

CHICAGO, January 7, 2021 – Members of the Chicago delegation of the Illinois General Assembly, some of which are parents and former CPS students, support a safe return to school. Our constituents have expressed concerns and anxiety regarding the return to in-person learning following the large uptick in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations.

We have consistently engaged in conversations with Chicago Public Schools throughout the pandemic and continue to offer the following recommendations as Chicago Public Schools cancel classes this week following a vote from the Chicago Teachers Union to opt for remote work amid the surge:

- Expand capacity to stand-up vaccine clinics with extended hours in more schools beyond the four static sites;
- Adopt an adaptive pause to launch remote learning and develop mutually agreed upon safety metrics;
- Leverage community partners to increase participation of CPS families who opt-in to regular COVID-19 testing; or make weekly COVID-19 testing required like [34 other school districts](#) across the state; and
- Ensure sufficient distribution of N95 or KN95 masks for students, staff and educators.

We recognize that the issues go beyond classrooms because students live in the context of their communities and families. Many students come from households who may have intergenerational members, family members with chronic health conditions or who are vaccine-hesitant, and family members who are frontline workers.

We come together to try to leverage state help and resources in the hope of speeding up the safe return to in-person learning in Chicago Public Schools. We have reached out to the governor’s office, Illinois Department of Public Health, Illinois State Board of Education and other state agencies to clarify return to school policies in Illinois and bring additional testing, faster results and increased supplies for students and their families.

Many of us have been distributing masks and educational materials throughout our communities since the beginning of the pandemic. When the vaccine became widely available, we have been hosting vaccine and booster clinics regularly. We are determined to work together to find solutions as the state works toward recovery.

We support a safe return to in-person learning that protects everyone’s health so we can give our students the education they deserve and ensure educators and staff are in safe work conditions. We are committed to work in creative ways through State government to leverage resources and services to minimize adverse impact with our students and school communities.

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