Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has an abiding interest in accurate COVID-19 data to inform our decisions and be transparent with the public.

There are two primary sources for our COVID-19 data regarding case counts and they are both accurate but report different information.

First, the CPS COVID-19 data website shows all open reported cases and closed reported cases at the district level. This is consistent with CPS' publicly-available API. At the school level, our site currently only shows closed reported cases.

As a matter of clarity, **open reported cases means:** Any and all possible cases based on self-reported cases or positive tests through the District's in-school surveillance COVID-19 testing program that still need to be investigated and confirmed for positivity.

Closed reported cases means: Cases that have been reviewed, verified, and investigated by the Contact Tracing Team.

History: CPS was reporting all school-level open cases on our COVID-19 data website pages until Winter Break. CPS updated the data dashboard Dec. 20, 2021 to switch from all open school-level cases to only *closed* cases at the school level. This change was made to provide a more accurate number of closed positive and confirmed cases and to protect the privacy of our students and staff, especially in some of our school settings where the case count was very low and there was subsequent speculation about the health status of specific individuals. In all matters, we take student and staff privacy seriously.

Solution: However, in light of the Omicron surge and in the interest of broader transparency, we are re-evaluating our data reporting, and exploring reporting all open reported cases as well as closed cases at the school level.

CPS remains committed to transparency and accurate data to drive our decision making. We also understand that the data shows a large gap between open reported cases and closed reported cases over the last two weeks. This is due to two main factors: a large number of open reported cases coming out of Winter Break, and the fact that with staff and students out of buildings from Jan. 5 - Jan. 12 due to the work stoppage, many cases were rendered inactionable for contact tracing purposes, and contact tracing became even more difficult once the work stoppage concluded and students and staff returned to class.

Moving forward, we are offering paid opportunities for CPS staff to support our contact tracing efforts so we can close cases more quickly, give families greater certainty, and ensure a safe learning environment for everyone.

BACKGROUND

- The District acts and posts on cases directly self-reported to us via cps.edu/covidresults.

- Showcasing reported open cases will reflect more cases than will ultimately be confirmed as positive.

- Only about one to three percent of reported open cases, including the "close contacts" who are identified and sometimes moved to remote learning, will later test positive for COVID-19.

- Case counts are not a measure of transmission in schools and numerous studies have shown that schools are not sites of significant COVID-19 transmission.

- The District continues to work on a contact tracing program that delivers timely results. The work stoppage from Jan 5 to Jan. 11 did render some case reports inactionable.

- As a matter of public health, we are proactively providing data on our current case counts by school and District but are not required to provide this data. The data may lag the lived experience at times which is why we have implemented all the other COVID-19 safety mitigation measures, including universal masking, social distancing, strong hand hygiene, as well as robust and expanding testing and vaccination programs.