



DuPage Regional Office of
EDUCATION
Excellence in Education

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In this challenging time for our community, and with deep polarization affecting many of us, there is one thing medical experts, school leaders, public health officials, and parents agree on: Our children should have the right to attend in-person schools without fear of contracting COVID-19.

Our goal as a community must be to reopen schools - safely. We must acknowledge we are facing a virus never seen before, and there is much for us still to learn. While studies remain inconclusive regarding how easily COVID-19 spreads among children, we do know transmission is possible. It is encouraging that to date most of our children appear to have been spared the most severe symptoms and outcomes associated with COVID-19, but the risk of infection to anyone who interacts with school-aged children remains.

Lowering rates of community transmission is essential to achieving our goal of safely reopening all schools. If we work together and collectively reduce the rate of transmission in our communities, we can once again give all children the right to attend in-person school without fear of contracting COVID-19.

One thing we have learned in our battle against COVID-19 is that the steps we need to take to lower community spread require commitment and sacrifice. It's not easy to limit social gatherings, wear masks, wash hands, provide testing, conduct contact tracing, and stay home to isolate and quarantine.

However, we believe both goals—reduced community transmission and the reopening of schools—are achievable. Reaching these goals requires the continued commitment of every member of our community. Physical gatherings must be limited. Masks must be worn, indoors and out. Answering the call of contact tracers (COVID CONTACT; 312-777-1999) and isolating or quarantining can save your life and the lives of your neighbors, loved ones, and friends.

The benefits of our collective actions are immeasurable. Beyond the educational, social, and developmental benefits for children provided by lowering community transmission rates to levels that allow for a safer return to school, we also provide health care systems the opportunity to regain sustainable strength. Our actions will signify our choice to prioritize the well-being of our children over short-term conveniences and comforts. Ultimately, the choices of every community member will shape what this school year looks like.

Please, do your part DuPage.

Sincerely,

Dr. Darlene Ruscitti
Regional Superintendent

Karen Ayala, MPH
Executive Director
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