



DISTRICT 186

SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Return to Learn 2021- 2022

This plan was approved by the Springfield Board of Education on August 2, 2021. As new updates are coming to school districts almost each day from the Center for Disease Controls, Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Public Health & Sangamon County Department of Public Health, it is understood that this will be a living document that will have updates as warranted. These will be discussed at open board meetings as they occur.

Updated August 2, 2021

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Introduction

It is the intention of Springfield Public School District 186 to follow all directives from ISBE and IDPH related to the COVID-19 crisis. It is our goal to resume the 2021-2022 school year with an emphasis on combating the opportunity and learning loss experienced by students and to provide in-person direct instruction as well as all extracurricular activities and events in a welcoming and safe environment for students, staff and families. We want our students in school and that is our priority. It has been a turbulent sixteen months, and we understand the toll that it has taken on families. We thank our families, community volunteers and especially thank our medical and health care providers for surrounding and supporting our staff and students during this time.

In accordance with the Illinois State Superintendent of Schools July 9, 2021 declaration, all Springfield Public Schools District 186 will be open fully for in-person learning for all student attendance days for the 2021-22 school year on August 23, 2021. We will resume our one hour early dismissal on Wednesdays that provides collaboration opportunities for teachers and staff. We are also resuming our balanced calendars at Graham and Southern View. Their first day of school was July 21, 2021.

Remote instruction will only be made available for non-vaccinated or vaccine ineligible students who are under quarantine as directed by the local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health. More guidance on the specifics of how remote instruction will be delivered during these quarantine times will be forthcoming.

The Springfield Public Schools District 186 will continue to follow these guidelines absent an order from the Illinois State Board of Education and/or the Illinois Governor's Office, and will be in operation in accordance with the CDC's updated (July 26, 2021) Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Kindergarten (K)-12 Schools, which was adopted by the IDPH on July 26, 2021 and the Illinois State Board of Education on August 2, 2021. ([Updated: August 2, 2021](#)).

As we re-enter an in person school approach, we will abide by the following mitigations listed. We will revisit these measures with the Board of Education to address any additional needs or possible removal of preventative measures in a scaffolded manner when our local metrics show even greater improvement or vaccines become available for our younger learners. These mitigations include the following:

Social Distancing

Social Distancing 3 ft or greater will be used to the extent possible within school and classroom structures so that it does not exclude students from full day in-person learning. The ISBE FAQ Document released on August 2, 2021 states that this strategy combined with universal indoor mask wearing reduces transmission risk (p. 4). The inability to social distance by 3ft at all times should not exclude students from in-person learning in order to to keep a minimum distance.

School staff are to help students commit to physical distancing as much as possible by:

- Arranging furniture, play spaces and materials to model and reinforce physical distancing of at least 3 feet and movement;
- Utilize classroom rugs minimally and encourage maximizing space for students rather than furniture;
- Providing assigned seating for students and encourage students to remain in these seats to the greatest extent possible; and
- Developing marked paths of travel in classrooms and corridors.
- School staff will maximize physical distance as much as possible when moving through food service lines and while eating indoors. Aside from the cafeteria, additional spaces for mealtime seating will be utilized when available and feasible (e.g., weather permitting). Students and staff who are fully vaccinated do not need to distance while eating.
- Physical distancing measures are to be done in an equitable manner that does not perpetuate academic, racial, or other tracking (e.g., separating people into fully vaccinated and non-fully vaccinated cohorts).

Social distancing along with other mitigation measures is the best way to prevent the spread of COVID.

Updated Guidance on Masking

[Our goal is to return 5 days a week for full days \(other than Wed. early dismissal\) with all student extracurricular activities offered and all student activities and events at full function and capacity.](#)

In order for us to do this, we need to be cognizant that we are in a constant state of fluctuating and at times competing recommendations from the CDC and IDPH and the Sangamon County Department of Public Health and the Illinois State Board of Education regarding the use of masks of both unvaccinated and vaccinated students and staff. Most recently the US Secretary of the Department of Education, Miguel Cardona, issued this statement based on the CDC Guidance:

July 27, 2021

"Students are provided the best opportunity to learn and thrive when learning in person. We know the best way to safely do this is to get as many people age 12 and older vaccinated. Given the recent trends in COVID spread due to premature relaxation of prevention strategies by unvaccinated individuals and lagging vaccination rates in some parts of our country, we support the recommendation for masking in K-12 schools. We must do everything to ensure that our students do not have to compromise any more of their educational experiences due to increases in community spread. The Department stands ready to work with schools, families, and communities to implement these recommendations from the CDC and ensure all students in every corner of the country can return to school in-person, full time this fall."

