

Illinois State Board of Education



AMENDED RESOLUTION

Supporting
In-Person Learning

September 21, 2022

WHEREAS, the hard work of our health care professionals and the conscientious diligence of all Illinoisans who altered their lives and daily habits to contain the spread of COVID-19 have allowed Illinois to transition into Phase 5 of the Restore Illinois Plan on June 11, 2021, allowing businesses to resume normal operations and public gatherings of all sizes to proceed; and

WHEREAS, students and school staff have meaningful protection from COVID-19, with highly effective vaccines widely available to all Illinoisans, including children beginning at age 6 months; and

WHEREAS, our schools have the capability to rapidly identify new cases to prevent COVID-19 outbreaks and reduce the risk of further transmission, thanks to the State of Illinois support in providing rapid antigen tests as well as the use of covidSHIELD tests free of charge; and

WHEREAS, multiple studies show that – although online classes are a far better option than no classes at all – students, particularly students who struggle academically, still learn better while in person alongside their teachers; and

WHEREAS, reconnecting with teachers and peers in-person is essential for students' mental health and social-emotional development, especially after the prolonged isolation of the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Illinois schools are receiving \$7.8 billion in federal pandemic relief funds for the safe return to in-person learning and to address learning gaps caused by the pandemic through strategies, such as tutoring, summer school, and community partnerships for mental health; and

WHEREAS, all Illinois public school districts are offering in-person learning consistent with Illinois State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen I. Ayala's declaration in July 2021 and as subsequently issued on September 7, 2021; and

WHEREAS, in September 2022, the Illinois Department of Public Health and Illinois State Board of Education issued updated joint guidance titled IDPH and ISBE Joint Guidance for COVID-19 prevention in Schools; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of brief intervals of remote learning for individual students or schools pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/10-30 and 105 ILCS 5/34-18.66 is to keep the school community safe, provide continuity of learning, and ensure students transition back to in-person learning successfully and as quickly as possible; and

WHEREAS, the Illinois State Board of Education wishes to reaffirm the rights, powers, and duties of schools to ensure a safe and healthy learning environment for all students and staff, including providing remote learning for students who are excluded from school;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Illinois State Board of Education supports Illinois State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen I. Ayala in making the following amended declaration: Effective September 21, 2022, all schools must continue to provide fully in-person learning for all student attendance days, provided that, pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/10-30 and 105 ILCS 5/34-18.66, remote instruction: 1) may be made available for individual students who are excluded from school pursuant to 77 Ill. Admin. Code 690.30 consistent with guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health or a local public health department, and 2) must be made available for students whose entire classroom or entire school is placed on an adaptive pause entered into in consultation with a local public health department.

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