

West Burlington Independent School District

Response to the Potential Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

Return to Learn Plan

This plan now stands as reflections of how the district planned to support our students and staff in learning, social-emotional challenges and physical safety during the pandemic. Iowa ended its Covid-19 Emergency Declaration on February 15, 2022 and the national emergency declaration of the pandemic ended on May 11, 2023.

At this time, the expectations of Covid-19 are like that of other contagious illnesses that students and staff typically encounter.

The West Burlington Independent Schools has returned to on-site instruction for all students and continues as before to meet the academic, social-emotional and physical needs of our students and staff within the guidelines of the laws and research that guide us.

Much was learned from the experience that will forever impact our personal and professional perspectives of the world we live in. We leave this plan intact as a place of consideration for future situations that may require a similar response.

September 18, 2023

Our vision is simple

STUDENTS FLOURISH

Our goal is attainable

Students are successful in learning this year's content regardless of the challenges that have arisen or will arise due to Covid-19.

Our plan is executable

Learning is the Focus

Everyone is Safe Yet Engaged

Everyone Feels Supported

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Introduction

Planning Process

This plan has been developed in collaboration with the Iowa Department of Education and the Des Moines County Public Health as well as district staff, AEA Leadership and other education leaders and medical professionals. Parent and staff perspective was also gathered and reviewed.

The contents of the plan is aligned with guidance by CDC and Iowa Public Health as well as proclamations that have been made by Governor Kim Reynolds and are currently in force.

It has also been reviewed by the West Burlington Independent School District's Board of Directors throughout the process. The contents of the plan as it is currently presented was approved by the board on July 31, 2020.

This plan is subject to change based on federal and state guidance and legal opinion.

While, as a complex system, we most often plan and execute our work under the paradigm of "Ready, Aim, Fire". This situation, the Covid-19 Pandemic has forced us to function more frequently under a "Ready, Fire, Aim" paradigm. Be assured that no action considered has been taken lightly, but rather has been thoroughly researched, reviewed and discussed with multiple perspectives to the extent possible.

Information, federal and state guidance and legal opinions supporting the development of this plan have been, are and will continue to be very dynamic. This plan will also be dynamic and is subject to change as deemed necessary.

Document Structure

Section 1: "Framing the School Structure(s)"

Discusses the purpose of the plan, the learning models that will be used to provide learning for students this year.

Section 2: "Learning as the Focus"

Presents the steps the district will implement to ensure our students success in mastering this year's learning expectations while simultaneously closing their gaps in learning from recent school closure.

Section 3: "Everyone Safe Yet Engaged",

Details the steps the district is taking to promoting student and staff health and safety.

Section 4: "Everyone Feels Supported"

Details how we will monitor and support the social-emotional and resource needs of students, their families and of our staff.

Mutual Commitment

Covid-19 is expected to impact the world for some period of time. It is anticipated that school systems will be impacted at least through the 2020-2021 school year.

Regardless of the learning format chosen, the West Burlington Independent School District is committed to providing the highest quality of instruction possible to meet the needs of our students. As school, parents and students, this year will take deep commitment, engagement and much patience and grace to work through. I am confident that we cannot only help each other maneuver the waters but also to thrive in doing so.

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Framing the School Structure(s)

The Covid-19 Pandemic is expected to continue throughout the 2020-2021 school year. School as we knew it in the spring of 2020 is not possible given the measures necessary to be taken to help support our greater community. The impact this event has had and will have on our students, their families and our staff is similar, yet unique. In many ways we are all in this together....alone.

With this as our reality, the district has identified the following options for “school” during the 2020-2021 school year.

School Options

KDG-12th Students

On July 31st the Board of Education adopted the below learning options for students. Parents/Guardians of Kdg-12th grade students may choose to:

1. Have their student attend school on-site Monday – Thursday and participate in online learning on Fridays or
2. Have their student participate in learning off-site virtually Monday – Friday.

On Friday, teachers will meet, virtually or face to face with individual or small groups of students to support them in their learning.

Teachers will continue to plan, collaborate and participate in professional development on Friday afternoons.

Students participating in Off-Site (Virtual) learning are eligible to participate in extra and co-curricular activities as desired.

Preschool Students

Preschool while supporting the development of basic academic skills, is primarily focused on the social development of young children. These youngest students need to be able to play together in order to develop these skills adequately for future success in school.

In order to promote play in an environment that better supports the Covid-19 driven need for physical distancing the district will provide pre-school in an A/B schedule with students assigned to M/W AM, M/W PM, T/TH AM or T/TH PM with additional learning activities provided for days when they are not physically attending schools. Pre-school will not be offered virtually.

This structure reduces the number of individual student contacts, aligns with supported guidance and provides a more appropriate environment for student learning.

The following expectations are established for students:

- KDG- 12th grade students learning by attending school in the district’s facilities will be expected to attend school Monday - Thursday and to participate in virtual learning on Fridays.