Contact: Press Office, (202) 401-1576, press@ed.gov

Updated Guidance:

There are three specific levels of Mask Requirements that can be considered and implemented upon a majority vote of the the Springfield School Board of Education. It is suggested that the Board of Education revisit the approved mitigation level after considering our communities data surrounding the spread of COVID 19 and health care professionals.

Mitigation Level 1: (Updated: This matches the current as of 7/26/21 Center for Disease Control, and IDPH Recommendations as well as the Illinois State Board of Education's endorsement on 8/2/21)

- Universal Masking is required of all students (above the age of 2) and staff who can medically tolerate masking in all **indoor settings** unless eating or drinking. Those who cannot medically tolerate masking will be required to have a doctor's note that outline accommodations that are needed. (See Below)
- Mask use is required for all school bus routes including field trips and Capital Area Career Center bus routes.
- Universal masking is required for all CACC students (per CAVV administration).
- Disposable masks will be available if someone does not have a mask at school and on the bus. All schools will be guaranteed to have the supply that they need without having to wait to receive additional supplies. (We recently had over 20,000 cloth masks donated to the school district by the Central Illinois Food Bank as well)
- Mask breaks may occur outside or if students and staff are at 6 ft distancing.

Mitigation Level 2:

- Mask use is required for Pre-K, elementary students and middle school students who cannot yet receive the vaccine.
- Mask use is required on all school bus routes including field trips and Capital Area Career Center bus routes.
- Mask use is required for all middle and high school students who are unvaccinated.
- Universal masking is required for all CACC students as per CACC administration.
- Mask use is NOT REQUIRED for vaccinated individuals, yet students and staff can opt to wear a mask.
- We encourage vaccinated adults to model mask wearing for PK and Elementary students when possible.
- Everyone should be prepared to wear a mask if local metrics warrant that need. (Revert back to Level 1 Mitigation)
- Disposable masks will be available if someone does not have a mask at school and on the bus. All schools will be guaranteed to have the supply that they need without having to wait to receive additional supplies.

Level 3 Mitigation: (Not recommended at this time)

- **Mask use is optional for all students in all instances**
- Disposable masks will be available if someone does not have a mask at school and on the bus. All schools will be guaranteed to have the supply that they need without having to wait to receive additional supplies.

Students in need of Masking Accommodations:

Illinois State Board of Education's most recent FAQ document stated, "Schools that continue to require people older than 2 years of age to wear a mask should make exceptions for the following categories of people":

- A person who cannot wear a mask or cannot safely wear a mask because of a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Discuss the possibility of reasonable accommodation with workers who are not fully vaccinated who are unable to wear a mask, or who have difficulty wearing certain types of masks because of a disability.

- A person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by the relevant workplace safety guidelines or federal regulations.
(August 2, 2021)

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

- School staff will monitor and reinforce frequent handwashing and respiratory etiquette by continuing to teach handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
- assisting young children with handwashing;
- reminding everyone in the facility to wash hands frequently;
- using hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol (for teachers, staff, and older students who can safely use hand sanitizer) when hand washing is not possible;
- continuing to teach respiratory etiquette (e.g., covering coughs and sneezes); and
- providing adequate handwashing and hand sanitizer supplies that are safely stored.

Testing Protocols

District 186 is offering the following testing options at your child's school grades K-12. These testing measures are both available at no cost to the District or to families through the State of Illinois. They are both mitigation strategies to help keep students in school. A parent consent to test form was a part of the registration process for the 2021-2022 School Year.

[UPDATE on 8/2/21: We are now recommending these options for K-12 grade with parent permission.](#)

SHIELD Illinois – SHIELD Illinois is a surveillance testing program through the University of Illinois. The SHIELD test is a saliva-based PCR test. Students will be tested 1 or 2 times per week to identify cases as early as possible. Results are available within 24 hours. Negative results allow students to return to class. The test is self-administered with help from our testing partner. The third party testing partner will contact families directly with medical results.

Students participating in extracurricular activities and sports will be required to test unless they are vaccinated. This practice started during the summer of 2021.

BinaxNow – The BinaxNow Test is an antigen test that provides results in approximately 15 minutes. This test is used when a student has symptoms. In some cases, a negative Binax test is sufficient to allow a student to return to class. In other cases, a PCR test, such as the SHIELD test, is required. The test is a nose swab administered by a school nurse.

