



# Alton Community Unit School District #11

550 Landmarks Boulevard | Alton, IL 62002 | 618.474.2600 | [altonschools.org](http://altonschools.org)

August 16, 2022

Dear Redbird Families:

Welcome back! I hope your summer has been enjoyable. We are excited to welcome students on Wednesday, August 17 for the first day of school. As we start the school year, I want to provide just a few updates and information you may find useful both now and for future reference:

## **School Start and End Times:**

### *ALTON HIGH SCHOOL:*

8:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

### *ALTON MIDDLE SCHOOL:*

8:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

### *EAST, NORTH AND WEST ELEMENTARY:*

8:00 a.m. to 2:25 p.m.

### *EUNICE SMITH, GILSON BROWN, LEWIS AND CLARK AND LOVEJOY ELEMENTARY:*

8:15 a.m. to 2:40 p.m.

### *MARK TWAIN SCHOOL:*

K-8: 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.    9-12: 8:40 a.m. to 2:22 p.m.

### *EARLY CHILDHOOD:*

Lewis and Clark and Gilson Brown Sites:

A.M. Session – 8:30 to 11:00 a.m.    P.M. Session – 12:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Eunice Smith and Alton High Sites:

A.M. Session – 8:20 to 10:50 a.m.    P.M. Session – 12:20 to 2:50 p.m.

### **Health Information and Precautionary Measures:**

In navigating the pandemic for over two years now, the upcoming school year offers what we hope will be our most “normal” start to school in quite some time. However, we must also remain committed to our safety protocols in protecting the health of students and staff to the highest degree possible. The Alton School District’s 2022-2023 Return to Learn Plan provides information on our current health and safety procedures. The strategies and measures within the plan align with the most recent guidance for K-12 schools from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (August 12, 2022). To review this information on school-based safety measures, exclusions, close contacts, alternate learning options for COVID-related absences and weekly COVID screenings available to students, please use this link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YQyo80CrHsSMTPSXeOs8JVzSEMZog2sW/view?usp=sharing>.

### **School Safety and Security Measures**

The safety of our students and staff is the Alton School District’s first and utmost priority. Over the summer months, we tragically witnessed several violent incidents occur. These events serve as a critical reminder that we must remain highly alert and vigilant regarding school safety and security. The following provides information on just some of the safety and security strategies already in place/new measures that will be implemented this school year:

**\*ALICE Training and Safety Drills** – The District provides ALICE Training (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) for all staff. ALICE empowers our staff members and safety teams to make situational decisions with confidence should a threatening incident occur involving a school intruder. Barricading classroom doors, exiting through windows on a ground-level floor and other decisions are examples of the strategies provided during ALICE training. Additionally, all district schools continue to participate in drills each year such as weather-related incidents, school evacuation scenarios (ex. fire), lockdowns/intruder and others so that students and staff can practice various emergency scenarios.

**\*CrisisGO** – This year, all district schools are moving their school emergency plans to a digital format hosted by CrisisGO – an app-based emergency management system. In addition to hosting our digital emergency plans, CrisisGO has an emergency alerting/management feature whereby a school staff member can send or receive an emergency alert with just the touch of a button on their phone should a situation deem necessary. We are also installing a silent alerting system in our offices and key points throughout our larger schools that immediately connect our buildings with law enforcement officials should the need arise.

**\*School Resource Officers, Law Enforcement Coordination and Safety Personnel** – Two full-time Madison County Sheriff’s Deputies work at Alton High each day as school resource officers. Additionally, the Alton Police Department provides a full-time school resource officer at Alton Middle School and at Mark Twain School. Alton Middle School and Alton High School each have a team of safety officers who support students and the school throughout the day with a visible presence at our main entrances, in hallways and parking lots. Both of our law

enforcement agencies also conduct regular patrols and walkthroughs at all schools. Law enforcement agencies meet with school administrative teams each summer to review safety and emergency plans, discuss/implement training needs, conduct vulnerability assessments and review school safety procedures.

\*Behavioral Threat Assessments and Threat Assessment Teams – Because of the importance of identifying threatening or concerning behavior at the earliest possible point of intervention, all schools will conduct a behavioral threat assessment should a student present behaviors (verbal, on social media, or other actions) that warrant further assessment and/or referral to other agencies. Counseling and social work supports are also available to students in need. School and district personnel have been trained to serve on threat assessment teams to identify, evaluate, classify and address threats or potential threats. Following the assessment, the team then determines an appropriate response and intervention.

\*Reporting School Safety Concerns – Each year, the District uses an online reporting tool called *Stay Safe/Speak Up* so that students, staff and families can anonymously report school safety concerns (threats, bullying, harm to self or others). This reporting feature is located at [altonschools.org](http://altonschools.org). Additionally this year, students will see another option for reporting school safety concerns. On the back of each student ID, information is provided where students can text or email concerns (Text: SAFE2 or 72332 or E-Mail: [Help@Safe2HelpIL.com](mailto:Help@Safe2HelpIL.com)). Signs are also posted throughout our schools reminding students that “IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING” followed by information for reporting concerns.

\*Enhanced School Safety Features – All district schools are equipped with an exterior “buzz in” system where visitors to the school are viewed via security cameras and must identify themselves prior to entry. District schools use BadgePass Watchdog. Through BadgePass, school visitors must present personal identification that is then reviewed and checked across relevant registries and records before a visitor badge is granted. Additional school security cameras have been added and/or upgraded at numerous schools to bolster security.

\*Social Media, Email and School Network Analysis – The District uses both BARK and Navigate 360 to scan our email systems, network/technology usage and accessible social media for specific words, phrases and/or web searches that could potentially indicate a threat. Any flags for concern are sent to the immediate attention of school and district administrators. These two platforms can potentially assist in the detection of threatening language or threatening behaviors.

\*Social Workers, Counselors, School Psychologists and School-Based Mental Health Professionals – The District has an extensive staff who assist in providing social and emotional supports for students throughout the school year. Social workers, school psychologists and counselors all team to provide assessment, prevention and intervention services to students and families. The District also partners with Centerstone (Alton) to provide school-based mental health professionals who provide direct services to students and families.

While this safety and security overview is not exhaustive, this provides several of the prevention and intervention strategies in place at our schools.

In closing, please know how much we look forward to greeting our students tomorrow for the first day of school. If we can ever be of greater service to your family, please contact your school office or the Administrative Center at (618) 474-2600. Thank you and have a great year!

Sincerely,

*Kristie*

Dr. Kristie Baumgartner  
Superintendent