



Northern Suburban
Special Education District

March 15, 2021

Dear NSSED Families and Staff,

Each NSSED program will begin a transition to full in-person instruction following Spring Break. All programs will complete this transition by April 19. If individual programs are able to provide full-day in-person instruction throughout the week prior to April 19, they will. After Spring Break, all program leaders will directly announce their in-person instruction schedules, based on staffing levels and vaccination rates, transportation services, and student enrollments. This applies to: North Shore Academy, North Shore Academy Elementary, Arbor Academy, and the Transition Center.

NSSED classrooms in member district buildings and Little Adventurers and Little Wildcats will continue to follow their host site plans.

Remote learning families will now have the option to continue with their existing schedule or have the opportunity to return to the program's in-person schedule; program administrators will be contacting families about this option this week so they can continue to plan accordingly.

This decision to phase into our final stage of our reopening plan no later than April 19 was discussed by our Reopening Committee after reviewing our eight considerations outlined in our Reopening Plan. Below is a summary update of these considerations:

- Regions 9 and 10 are now in Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan.
- Illinois Department of Public Health guidance indicates that schools can be fully open; CDC and ISBE/IDPH joint guidance last week provided additional details to schools on how to proceed as safely as possible and those materials have been reviewed and incorporated into our planning.
- Regional conditions are improving; the positivity rate in Lake County was 2.7% at the end of February.

- The majority of our member districts are planning now for an increase of in-person learning; schedules vary across districts.
- We continue to maintain an adequate supply of PPE and cleaning supplies.
- Our planned schedules allow us to follow social distancing guidelines.
- We are fully staffed at this time.
- Substitutes are a continuing concern for all school districts, including NSSSED.

In addition to our Reopening Plan considerations, please know:

- approximately 33% of all employees have been fully vaccinated and minimally another 33% expect to receive their second dose by April 19. We also anticipate some additional staff may elect to take the single dose of Johnson & Johnson.
- by April 19 or sooner, specialized transportation companies anticipate being fully staffed with drivers, and our NSSSED transportation department expects to have completed the necessary route schedules with the companies to ensure everyone's access to school.
- program administrators also expect to have final enrollment numbers for those choosing to return from remote schedules to in-person learning.

To further prepare for this return, NSSSED staff will engage in an ISBE-provided planning day on Friday, April 9. **There will be no student attendance or instruction on April 9** in our programs: North Shore Academy, North Shore Academy Elementary, Arbor Academy, Little Wildcats and Little Adventurers, and Transition Center.

Throughout this pandemic, our staff have been praised for providing many options for families, including consistent in-person hybrid instruction since the beginning of the school year. We are excited to continue to increase this in-person time by moving from Phase 2 (Hybrid) to Phase 3 (in-person), and appreciate your patience as programs continue to work through their individual details and schedules in the days and weeks ahead.

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Superintendent
Northern Suburban Special Education District