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- KDG-12th grade students remaining off-site for their learning will participate in virtual learning Monday through Friday. The expectations for participation in classes throughout the day and week will be determined by teachers based on the course and level.
- Friday mornings will be used to work with students individually and/or in small groups in virtual and/or face-to-face settings as determined by the teacher in consultation with the building principal. Students will be expected to participate as requested. Students/parents may also request to meet with a teacher during this time.
- All Kdg-12th grade students will be expected to participate in virtual learning on days when school is delayed or cancelled due to inclement weather.
- Students who are unable to attend on-site school due to illness or other reasons will be expected to participate in learning virtually as determined appropriate.
- Cohorting of students intended to reduce student contact levels will be used to the extent possible.
 - Elementary students will be cohorted throughout the school day. They will remain with their designated classmates only for the predominance of the day.
 - The extent of cohorting for the secondary continues to be defined. The final degree and structure of cohorting will be communicated once determined.

Instruction/Learning Expectations

- Instruction provided for all students whether face-to-face or virtual will be substantially the same.
 - Instructional activities/materials may vary to accommodate the mode of learning; expectation of and support for learning will not.
 - Participation, meeting deadlines and completion of assignments is expected of all students regardless of where or how they are learning. Off-site and On-site students may be expected to collaborate on course work. Off-site student may be required to participate in such activities at a designated time as required by the teacher.
 - Assessment of standards and calculations of grades will be identical.
 - Attendance will not be a factor in grade calculation.
 - Summative assessment will be conducted in a manner that demonstrates assurance of the child's mastery of the standards. An alternate location and/or a time that provides minimal risk to the student will be provided for the completion of an assessment should that be considered most appropriate. (i.e. District Office, Outside of the school day)
- Some lab and performance based courses such as Industrial Technology, Family and Consumer Science, Art and Band/Choir *may* not be offered as elective options for students who are working on-line. Such offerings will be considered on a course by course basis with the building principal's decision being final. It is within the discretion of the principal to approve an alternative course offering for online students if presented by a teacher.

Technology/Materials Use

- All students will receive a district-provided device.
 - Students will be expected to follow all district expectations related to
 - the use of the device,
 - the use of Internet and/or other district-provided materials and
 - with regard to their behavior whether virtual or in a face-to-face format
 - Canvas, a learning management system, will be used to ensure
 - Equitable instruction and accountability for all students,

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- Better communication between staff, students and parents, and
- Better coordination of instruction

Student Transitions

- Students may transition to off-site learning at the discretion of their parents and with the recommendation of the IEP team should the student have one.
- Students will be allowed to transition to on-site learning based on criteria including, but not limited to, community spread and building and/or grade absenteeism.
- Requests for multiple transitions between on-site and off-site learning are highly discouraged and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

District Transitions

- The district may transition students participating in on-site learning as a whole, or as a building, grade or classroom to more virtual learning to try to mitigate illness or to address staff shortage as an intervention measure before moving to fully off-site learning for all students.
 - The number of days to be transitioned would be no greater than a total of 1.5 days and would be taken incrementally in no smaller than .5 day units.
 - The district would strive to, but cannot commit to at least 48 hours notice. Parents/Guardians are asked to please have contingency plans in place at all times.

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LEARNING AS THE FOCUS

Student learning is our core purpose. Ensuring student learning throughout the continuum of potential learning models requires substantial changes in structure, instruction and assessment so that learning expectations remain constant regardless of the location of students or staff.

The following changes are being implemented:

Modify schedules to better address student learning needs

- Change West Burlington Arnold Jr. Sr. High School's start time to 8:10.
- Transition the secondary school to a trimester structure providing more daily instructional time with staff in fewer courses at a single time while creating the opportunity for students to complete more credits over the course of an academic year. It is intended to also alleviate some of the physical distancing concerns by potentially reducing section sizes and the number of transitions daily

Provide students instruction at current grade level while resolving gaps in past learning necessary to be successful

- Implement the use of the Accelerated Learning Protocol to identify gaps in student learning and then provides scaffolding as well as individual, small group and/or whole class instruction in skills necessary to meet the new year's learning expectations.

Ensure student access to high quality instruction and learning opportunities that aligns with and promotes attainment of grade level/course content standards in all models of school

- Provide an internet accessible device for each student.
- Provide a means of access to digital materials and tools if access is not available at their home. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Students being allowed to work from school or in the parking lot during a closure.
 - Google offline is used with work then being uploaded once connected to the network.
 - Consideration of district-provided hot spots for those without adequate bandwidth.
- Continue to enhance teachers' and staffs' skills in implementing and facilitating technology-based instruction including the conducting of valid assessments.

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Enhance use of technology-based instructional materials and tools that demonstrate the potential of greater resource and time efficiency, engagement and/or provide integrated formative assessment

- Implement of IXL as an adaptive learning system.
- Implement the use Canvas Learning Management System and other add-Ons that exceed or enhance the tools and user interface of Google Classroom.
- Review and adopt curriculum and tools that support both learning and teaching in all potential models of school especially in the hybrid and virtual models
 - Apex Learning (6th-12th digital curriculum for core courses)
 - Pear Deck (Add-on for Google Slides)
 - And others (i.e. Screencastify)
- Develop and/or continued to develop expertise of staff in the use of Canvas, Google Suite including Google Meet and using Google applications offline, Apex Learning and other applications

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EVERYONE SAFE YET ENGAGED

As the driver of the district's transition from one model of learning to another, it is also the most fluid aspect of our planning. The expectations, guidance and legal opinions seem at times to be changing weekly if not daily. It is anticipated that this will continue to happen throughout not only the next few months but the year.

