

Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan



School District of West Salem

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Introduction

On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plans (ARP) Act was signed into law. In it, the U.S. Department of Education is providing an additional \$121.9 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER III Fund). This legislation will award grants to state educational agencies (SEAs) for providing local educational agencies (LEAs) with emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the nation.

Wisconsin will receive \$1,540,784,854 in ESSER III funds from the Act, with 90 percent being awarded to school districts with amounts determined in proportion to the amount of Title I, Part A funds they received in summer 2020 from funds under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The remaining funds will be used for state-level activities to address issues caused by COVID-19.

This plan describes how the LEA or district will provide a safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services for all schools, including those that have already returned to in-person instruction.

Maintaining Health and Safety

Overview

It is the intention of the School District of West Salem to remain open to in-person learning by establishing a safe learning environment by implementing a system of layered mitigation measures. We aim to have near-zero transmission of the COVID virus within our schools. Transmission levels will determine reducing mitigation measures over time. The District will follow all legal orders or mandates presented by government agencies such as the US Department of Health and Human Services, the US Department of Transportation, the Wisconsin Department of Public Health, and the Department of Public Instruction. The District will consider guidelines and recommendations when choosing the best course of action. Our local community conditions, which include district buildings, will also be considered throughout the decision-making process. National guidelines may focus on areas that show high transmission with low vaccination rates which may not be relevant to local conditions.

On December 14, 2020, as part of a motion by Mr. Erik Peterson and Mr. Sean Gavaghan, the Board authorized the Administration to make the decision regarding the mode of learning. The urgency of the situation would determine the necessity for an immediate change to the plan.

The description on maintaining the safety of staff and students

The West Salem School District will begin the 2021-22 school year with a five-day per week, face-to-face instructional model and adhere to the following health protocols. Accordingly, the District will:

- publish the COVID-19 pre-screening checklist and strongly encourage students and staff members to utilize the checklist before entering a school facility,
- encourage staff members and students to stay home or go home if they are showing COVID-19 symptoms or if they have tested positive for COVID-19,
- limit visitors and activities for non-essential purposes,
- provide sanitizing stations throughout the building
- establish a test and stay program to keep as many of our students involved in face-to-face instruction as possible

Description to continue to provide services regardless of the mode of instruction (for example, health and food services if the LEA must pivot to virtual or hybrid instruction)

The West Salem School District will offer in-person learning five days a week according to the Board adopted 2021-2022 Academic Year Calendar. The school district has also provided families the option to enroll their students in virtual learning. In the event of school closure due to the pandemic, the district purchased iPads and laptops for all students to continue virtual learning.

Regardless of the mode of instruction, the West Salem School District will continue to provide meals under the community provision as long as USDA continues the allowance. Meals will be provided for summer school attendees as well as all eligible youth during the school year. If school is closed due to a pandemic, the district will assess its ability to distribute meals utilizing the same process it used during the spring of 2020.

The West Salem School District employs two full-time school nurses and one health paraprofessional who will continue to offer health services in person or virtually.

Mitigation Measures

Universal and correct wearing of masks

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

The West Salem School District will follow any legally issued orders provided by relevant governmental agencies. The CDC and local medical officials encourage masks for anyone age two and older regardless of vaccination status. The West Salem School District fully supports this recommendation for all staff and students while indoors. While supporting this recommendation, we will not be making masks mandatory at this time. The school district will maintain our [COVID-19 dashboard](#). Conditions within the district will be monitored and will be our primary measure of decision-making. If the District sees an upward trend of illness and/or quarantine we will reassess the need to implement a full extent of mitigation strategies including masking. A masking period may be required by a classroom, grade, school, or all individuals in order to keep students within our buildings safe. A decision to move to mask will last for a period of at least three weeks.

We want to provide families the opportunities to make choices for their children and will continue to move forward in that manner until buildings or classrooms show the need to layer on mitigation measures. After that point, various protocols will be triggered based on thresholds and conditions listed below:

Green

There is the presence of active cases, but not greater than two or more cases within a classroom or 3% of the total school population in our school buildings for five consecutive school days. Our [COVID Dashboard](#) has been updated to show this information.

