



Will County School District 92

"Empowering each student with a love of learning"

Walsh Elementary School
Reed Elementary School
Ludwig Elementary School
Oak Prairie Junior High School

Thursday, August 26, 2021

All Staff,

Let me begin by thanking each staff member who has already done their part to try to end the current pandemic by being fully vaccinated. Your collective effort is appreciated and there is no need for you to read any further unless you still need to [send proof of vaccination](mailto:sdoran@d92.org) to Sandy at sdoran@d92.org.

As you may know, Illinois Governor, J. B. Pritzker held a COVID-19 press conference today where he issued **new rules regarding indoor masking, educational employee vaccination, and COVID-19 testing requirements.**

The newest indoor masking order, statewide, begins Monday, August 30, and the **requirement for educational employees to begin their COVID-19 vaccine regimen is September 5. All educational employees must get a COVID-19 vaccination or submit to testing weekly** (or more frequently if ordered by the local health department).

Pandemic of the Unvaccinated: In the Governor's speech, he stated that we are in a "pandemic of the unvaccinated" and the data certainly supports that observation. We say that we want no masks in schools (and who does?), but without being "all in" for the most effective weapon we have against COVID-19, an FDA approved vaccination, I see a future with increasing sickness and hospitalizations, not to mention increased restrictions and continued mask mandates. This is certainly not the direction we want to go. The way out of this mess is to vaccinate up and stop the transmission of the more serious delta variant as soon as possible.

Exceptions: I understand that there are a very small number of individuals who cannot get the vaccination due to a legitimate medical concern. With the exception of those few individuals, we must acknowledge the importance of vaccinations in order to move forward. It protects the adults and OUR STUDENTS!

Proof of Vaccination: My office has been trying to verify which D92 staff are fully vaccinated for use in contact tracing and quarantining. As of today, we have 54% of D92 staff who are verified to be fully vaccinated. I suspect the actual number is higher, but some staff haven't submitted their proof of vaccination to Sandy. If you are fully vaccinated and haven't submitted your proof of vaccination, please send it to Sandy at sdoran@d92.org or drop it off to her at the District Office.

I know there is misinformation about an employer's right to ask for proof of vaccination due to HIPPA. To be clear, HIPPA does **not** limit an employer's ability to seek proof of vaccination from employees. Please note that only Sandy, the school nurses, and I have access to the list of vaccinated staff and we treat that list with the highest level of confidentiality.

COVID Metrics: The best source of up-to-date information related to COVID, including community and staff vaccination rates, may be found on the [D92 COVID webpage](#).

SHIELD Saliva Testing: As your building principals may have already shared, SHIELD saliva testing begins next week for students and staff who are not vaccinated. Remember that student participation is voluntary on an "opt-out" basis and unvaccinated staff are not yet required to test each week. I believe mandatory testing for unvaccinated staff begins the week of Sept. 5 based on the newest guidance, but that still needs to be verified.

- **Monday, Aug. 30** – Soft launch (practice) of SHIELD testing – no students
- **Tuesday, Aug. 31** – SHIELD testing begins for students at **Ludwig** and continues on Tuesdays
- **Wednesday, Sept. 1** – SHIELD testing begins for students at **Walsh** and continues on Wednesdays
- **Thursday, Sept. 2** – SHIELD testing begins for students at **Reed** and continues on Thursdays
- **Friday, Sept. 3** – SHIELD testing begins for students at **Oak Prairie** and continues on Fridays

At this year's Opening Institute, you heard me say how disappointed I am that we are still masking up. I'm not aware of anyone who enjoys wearing a mask. We need to hear each other clearly and see each other's smiles and facial gestures for true communication. We need to move forward with better COVID metrics, including vaccinations, in order to get back to "normal" learning for students and staff as quickly as possible. Please make it your priority to do your part right away.

Sincerely,



Tim Arnold, Ph.D.
Superintendent