



Palmer
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Palmer ISD Back to School Plan 2021-2022

Revised September 27, 2021

Community health data continues to change in our Palmer ISD community, and we are continuously monitoring this information and adjusting our plans accordingly.

Palmer ISD Back to School Plan Fall 2021

All Palmer ISD employees and students will continue with in-person instruction in the Fall of 2021. All Palmer ISD school operations will return to normal (prior to COVID-19) with the following exceptions.

Accelerated Learning

In order to help students make up for learning loss due to COVID-19, Palmer ISD will be implementing the requirements of House Bill 4545 that was recently passed in the 87th Regular Legislative Session . The new statute is effective, as of June, 2021, with acceleration instruction practices required during the 2021-2022 school year for all students, based on results from Spring 2021.

HB 4545 establishes new requirements for accelerated instruction for students who do not pass the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®). At a high level, the legislation includes:

- Elimination of grade retention and retesting requirements in grades 5 and 8
- For any student who does not pass the STAAR test in grade 3, 5, or 8 in math or reading, a new LEA requirement to establish an accelerated learning committee to develop an individual educational plan for the student and monitor progress

Learning Acceleration

- For any student who does not pass the STAAR test in grades 3–8 or STAAR (EOC) end-of-course assessments, accelerated instruction requirements specify that it must include either:
 - Being assigned a classroom teacher who is a certified master, exemplary, or recognized teacher or
 - Receiving supplemental instruction (tutoring) before or after school, and/or embedded in the school day

Palmer ISD has chosen the second option of providing supplemental instruction (tutoring) after school, and/or embedded in the school day. This instruction can also take place during the summer and/or on Saturdays.

Health & Safety Expectations for Students and Employees

Evolving Student Health Protocols

Masks

CDC guidance has recommended that schools continue to use and layer prevention strategies. Five key prevention strategies include:

- Universal and correct use of masks
- Physical distancing
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Cleaning and maintain facilities
- Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine

The Governor of Texas has declared that public school districts may not require students, school staff, or visitors to the school to wear a mask. Therefore, the wearing of masks will be optional for everyone unless a new Public Health Order changes the current order. If wearing a face mask, face masks must be appropriate for school and must be non-offensive, not considered derogatory or otherwise disrespectful to team members or visitors. Logos, graphics, and designs must be professionally appropriate as outlined in the District's dress code policy.

The district is following [TEA public health guidance for schools](#).

- All families (returning students or students newly enrolled) will complete an annual statement affirming, prior to the start of the school year, that they will adhere to all health and safety expectations developed by Palmer ISD.
- All students will be required to sign a statement at the beginning of the year that COVID-19 screenings will occur at home daily and that they will abide by COVID-19 health and safety protocols. Reminders will be posted.
- Families will NOT send students to school if they have a lab-confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis or any of the following COVID-19 symptoms: feeling feverish or fever 100.0 or greater, loss of taste or smell, cough, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, headache, chills, sore throat, shaking or exaggerated shivering, significant muscle pain or ache, diarrhea. Families must immediately notify the school if a child has COVID-19 symptoms (described above) or if the student has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Students will follow campus-specific guidelines to support social distancing to the fullest extent possible.

- Reminder posters outlining proper protocols will be prominently displayed for all employees and students to follow.

Evolving Employee Health Protocols

The district is following [TEA Guidelines](#).

- Employees will self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before coming onto a Palmer ISD campus/facility each day. The self-screening should include teachers and staff taking their own temperature. Employees must immediately report to their supervisor if the employee has COVID-19 symptoms (described below) or if the employee has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Per [TEA Guidelines](#), any individuals who themselves either: (a) are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed above) must stay at home throughout the infection period, and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:
 - In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria are met:
 - at least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
 - the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
 - at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- All employees shall know and follow the established protocols to protect themselves and others from COVID-19 to stay safe.
- Employees will practice approved environment cleaning/disinfection, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.
- Reminder posters outlining proper protocols will be prominently displayed for all employees and students to follow.

Community Input

The District made its plan available to the public and provided an opportunity for feedback that was collected and incorporated into the plan. Details are available on the ESSER III webpage at <https://www.palmer-isd.org/domain/1745>.

The District published its draft plan on the district website, www.palmer-isd.org on

July 19, 2021. As part of a regularly scheduled board meeting on June 21, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. the ESSER III plan was discussed. Feedback from the Board of Trustees and public were included in the plan.

The District engaged in timely and meaningful consultation with students, families, school and district administrators (including special education administrators), teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff and their unions, tribes, civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); and stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

The district took the following action steps to engage in timely and meaningful consultation on the plan: the district surveyed all stakeholders including teachers, staff, parents, and community members representing interests of children with disabilities, English learners; the district's team developed strategies to meet the learning needs of students, including traditionally underserved students; the district reviewed all survey feedback and included feedback in the development of the plan; the district established a diverse ESSER Task Force with representatives focused on underserved populations listed above to review the draft plans of the district for use of ESSER funds and to serve as an advisory board meeting semi-annually to monitor and adjust the plans over the next three years.

