

Executive Summary

This document is Part Three of the Transition Advisory Workgroup's recommendations for transitioning to in-person instruction. This document has been developed in partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH).

On May 5, 2020, Governor JB Pritzker announced the [Restore Illinois](#) plan, which lays out a public health approach to safely reopen our state. This document focuses on considerations during Phase 4 of the plan. As the plan notes, the four public health regions of the state may reach Phase 4 on different dates and possibly must return independently to an earlier phase if necessitated by public health indicators. See Appendix A for a map of the four public health regions in Illinois.

[Executive Order 2020-40](#), filed on June 4, 2020, allowed schools to reopen for in-person instruction in Phase 3. In-person instruction is strongly encouraged in Phase 4; however, it is critical to note that this does not signify a return to pre-pandemic operations. Appropriate social distancing, face coverings, enhanced sanitation measures, and other accommodations will be necessary to ensure the safety of students, staff, and their families. During Phase 4, IDPH guidelines will:

- Require use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including face coverings;
- Prohibit more than 50 individuals from gathering in one space;
- Require social distancing be observed, as much as possible;
- Require that schools conduct symptom screenings and temperature checks or require that individuals self-certify that they are free of symptoms before entering school buildings; and
- Require an increase in schoolwide cleaning and disinfection.

All public and nonpublic schools in Illinois serving prekindergarten through 12th grade students must follow these guidelines.

It is important to note that these requirements are subject to change pursuant to updated public health guidance and changing public health conditions. School leaders should remain alert for any updates.

Schools and districts should also prepare for a return to remote instruction in the event of a resurgence of the virus or a second wave of it in the fall.

ISBE recommends clear communication with students, families, and staff about expectations and protocols for all schools. ISBE also recommends collecting information from students and families via an intake survey/needs assessment to help guide school and district planning and to connect students and families with resources in advance of the start of the school year.

Each child will return to school having had a unique experience with remote learning. This document includes instructional recommendations for all schools and districts for the start of the

2020-21 school year, paying close attention to assessing and addressing learning loss. This document recommends shifts in instructional practice to help maintain social distancing, especially for our youngest learners, who may struggle to understand and comply with social distancing and PPE usage. This document also provides considerations for students with disabilities and English Learners. ISBE will release an updated Remote Learning Recommendations document in the coming weeks to further support districts.

Governor JB Pritzker recently signed Public Act 101-0643; the education omnibus legislation passed during the abbreviated special session. This Public Act addresses multiple education-related issues, including many important provisions to provide relief to schools and districts during public health emergencies. The legislation suspends clock hour requirements during a disaster declaration and allows the State Superintendent to establish minimum clock hour requirements. The State Superintendent has determined that Remote and Blended Remote Learning Days must ensure at least 5 clock hours of instruction or school work for each student. Districts can be flexible in determining how to best meet the requirement in their own context by counting all learning activities toward the 5 clock hour expectation.

Meaningful professional development will be critical for teachers and staff to be able to meet the diverse academic and social-emotional needs of students returning to school under the current circumstances. PA 101-0643 allows every school and district to utilize up to five total Remote and Blended Remote Learning Planning Days, in addition to normal Teacher Institute Days. ISBE recommends identifying the grade-level standards that students did not cover in the previous school year and providing time for vertical articulation to ensure a smooth transition, especially for students entering new grade bands or schools. ISBE recommends dedicating professional learning and collaboration time to developing reintegration assessments; preparing to address students' mental health needs; evaluating the successes and challenges of remote learning; and training on recognizing and affirming the socio-economic, cultural, religious, ethnic, racial, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, and language diversity of the population within each district. Teachers and students also will need training on any new technology devices or programs if the school utilizes Blended Remote Learning Days and/or in preparation for intermittent returns to Remote Learning Days. ISBE recommends utilizing teacher leaders, statewide coaching networks, and teacher mentors for ongoing support during the school year.

Regarding grading, ISBE recommends school districts return to traditional grading policies and make modifications as necessary. ISBE strongly recommends that any return to traditional grading policies ensures that students have all the necessary tools, technology, and teacher supports at school and at home to complete all assignments, take assessments, and complete projects in a timely manner. Per the School Code, grading policies are the exclusive responsibilities of local districts (105 ILCS 5/10-20.9a).

Lastly, this document provides guidance from IDPH regarding health and safety protocols for specific activities and areas of the school. Please note that some of the guidance has been updated from the Part 2 document released on June 4, 2020, and includes new recommendations regarding illness and diagnoses monitoring, mental health, nap time, libraries, auditoriums and multi-purpose rooms, self-contained classrooms, related services, before- and after-care

programs, health offices, extracurriculars, playgrounds, dual credit and career and technical education, and field trips.