

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

CASS SCHOOL DISTRICT 63

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Mark R. Cross

Superintendent of Schools



Thursday, November 5, 2020

Dear Cass School District 63 Parents and Community Members,

First and foremost, on behalf of the teachers, staff, administration and Board of Education of Cass School District 63, I would like to thank all of our parents, grandparents, relatives and community members who are veterans of the United States armed forces. Thank you for your service to our great country and providing the many blessings and freedoms we can all too easily take for granted. We are grateful for your service and will continue to instill in our students the importance of this sacrifice not only on Wednesday, November 11, but every day throughout the year. Thank you!

To our parents, thank you for your continued efforts in communicating openly and honestly to help make in-person learning so successful in Cass School District 63. Despite the challenges throughout the pandemic, we have had another great week and I continue to believe very strongly in the integrity and safety of our School Reimagined Return to Learn Framework. We will not let our guard down here at school, and we ask that you continue to be equally vigilant while also doing your part to help bring the numbers down in our community. The more we can do that, the better we can continue to deliver your children the high quality education that they deserve here at school.

Concord Elementary School

Cass School District 63
1019 Concord Place • Darien, Illinois 60561-5124
331-481-4010 • Fax 331-481-4011 • landerson@cassd63.org

Laura Anderson, Ed.D.

School Principal & District Director of Teaching & Learning

Cass Junior High School

Cass School District 63
8502 Bailey Road • Darien, Illinois 60561-5333
331-481-4020 • Fax 331-481-4021 • cmarcinkewicz@cassd63.org

Mrs. Christine Marcinkewicz

School Principal & District Director of Technology

Important - New Testing Requirements with COVID Symptoms

In conjunction with guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health, the DuPage County Health Department is changing an important requirement for testing back in to school after COVID-19 symptoms are exhibited. This is related to Column B under the updated [IDPH Exclusion Guidance](#) that our school district follows.

For a symptomatic individual, if the first test is negative and it is an RT-PCR test, the person can return to school (Column B) as long as the symptoms have dissipated. If the first test is negative and is not an RT-PCR test, the DCHD is requiring a confirmatory negative RT-PCR COVID-19 test result within 48 hours following a negative antigen test result or negative rapid molecular (rapid PCR) test result.

To explain this another way, in the absence of a negative RT-PCR test, an individual with COVID-19 symptoms cannot return to school outside of an alternative diagnosis in writing as explained in the exclusion guidance (Column C). A positive test of any kind is considered a confirmed positive and the appropriate 10-day isolation measures are enacted.

To avoid the potential need for two tests, the other option is to pursue the RT-PCR test initially to avoid a "false negative" with one of the other tests. In the absence of confirmatory testing, the student or staff member must complete the minimum 10-day isolation period prior to returning to school. It is also important to note that nothing has changed with the "close contact" requirement, which is still an automatic exclusion for 14 days.

Symptoms? Contact Your Family Physician

Believe me when I tell that you we know this can be very frustrating. We are just passing along the information and the only medical advice that I can provide is to always contact your family physician with ANY symptoms to see what testing is necessary. I would suggest mentioning this guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health and the DuPage County Health Department when you reach out to your physician.

Cass School District 63 COVID-19 Dashboard

We expected to see a leveling off in some of our data, and that is exactly what happened this week. The additional wonderful news is that we had another week with no cases or close contacts at school. This is in spite of the higher numbers in our community and region. We are monitoring all of the data carefully but have continued to do well because of our safety measures and protocols here in our schools, as well as the continued vigilance with our parents and staff self-reporting symptoms and close contacts outside of school.

Cass School District 63 COVID-19 Dashboard	
Positive Cases Week of 11-2-20	0
Positive Cases Week of 10-26-20	0
Total 2020-21 Positive Cases at School	1
Close Contacts Week of 11-2-20	0
Close Contacts Week of 10-26-20	0
Total 2020-21 Close Contacts at School	5
Isolated or Quarantined Week of 11-2-20	51
Isolated or Quarantined Week of 10-26-20	53

Clarification Regarding Data at School

This is nothing new and not one thing has changed, but I do want to make clear that this does not mean there are no cases in our students or families outside of school. We report ALL cases AT school, as well as ANY close contacts that take place at school. We will also continue to provide any low-risk exposure notifications as a result. These numbers have not changed.

As far as what happens outside of school, we cannot know all of that data for certain. However, what we do know is reported through the "Isolated or Quarantined" lines in the table above. These numbers are the direct result of self-reporting of close contacts, cases and symptoms, as well as any symptoms that may manifest themselves at school. I hope this clarifies and eliminates any confusion, and of course your questions are very welcome.

In-Person Instruction Friday, November 6th

Due to the mandated Election Day holiday earlier this week, this is a reminder that we have in-person instruction for our Tuesday/Thursday students on Friday, November 6th. This also means that we have our normal Monday-Thursday schedule on this day for our students who are fully remote.

Bus Stop Changes

We have hit that point in the school year where we will not be making additional bus stop changes unless it is absolutely necessary. This was one of our greatest challenges with the pandemic and we have remained very flexible for as long as possible, but I wanted to make parents aware of this. We truly appreciate your patience and understanding.

Virtual Parent-Teacher Conferences

This year's parent-teacher conferences will be held virtually via the Zoom platform. Online registration information for Cass Junior High School is included in the NoteTotes and the Concord Elementary School office and teachers are communicating directly with parents regarding conferences. Conferences will be held on Monday, November 23rd from 12:00 – 8:00 p.m. and on Tuesday, November 24th from 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. As a reminder there is no school for students that week of Thanksgiving when conferences are held.

Let's Keep Communicating!

You can know that we will work very hard to communicate and make everything as clear and easy as we can for you. I hope it is helpful but when we fail to do so, please let us know. All we ask is that you continue to be proactive and report as necessary to help keep everyone safe at school.

Thank you as always for your support of our teachers and our schools. And once again, a very special thank you to our Veterans in the Cass 63 Community and across our great country.

Sincerely,

Mark R. Cross

Mark R. Cross
Superintendent

MRC/glw