines (except where not advisable due to health condition). Vaccine is best prevention strategy for students 12+.
- Masking will be optional
- Masks are not required on buses.
- The size of middle and high schools make enforcement difficult.



# Social Distancing

- According to the health experts, 3 feet to the extent possible plus mask is best strategy.
- In most of our district school buildings, 3 feet of social distance in middle and high school is not possible (including lunch, band, and chorus). We will strongly encourage mask usage as it is recommended.

# Data Monitoring

Districts and NonPublic Schools will be provided with the latest data available through Northwestern University, IDPH, and the Kane County Health Department.

Weekly meetings with the Superintendents and Kane County Health Department will continue as deemed appropriate based on local and statewide COVID19 data.

The Kane County ROE will remain open for in person services but will continue to monitor our data to ensure the safety of our staff.

The coordinator of alternative programming will monitor the data for the programs throughout the county.

# ROE Monitoring School District Decisions

**PREVENTION STRATEGIES:** Removing prevention strategies should be driven by data (if transmission is low across our communities, vaccination is high, and surveillance in schools finds no cases)

**SELF CERTIFICATION:** Parents/staff should monitor symptoms and remain home when sick, and report COVID symptoms to the school.

**CONTACT TRACING:** Continued contact tracing for staff should continue until deemed unnecessary by IDPH.

**QUARANTINE:** Quarantine will still be necessary if a student has COVID, or presents symptoms of COVID. Students in quarantine are to receive daily instruction from an educator pursuant to ISBE declaration.

**SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION:** Occupancy on buses will not be limited

**FOOD SERVICE:** Food service may proceed with social distancing

## Kane ROE Focus Areas

**ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM MONITORING** - The ROE will focus on ensuring that our alternative program students are receiving consistent instruction.

**TRUANCY** - Youth Outreach staff will make regular contact with youth on their caseload in accordance with the requirements of the TAOEP Grant.

**EDUCATOR LICENSING** - Licensure staff will continue to provide the highest quality service to our educators and school districts to expedite approvals as needed.

**DISTRICT SUPPORT** - All members of our staff will continue with school network groups either in formal meetings or informal discussions.

# Kane ROE Focus Areas

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** – Online and In Person professional learning opportunities will be provided with many customized to the needs of the districts.

**LOCATING STUDENTS:** Throughout the pandemic, many students have dropped out of school, attempted homeschooling, or relocated. Our goal will be to reunite students with their school district.

**MENTAL WELLNESS/SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING:** The potential issues resulting from the pandemic for our students are cause for concerns and an area that we believe needs to be addressed with rigor.

**TRANSPORTATION:** The Kane ROE will work collaboratively with the school districts and school transportation companies to provide refresher and initial bus classes in a safe environment.

## Closing

*“The Kane ROE is committed to supporting our districts through this complex time. Our goal is to support the districts with the understanding that our local school boards are making the best decisions possible for their students”.*

**Patricia Dal Santo, Regional Superintendent of Schools**

**Kane County Regional Office of Education**