



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

260 Madison ▪ Oak Park ▪ Illinois ▪ 60302 ▪ ph: 708.524.3000 ▪ fax: 708.524.3030 ▪ www.op97.org

TO: Members, Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Carol Kelley, Superintendent

SUBJECT: Item 6.1 - Covid-19 Transition Planning Update

DATE: June 16, 2020

Preview of purpose and content of report:

The Board of Education has asked the administration to provide an update on the Covid-19 transition planning underway in the district.

Since our last report (May 26 Board of Education meeting), our region entered the third phase of recovery in the Restore Illinois plan on May 29. On June 4, ISBE and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) released joint guidance to support schools in complying with the necessary health and safety requirements during Phase 3. This joint guidance for health and safety will apply in Phase 4 as well, with the capacity limit for individuals in a single space lifting from 10 to 50.

Below, please find a summary of the health and safety guidance we would need to comply with for the foreseeable future:

During Phase 4, all public and private schools must follow IDPH requirements, which:

1. Prohibit more than 50 individuals from gathering in one space;
2. Require social distancing policies; and,
3. Require use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Schools should ensure individuals:

- socially distance themselves (6-feet physical distance) when gathering in one space;
- wear face coverings and other PPE appropriate to their duties and risk of exposure;
- wash hands frequently;
- conduct symptom and temperature checks before entering the school building;
- regularly clean and sanitize buildings and equipment;
- abstain from physical contact with each other (handshakes, high fives, hugs) during instructional time, mealtimes, recess, extracurricular activities, and transportation;
- restrict the borrowing or sharing of items; and,

- limit capacity in any space to 50 or fewer people.

Our planning team will be reconvening next week; it was important to me that our staff had a week or two to exercise self-care, especially given the work that lies ahead. When we come back together, one of our primary focuses will be determining how we can operationalize the health and safety guidance we received from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and Illinois Department of Health (IDPH). We will be considering everything it would take to safely reopen our buildings—physical spaces, staffing, social-emotional support for students and staff, scheduling, finances, etc. Some of the implications of these guidance requirements include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Hiring additional classroom teachers to reduce class sizes in order to comply with social distancing guidelines that will be in place during Phase 4. Based upon typical classroom size (see [drawing](#)), class sizes would need to be reduced to 12-16 students.
- Hiring an additional three to five Buildings and Grounds employees (in each building) in order to disinfect all high-touch surfaces and bathrooms daily in an entire school;
- Hiring additional supervision staff in order to conduct temperature checks on staff and students before they are allowed to enter the building each day; doing temperature checks will require supervision staff to have PPE.
- Hiring additional supervision staff or enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with staff to supervise recess and lunch in order to monitor and ensure that students maintain social distancing and abstain from physical contact with each other during mealtimes, recess, and extracurricular activities.
- Adding additional classroom spaces (including furnishing, teacher supplies) to accommodate the additional sections required due to social distancing requirements.

As of today, we have not made any final decisions about what school will look like in the fall, but we are committed to doing everything we can to return to on-site learning to the extent that is possible under ISBE/IDPH guidance. We anticipate receiving from ISBE and IDPH the next part of the transition plan that will advise schools and districts on the start of the 2020-21 school year some time during the third week of June and the second version of ISBE's Remote Learning Recommendations soon thereafter.

On June 16, we plan to share a special report containing a comprehensive summary of feedback we received from stakeholders related to their (spring 2020) remote learning experiences. This feedback includes a diverse collection of stakeholder voices and perspectives, including students.

Our goal is to share more concrete plans with students, staff and families during our July board meeting.

If you are interested in working on a committee who will be designing a survey seeking feedback on our ongoing plans to potentially re-open schools this fall, please visit our Let's Talk page ([see Covid-19/Planning for 2020-21](#)) and message your contact information. Meetings will take place weekly, late June - early July.

I deeply appreciate your patience as we navigate these challenging circumstances together in the service of Oak Park's students.

Find more information about COVID-19 and education in District 97 at <https://www.op97.org/updatecenter/2020-21-planning>.