Is testing required?

- Testing is not required for vaccinated staff and students.
- Testing is not required, but highly encouraged, for unvaccinated staff and students.
- Testing is required for unvaccinated students participating in extracurricular activities.

Testing all unvaccinated staff and students is critical because approximately 50% of spread is through asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic individuals.

Why should my student participate?

- Early detection
- Keeps kids in school and extracurriculars and reduce any need for quarantine
- Peace of mind
- For vaccinated students, surveillance testing is not necessary. However, if a vaccinated student has symptoms, he/she must be excluded from school for 10 days or have a negative PCR test or alternative diagnosis.

More detailed information is available [here](#).

Consent for both testing strategies will be a part of the registration process. All students must register for school online or in person. Online registration will begin on July 20, 2021 and in person registration opportunities will be held on August 9, 2021 from 11 - 6:00pm and on August 10, 2021 for middle and high school students between 8 - 2:00pm.

[Please note: Balanced Calendar schools, Southern View and Graham Elementary, begin school on July 21, 2021.](#)

Vaccination / Immunization and Physical Outreach

Springfield Public Schools will offer additional opportunities for school physicals, school immunizations that are required by law and additional COVID-19 Vaccination opportunities prior to and after the beginning of the school year. We also encourage families to call the Sangamon Department of Public Health or their regular care physician to schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

Ventilation Mitigation

HVAC systems will continue the mitigation process that we followed in the Spring of 2021. These include:

- Increased run time to continue the flow of air
- Increased air exchange as allowed by the equipment in each individual school.
- New filters with the highest MERV rating that they can handle will be installed prior to start of school and replaced on a frequent basis
- New HVAC equipment will be installed as a part of facilities improvement plans in identified buildings as the projects progress.

AirBox air purifiers for offices, and classrooms with window air conditioners have and are being distributed along with filter changes for the year. (Specifically, Hazel Dell, Laketown and Edison wing of LHS will have one per classroom in addition to other small spaces).

Bi-polar Ionization units for HVAC units are in the purchase process and installation will begin upon receipt.

Communication Plan

The Superintendent and District Level Team will consistently and frequently provide updates to school administrators, teachers and school staff via e-mail and video conferencing as necessary (Zoom). District messages will also be communicated to families via email, automated calls, text messages and social media including the District Facebook and Twitter accounts. Additionally, a dedicated District website has been developed at www.sps186.org/coronavirus and it will be kept up-to-date with all information regarding the 2020-2021 Return to Learn Plan. We will also work with community partners as necessary to share information.

District 186 Website – www.sps186.org

Facebook – www.facebook.com/District186/

Twitter – @schooldist186

Bilingual and ELL teachers will be available to translate or assist students and families with communication. Google Translator is available on our website. We will work to address all barriers to learning.

School and Classroom Family Communication

There will be a focus to minimize the large amount of emails to families by using centralized communication options found in the Canvas Learning Management System, Remind, and Class Dojo.

Resources

We will utilize a combination of resources to share important information about COVID-19, Center for Disease Control, IDPH recommendations, and other District and community messages. These resources include posters, videos, and websites from both community partners and items created by staff and students.

Response to a Positive Case

All communications regarding a positive case will be made following IDPH and SCDPH recommendations.

Both organizations have issued guidance documents for schools that can be found in the District COVID Information Folder and they will be updated as they are issued. At all times, we must ensure a person's right to privacy while sharing the appropriate information. This framework will also include cleaning and sanitizing the building.

Vaccination

Vaccination is not currently mandated at the state or the district level. However, fully vaccinated individuals are not required to quarantine if exposed to a case as long as they remain asymptomatic.

Why Vaccinate?

Scenario	Vaccinated	Not Vaccinated
Someone at home has COVID.	Continue to attend school and activities.	Must stay home from school and activities for 24 days.
Someone at home has symptoms.	Continue to attend school and activities.	Must stay home from school and activities for 24 days.
Close contact with someone outside of the home that has COVID including a teammate or classmate.	Continue to attend school and activities.	Must stay home from school and activities for 14 days.
Student has COVID symptoms.	Out 10 days or until negative PCR test or alternative diagnosis.	Out 10 days or until negative PCR test or alternative diagnosis.

