



**Illinois
State Board of
Education**

April 5, 2022

TO: Public and nonpublic schools
RE: Preparing for Subsequent Surges of SARS-CoV-2 Infections and COVID-19 Illness

Dear School and District Leaders,

The number of Illinoisans being infected with SARS-CoV-2 and those hospitalized or suffering other adverse outcomes related to COVID-19 has sharply decreased since January 2022. As of March 30, 2022, COVID-19 community levels were low in every county in Illinois. Unfortunately, the prospect of new variants of concern, the potential seasonality of transmission, and underlying social and medical vulnerabilities increase the likelihood that we will experience future waves of morbidity and mortality. To ensure the state is prepared for the next surge of COVID-19, we ask that Illinois schools have updated emergency plans in place now.

In the event of a surge, a well-developed emergency plan would:

- Ensure adequate testing supplies are readily available
- Ensure adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE), including NIOSH-approved respirators (N95 and KN95 masks) or other masks that meet the Barrier Face Covering Standard, are readily available
- Include a method to anticipate/calculate daily PPE usage or burn rates and significant changes that may occur related to a surge
- Ensure compliance with infection control procedures including updated staff trainings
- Ensure compliance with case reporting requirements and handling of cases of COVID-19 and their close contacts.

Schools should plan to maintain at least a 10-week supply of PPE and testing supplies and should continue to engage in preparedness activities. Schools should plan for how they will bring on additional staff and substitutes if needed. We encourage schools to take full advantage of any remaining federal resources available when preparing for future surges. Vaccination remains the leading public health prevention strategy to prevent adverse outcomes related to COVID-19. We encourage schools to work with their local health departments to improve vaccination rates.

If you have any questions, please contact the Illinois State Board of Education by completing [this form](#). Thank you for your critical work on the behalf of every resident of Illinois. We are in this together.

Sincerely and respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amaal V.E. Tokars".

Amaal V.E. Tokars
Acting Director
Illinois Department of Public Health

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carmen I. Ayala".

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
State Superintendent of Education
Illinois State Board of Education