Community Vaccinations

Palmer ISD continues to strongly encourage all staff and eligible students to get vaccinated for COVID-19. All staff and immediate family members will have the opportunity to receive the Moderna vaccine at our annual vaccination clinic on September 30th.

Campus Procedures

- Palmer ISD will continue to educate our students, staff, and community members about the importance of frequent hand washing; covering a cough or sneeze; not touching one's eyes, nose, and mouth; staying home when sick, and other measures to help prevent the spread of communicable diseases.
- Campus administration will provide procedures to best protect employee and student safety in regards to student movement, personal space, physical distancing in community areas, organization of resources, and classroom supplies.

Campus Cleaning & Disinfecting

- The district will continue to have universal signage for all facilities including, but not limited to, social distancing and hand-washing/sanitizing
- Proper cleaning and disinfecting of school workspaces, and high-traffic areas (e.g., bathrooms, cafeterias, libraries, faculty lounge rooms) will be conducted routinely throughout the day.
- All classrooms will be provided with wipes, cleaner, and hand sanitizer for students to clean their learning surfaces.
- Hand sanitation stations will be available at designated entrances and other areas throughout the building. Everyone will be encouraged to perform hand hygiene frequently.
- Improving ventilation – maintenance department will change all filters every month

Student Attendance

- The health and well-being of all students and employees is a priority. If you are sick, stay home, and come back to school when you are healthy enough to do so.
- As always, contact your campus to report an absence, so we know how to best support your student while they are out sick.

Meals

- All child nutrition staff will be trained to practice health and hygiene regulations.
- Cafeteria, serving, and eating areas will be cleaned between uses.

Nurses/Clinic

- In collaboration with Health Services and [guidance from TEA](#), campuses will implement protocols for students who require additional support from clinic staff, i.e., diabetes, medications, and regular care due to illness or injury, etc.
- Campuses will utilize the school nurse to provide professional learning for students and employees regarding best practices for health and hygiene.

Isolation Facility/Health Considerations

Palmer ISD will implement isolation strategies to separate students that have non COVID-19 illnesses from potential COVID-19 symptoms or illness. Any student or staff

member known to have COVID-19 symptoms will be placed in a isolation room until they are able to depart the district.

Testing

With guidance from the Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM), Center for Disease Control (CDC), Texas Education Agency (TEA), Palmer ISD has implemented rapid COVID-19 testing. Rapid antigen-based testing gives Palmer ISD the ability to quickly identify and isolate positive individuals before they can transmit the virus to others. In turn, this helps reduce the amount of absences for individuals waiting on test results and helps to fast track treatment and quarantine for positive individuals and their close contacts.

Contact Tracing

If a student or staff member is confirmed to have COVID-19, our Nurse and campus administration will conduct contact tracing. Parents of all students who attend the campus will be notified that a staff member or student has had a positive result. For confidentiality reasons, no other information will be provided.

Transportation

- Hand sanitizer will be provided as students enter and exit the bus.

School/Extracurricular Activities

- Extracurricular activities will follow [TEA guidelines](#), UIL, community health organizations, and other agencies/organizations.

Mental Health

- Palmer ISD counselors have been trained in social-emotional support and trauma informed care.
- Counselors will develop strategies and support for students, families and staff members.

What will Palmer Remote look like if we have to close classrooms, campuses or the district?

- Palmer ISD parents/caregivers are expected to be engaged with their children's education but are not expected to serve as their children's primary teacher of the academic curriculum.
- Students will have digital access through Google Classroom to all their courses
- Google Meet and Zoom will be used for virtual classroom meetings
- Students will engage daily in remote learning with Palmer ISD certified teachers facilitating students' learning and coursework.
- Students may have periods of daily, live instruction (synchronous) with certified teachers, as well as periods of self-paced, independent learning (asynchronous).
- A designated daily schedule for remote instruction will be provided to all Palmer Remote students that they will be expected to follow. Student attendance will be taken and student engagement will be monitored for all students every school day.
- Grading guidelines will be the same for Palmer On-Campus and Palmer Remote.
- Students who require additional support and interventions will receive those via video/phone conferencing based on the expectations and assessment of Palmer ISD certified educators.
- Students who receive services or accommodations through special education, gifted and talented, 504, or multilingual services will continue to receive the support and services. Please see the Special Programs for more detailed information.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What will the daily sanitization protocols be?

All classrooms, restrooms and commons spaces will be cleaned and sanitization misting machines will be utilized daily. Buses and school vehicles will be sanitized twice daily. All staff will have access to cleaning materials to utilize each day throughout the day.

Will students and staff be required to wear face coverings?

No

Can students and staff wear face coverings even when they are not required?

Yes, face coverings shall be appropriate to the educational environment not causing any disruptions. It should have appropriate logos, graphics, or designs. Bandanas will not be allowed. We recommend students face coverings that are a solid color, have a

school or school club/organization logo or image, have a favorite college or trade school logo, or favorite sports team logo.