



## **Gavin 37 Modified Mitigation Plan**

Approved February 22, 2022

### **Introduction**

The District presents the following Modified Mitigation Plan to replace the current mitigations in District 37. The proposed plan utilizes a layered mitigation approach and is adaptable depending on the local metrics/environmental at the time. The plan provides choices as well as continued effective mitigations to keep our students, staff and visitors safe while in school.

### **Learning Priorities**

With the changes in mitigations, the district will continue to provide a safe, caring learning environment for all students and staff. To do so, the district may need to adapt to environmental changes while maintaining the least amount of disruption to learning. Our priorities since the beginning of the 21-22 school year have been to:

- Have our students in school - with as few disruptions to learning as possible
- Create safe learning conditions
- Focus on teaching and learning
- Support learning and SEL needs of staff and students
- Communicate Clearly

### **Conditional Mitigation Plans**

[This Conditional Mitigation Plan](#) was shared at a Special Board of Education Meeting on February 14, 2022. In it, you'll see data as of 2/14/22 and the conditional mitigation plan now in effect to address potential changes to the presence of COVID-19 in our schools.

### **Rationale for a Modified Mitigation Plan**

A modified approach to mitigation is necessary due to the changing environmental factors and conditions surrounding the pandemic. These conditions include:

- Vaccines are available for ages 5 and up. Vaccines for children under 5 will be approved soon.
- COVID testing is more readily available in our community and school. The district offers

weekly Shield (PCR) testing for staff and students and has rapid, antigen testing available for symptomatic individuals and close contacts.

- Therapeutics and other treatment options are available to those that contract COVID
- More individuals have achieved some natural immunity due to high infection rates
- Higher grade masks (N95) are widely available
- Hospitalizations have decreased and there is increased ICU capacity
- COVID cases and positivity rates in our schools and surrounding area have decreased
- District weekly testing data and family reports are used to track COVID levels in our schools
- Multiple layers of mitigation will continue, including cleaning and sanitizing, improved ventilation, hand washing, optional contact tracing, and social distancing to the best extent possible.

Additionally, the legal landscape continues to evolve. The Governor announced that the indoor mask mandate will be removed in Illinois, except for schools, on February 28th. The Governor stated that the mandate for schools was to occur a few weeks later, but did not give an exact date.

### **New Layered Mitigations**

The district will continue to use a layered mitigation approach to limit the spread of COVID-19. Layered mitigation provides safety measures when one or more mitigations are altered. The chart below describes which mitigations will be maintained and which mitigations will be modified.

<b>Maintain</b>	<b>Modify</b>
Cleaning and sanitizing (Daily)	Masking (now optional but recommended)
Isolation for positive COVID-19 cases	Social Distancing
Weekly PCR testing (Shield) On-site, rapid testing available (BinaxNOW)	Close Contact Tracing and Quarantining (now optional)
Frequent hand washing	Test to Stay (now optional)
Vaccination (encouraged)	

The “Maintain” category of mitigations will not change. We will continue to clean and sanitize daily, provide the weekly PCR testing and on-site antigen testing, maintain improved air quality, encourage frequent hand washing, and encourage vaccinations.

With masks now optional/recommended, social distancing and close contact tracing will be

modified. Close contacts will be identified within 6 feet of an individual who tested positive for COVID. We will continue to inform parents whether or not their child was a close contact so they can watch their children for symptoms or receive a COVID test. Close contacts should be monitored for 14 days.

The Test to Stay program will be modified to offer testing to students and staff that request it if they are close contacts. We will continue to offer antigen testing at school for students and staff showing symptoms as supplies allow.

### **Seating in Classrooms**

Students will be fully participating in classrooms and not separated from each other. Students who choose to wear masks and students who choose not to will be seated next to each other. There are multiple mitigation layers in place as mentioned above to keep students safe.

### **Lunch**

No changes to lunch are needed at this time.

### **After School Activities and Competitions**

After school activities and competitions will follow the same guidelines as when students are in school. The differences will be when they visit other schools for competitions. If another school is a mask required facility (based on a local decision), our students will be required to wear masks as well.

### **Mandatory Masking on Buses**

As of the adoption of this plan, bus transportation falls under federal authority and not state or local jurisdiction regarding a mask mandate. As such, masks are required to be worn by all individuals while on the bus.

### **When to Increase Mitigations**

There may be times when increasing mitigation is required to ensure the safety of everyone. That would include a rise in the transmission or cases of COVID in our schools or local community. Additionally, the district may need to increase mitigations, including masking, due to a court order, State mandate, or other laws passed requiring masks. The above linked conditional mitigation plan may be invoked to maintain safety.

### **Visitors to Schools**

All the above mitigation measures will apply to visitors. Masks will be optional, but recommended.

### **Social-Emotional Wellbeing of our Students**

Our schools used these talking points with our students, adapting based on age, when preparing for the mask-optional environment:

- **Health & Safety:** Remind students that our schools are safe places to learn. Remind them that we wash our hands and stay home when we are sick/not feeling well.

- **Be Respectful and Kind:** We will continue to be kind to each other. Some people will not have masks on and some will continue to wear masks. Either choice is okay and is a decision that each family is making for themselves.
- **Communicate Empathy:** Each family can make their own decision on what is right for them. Encourage children to ask their parents at home and be understanding of others' choices.

### **Summary**

This Modified Mitigation Plan provides a flexible way to continue to curb the spread of COVID-19 while providing options for individuals. This plan may be modified from time to time due to environmental and/or legal reasons.