

October 21, 2020

Dear NSSED Families and Staff,

As we shared with you last evening, we spent today gathering data regarding a possible pivot from blended remote learning to fully remote learning. At this time, NSSED programs (North Shore Academy, North Shore Academy Elementary, Arbor Academy, Early Childhood, and Transition Center) will remain in the [blended remote learning model](#) with existing schedules, and will remain in this model until further notice.

We are pleased to be able continue serving students in the blended remote learning model. We are keenly aware that our student population consists primarily of learners for whom in-person learning is a high priority, according to the Illinois State Board of Education.

[NSSED Considerations](#)

As we shared yesterday, the Lake County Health Department publicly recommended school districts move to a remote learning model as a result of “substantial community transmission.” We take this guidance seriously. As we have said from the beginning, phase change decisions are complex and a multitude of factors must be considered and weighed when making such decisions. Based on the Lake County Health Department’s recommendation, some NSSED member districts located within Lake County have pivoted, or, will soon pivot to a remote learning model, while others have decided to remain in a blended remote learning model.

In addition to member districts in Lake County, we also have numerous member districts in Cook County and guidance from Cook County health officials does not indicate a need to pivot to fully remote learning, and our Cook County member districts report remaining in their current plans at this time.

To date, NSSED has not suffered any direct student or staff COVID-19 positive cases. The administrative team continues to examine closely the necessary staffing levels, cleaning procedures, available personal protective equipment, and social distancing procedures and we are confident in our current safety and preventative measures. We particularly appreciate student success in following our safety practices, especially mask wearing, while at school. We believe these factors have all positively helped successfully manage a challenging situation.

Please Continue to Help Us

What you do outside the school day matters. Our ability to maintain the current learning model absolutely depends on the availability of our workforce, and all individuals making responsible decisions. Decisions about personal contact, travel, and whether to follow safety recommendations are very important, because everyone's health is critical to our success.

If you have not yet gotten a flu shot, please do so now. Health officials recommend it as we enter the flu season. This certainly helps reduce absences, COVID-19 related or not, which allows us all to continue moving forward together.

Wearing a face covering, washing your hands, and watching your distance are the simplest, and single-most effective ways to manage the community transmission rates.

Looking Ahead

We will maintain the blended remote learning model until further notice. However, we encourage everyone to be prepared should we pivot to fully remote learning, as the state of the pandemic can change rapidly. If a phase change decision were to be made, it could unfortunately be made without much notice. We will use the same procedure of notification as occurs on emergency inclement weather-related days - by email, automated call, and a follow up from your administrator.

Thank you for your cooperation and have a wonderful evening!

Kurt A. Schneider, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Northern Suburban Special Education District