We ask that families follow these guidelines:

- If your child is sick or has symptoms of COVID-19, please keep your child home. If they have symptoms of COVID-19 seek out testing either at school or a location of your choosing. ([Please see quarantine guidelines and definitions here](#)).

- The CDC, Wisconsin Department of Health Services, DPI, and local medical officials all strongly recommend the wearing of masks for everyone regardless of vaccination status. The District supports this recommendation of universal masking while in our buildings. During these conditions, masking is not mandatory for students or staff. We will honor the choices of our families, but this may be subject to change based upon the conditions listed below.

Yellow

All previous safety precautions in the schools apply plus the following:

Elementary School

Masking will be mandatory when:

- there are two or more cases within a classroom that have occurred because of classroom spread
- 3% or more of the total school population have active cases for five consecutive days (equates to 21 active cases)

Middle School

Masking will be mandatory when:

- 3% or more of the total school population have active cases for five consecutive days (equates to 16 active cases)

Exception: When students are engaged in non-contact physical activities in PE, they will not be required to mask.

High School

Masking will be mandatory when:

- 3% or more of the total school population have active cases for five consecutive days (equates to 17 active cases)

Exception: When students are engaged in non-contact physical activities in PE, they will not be required to mask.

Staff is encouraged to have students engaged in learning activities outside and build in outside mask breaks.

Staff masking is mandatory.

School-sponsored Clubs and Sports continue with approved safety protocols in place that include mandatory masking unless engaged in competitive physical activity.

Only staff and students will be allowed inside the building during school hours. Any visitors to the building will be required to wear a mask and access will be limited to the main school office during school hours.

Red

The thresholds stated in yellow are currently in place within all three of our buildings.

Mandatory masking at all times while inside the building by students and adults.

Recommendation of full class quarantine of students may occur if evidence of classroom spread (three or more cases within the same classroom in a 14-day period and no reasonable explanation for outside the classroom transmission).

* As our entire school population has had an opportunity to be fully vaccinated (December 17, 2021) the district will move to have universal protocols for the entire district. This date marks two weeks past the second dose offered to students ages 5-11 through a clinic that was conducted on campus.

- The district will move to 3% or more of the total student population in a school building that has active cases for five consecutive days.
- The district will continue with our test to stay protocols throughout the district.

Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (for example, the use of cohorts and podding)

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

The District will work to provide social distancing wherever possible. We appreciate students also being mindful of their surroundings.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

Emphasis will be placed on hand washing and covering of one's cough in all settings within the District.

Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

Measures of cleaning with the addition of disinfectant of all hard surfaces and high traffic areas will continue to be implemented on a daily basis. Cleaning supplies and hand sanitation materials will be available in all classrooms and in all common areas throughout the district. All supplies will be deemed safe for use by all ages.

The District will provide the highest level of filtration possible and increase air exchanges within each of our buildings.

Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

Quarantine (see District Quarantine Flow Chart):

- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, must quarantine.
- Individuals not fully vaccinated for COVID-19 who live with someone who is positive will be required to test daily to stay in school in order to avoid quarantine.
- The District will not require asymptomatic close contacts to quarantine.
- The District will continue to conduct contact tracing to determine if there are individuals who are close contacts to a positive case in the school setting. The School Nurse, or designee, will contact these families so they may monitor for symptoms.
- The District will utilize shortened quarantine measures as directed by county and state health departments.

Diagnostic and screening testing

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

The West Salem School District recommends students and staff get tested for COVID. The District is also working with Noah Laboratories to coordinate [COVID testing at our schools](#). Students have the option to be tested with parent permission when they are identified as close contacts or are symptomatic of COVID-19.

Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

All eligible staff employed in 2020-2021 were provided the opportunity to be vaccinated and provided the opportunity to receive the booster dose in October of 2021. Students ages 12 and older were provided access to an on-site vaccination clinic in the spring of 2021. Students ages 5-11 were provided access to an on-site vaccination clinic on November 12, 2021. New staff will be given access to vaccinations by working with local healthcare partners.

Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies and practices

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

When circumstances require specific policies or procedures designed to protect the health and safety of students, the 504 and IEP teams will determine if modifications and/or reasonable accommodations will be needed for individual students with disability-related issues.

Coordination with state and local health officials*Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable*

In accordance with the CDC recommendation, the West Salem School District collaborated with local health officials to determine the level of transmission in the community through the utilization of the state Department of Health Services website:

(<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/data.htm#maps>)

The West Salem School District continues to work with La Crosse County Public Health, our district doctor, and our district nursing staff to implement mitigating strategies for the safety of students and staff in order to keep our students and staff within our classrooms.

Continuity of Services

Overview

It is the obligation of the School District of West Salem to ensure the continuity of services to our students to address students' academic needs along with the social, emotional, mental health, and other needs of our students and staff. These needs also include health and food services for our students.

District response on continuity of services

The District will provide for continuity of services as follows:

Student Academic Needs

The West Salem School District has implemented a summer school program to assist all K-12 students with academic recovery. The District plans to continue full-time, in-person instruction beginning the spring of 2021. Additional instructional personnel has been added to staffing to implement further academic recovery efforts in core curriculum areas. These specialists will be available during the instructional day throughout the year.

Student Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

Additional counseling staff has been added to the mental health staff to address our students' social and emotional learning needs.

Other Student Needs (which may include student health and food services)

Food services will continue to provide meals under the community provision as long as USDA continues the allowance. Meals will be provided for all eligible youth during the school year. Summer meals were provided for summer school and all children age 18 and under through August 13, 2021.

Staff Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

The staff's social, emotional, and mental health needs may be addressed through the Employee Assistance Program and the District's Wellness program. Professional Development will also include wellness activities along with positive speakers to promote positivity and staff mental health. The district will also monitor the health needs of the staff through the annual School Perception Survey.

Other Staff Needs

The District will follow national, state, and local governing agencies' laws and directives concerning staff employment and benefits.

Periodic Review

Overview

As part of the requirement of the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan, this is the first revision of our original reopening plan that was presented to the BOE based upon public input on August 23, 2021. Per the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction, the current plan will be reviewed on or before the following dates:

May 12, 2022,
August 22, 2022, *
February 13, 2023,
August 20, 2023, *

* In August of 2022 and August of 2023, the School District of West Salem will provide a survey similar to the one that was sent to our families and community in August of 2021 to author our original re-opening plan.

District response on ensuring periodic updates to its plan

The updated plan will be shared on our district website under the COVID-19 tab. Revision dates will be placed at the conclusion of the document and parent/community survey results will be linked on our page as well. All the information can be found here:

<https://www.wsalem.k12.wi.us/content/covid-19-updates/2021-2022-reopening-plan-survey>

Public Input

Overview

The ARP Act requires that school districts make their Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan available to the public online and that the plans be in an understandable and uniform format; to the extent practicable, are written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practicable, orally translated; and upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent. Before making its plan publicly available, school districts must seek public comment on the plan and develop the plan after taking into account public comment.

District response on public input in the development of its plan

Example response: The West Salem School District has taken the following steps to make its plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at <https://www.wsalem.k12.wi.us/content/covid-19-updates/2021-2022-reopening-plan-survey>
- The plan is available in multiple languages by request.
- The plan was shared at the West Salem School District Board of Education meeting initially on August 23, 2021. An opportunity for public comment was available through a Google survey on August 17, 2021, and used to help finalize our school reopening plan. <https://www.wsalem.k12.wi.us/content/covid-19-updates/2021-2022-reopening-plan-survey>
- Upon request, a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA may be provided with the plan in an alternative format accessible by contacting our pupil services director.

Revised: May 12, 2022