(Chart updated after the 8/2/21 Board of Education action to adopt Mitigation Level 1)

Requesting Proof of Vaccination for Informational Purposes

As stated in the Illinois State Board of Education FAQ document released on August 2, 2021, schools may request proof of vaccination from parents for their children or from staff to determine vaccination status. The protocol to collect, to secure, to use and regulatory requirements, including Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) statutory and regulatory requirements. In addition, local school authorities are permitted to access the statewide immunization database to review student immunization records. The District will ensure that only employees who have direct responsibility for ensuring student compliance with 77 ILL.Adm. Code 665.210 can apply for and receive access to I-CARE database. (Updated: August 2, 2021)

Facilities & Operations

Signs, Markers and Hallways

- All school buildings have signs regarding face masks requirements and social distancing requirements and other safety procedures that are consistent across all school buildings.
- Schools have installed floor markers for social distancing and one-directional movement.

Locker Rooms and Lockers

- Locker rooms will be used and resume normal usage.
- We will still ask students and staff to store their coats and bookbags in their lockers for safety reasons.

Cleaning

- All disinfectant and cleaning products used by the District are listed as effective against COVID-19 and other viruses.
- Our buildings are generally closed to staff other than coaches, teams and administrators until August 9 or by appointment only as approved by the administration to allow for rooms to remain sanitized.

Day Cleaning Protocol

- The head custodian will inspect the building condition each morning prior to students and staff entering the facility.
- Upon completion of students and staff entering the building, entryways and touch surfaces will be disinfected.
- Restrooms will be monitored and disinfected multiple times throughout the day.
- Trash and corridors will be maintained as usual during the day.
- Food waste removal will be determined by schedule and a process will be developed by the District.
- Periodic disinfecting of touch surfaces will occur throughout the day.
- Classrooms will have access to disinfecting spray. Spot cleaning throughout the day **can be done by teaching and support staff if warranted. This is not required.** Staff will be provided supplies they need and have access to custodial staff throughout the day.

Night Cleaning Protocol

- Night custodial teams will be disinfecting each room and classroom on a nightly basis.
- Rooms will be swept and mopped regularly on a predetermined schedule
- Classroom desks, chairs, and touch surfaces will be disinfected regularly.
- Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected nightly as usual.
- Locker surfaces will be sprayed with disinfectant regularly.
- All trash will be removed as usual.
- Corridors will be swept and mopped then touch surfaces disinfected.

Cleaning Supplies

Cleaning products are in stock to address the needs of the upcoming school year.

Crisis Cleaning Response Team

A crisis cleaning response team has been developed to address special cleaning activities in the event of a partial or complete closing of a facility due to a positive case in a building. This is a workforce that has volunteered for extra duty assignments. This group is made up of our current trained custodial staff and facilitated by the District in

cooperation with SEIU Local 15. This group is willing to work overtime and night shifts to properly sanitize spaces and buildings.

Response Actions by Operations and Maintenance Department and the response team

In the event that the District decides to implement closing whole facilities or specific areas of facilities, the Operations and Maintenance may be asked to perform special cleaning as required. No decision to close or clean a building will be done without input from the District and Building Administration, along with the consultation of local, state or federal health department officials as necessary.

Response Actions

Only when it is determined that a cleaning or closing is warranted the response team will do the following.

- Coordinate with supervisors, building custodial teams and school administrators to outline procedures and areas to be cleaned.
- Regulate the area to be cleaned, i.e. lock doors, install barricades and signage if necessary.
- Ventilate the area if possible with existing HVAC equipment and or opening windows.
- Clean and disinfect as listed below.
- Reestablish occupancy after confirming with District Administration and health officials as necessary.

Process

- The team members are alerted of the situation. The number of team members will be determined by the size of the area to be cleaned and disinfected.
- Team members will arrive at the building with masks (N95), gloves, eye protection, disinfectant and additional cleaning equipment as needed.
- The team regulates the building. No one enters the building/area without PPE.
- Ventilation will be increased if existing equipment allows. Windows will be opened to promote ventilation weather permitting.
- Team members disinfect their way into the building/area and apply disinfectant (Buckeye E23) to touch surfaces of identified areas. Use of misters may be used as warranted.
- Touch surfaces are wiped down after contact time allotment and disinfectant applied again.
- Furniture and equipment are cleaned.
- Floor areas are then cleaned with Buckeye E33 Neutral Cleaner.
- Buckeye E23 disinfectant is re-applied and allowed to dry.
- The team cleans up and leaves the building disposing of used PPE and cleaning materials outside.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE will be provided to schools and additional supplies may be requested at any time. The District will continue to stock and reorder PPE as needed so needs can be met.