The health and safety of our students, staff as well as our families and greater community are a priority. This plan has strived to address current guidance within the space and resources available. Below find the actions we currently plan to implement:

Ensure greater physical distancing

- Classrooms are furnished with minimal furniture to provide the greatest physical distance possible.
 - The use of outdoor space for instructional work will be considered as appropriate.
- Students will use individual desks or tables which have been modified with plexiglass shields. They will be set in staggered rows when possible.
- Large groups of students physically gathering for extended periods of time such as during lunch or assemblies have been minimized by restructuring the activity to reduce the number of students present, increasing the size of space used, using an alternate location or eliminating the activity.
- Daily entry and exit routines are changed to better ensure physical distancing of parents and students and limit congestion at doors.
- Student traffic patterns are modified, and visual cues are provided as reminders.

Enhance safeguards to minimize infectivity

• Face Coverings

The district recognizes the current CDC guidelines that consider an individual exposed if they are within 6 ft. for longer than 15 minutes without or with a face covering as well as its guidance related to the wearing of a face covering when you cannot maintain a 6 ft. physical distance. This guidance is also provided and supported by Iowa Public Health. Thus, the Board of Education has adopted the following expectations:

- Face coverings will be required of staff when they cannot maintain a 6 ft physical distance.
- Face masks will be required of students in PK-12th grade when they cannot maintain a 6 ft. physical distance.
- Masks are not required of individuals with health risks that are compounded by the wearing of a mask. A doctor's note to support this may be required.

The district also recognizes that current research indicates that these young students are very low-risk for contracting or infecting others with Covid-19 and the masking of this young age group can be ineffective due to frequent touching of the facial area. At this time, the district will remain consistent

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with the guidance of CDC which indicates that masks should be worn by individuals aged greater than two.

Additional Information Related to Face Coverings

- Face covering breaks will be provided periodically throughout the day.
- Face coverings may be worn at times when 6 ft physical distance or greater is being maintained at the discretion of the student or student's parent.
 - The district will strive to meet a parent's desire, but will not be held accountable for the student wearing or not wearing it at times when physical distancing being maintained.
- Disposable face coverings will be available for students. Parents may purchase face coverings for their students should they choose.
- Face shields may be worn in addition to a face covering. It will not replace a mask.
- Face coverings and shields must meet the criteria identified by CDC and be in compliance with district policy or handbook expectation including but not limited to appropriateness and use.
- Para-educators working one-on-one with students may be required to wear wear shield depending upon the specifics of the assignment.
- Visitors will be allowed into the building on a very limited basis as determined by administration.
 - Use of electronic meeting and/or non-student facilities such as the district board room will be encouraged for meetings involving non-district individuals.
- No personal items are to come to school with students or staff except for purses/backpacks, coat, lunch and a water bottle, snacks as approved.
- Separation shields are placed at building reception areas.
- Entry into offices is minimized through facility space restructuring and/or new materials/supplies drop-off and pick-up procedures.
- Symptom Monitoring and Illness Isolation
 - Parents of on-site students will be expected to monitor student health. The symptoms monitored will be as identified by CDC and Iowa Public Health. At the current time, these symptoms are:

HIGH RISK SYMPTOMS

- New cough, Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, New loss of taste or smell

LOW RISK SYMPTOMS

- Fever, Headache, Muscle and body aches, Fatigue, Sore throat, Runny nose, Congestion, Nausea
- Students and staff members with **ANY** high-risk symptom and **TWO OR MORE** low-risk symptoms will be expected to remain at home.
- Fever is gauged as 100.4 degrees. Individuals must be fever free (without medicine) for 24 hours before consideration of return.

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- In conjunction with local public health, protocols will be implemented when a student or staff member is identified as Covid-19 positive including a 14-day quarantine and contact tracing to identify other potential need for isolation.

Implement greater hygiene measures:

- Handwashing or hand sanitizing will occur more frequently
 - Prior to entering the building,
 - When boarding and unboarding buses,
 - Before and after meals,
 - When transitioning between rooms/locations including recess,
 - After coughing/sneezing,
 - After group activities, and
 - Water filling stations will be used in lieu of a water fountain; Students and staff are asked to have a personal water bottle that seals to prevent spillage.

Reduce physical sharing of materials:

- Shared use of classroom materials (i.e. headsets, writing utensils, art supplies, computer devices, manipulatives, musical instruments) will be minimized; when not possible items will be sanitized prior to another's use.
- Personal property from home will not be allowed; student bags will be stored in lockers or individual classroom spaces.
- Snacks will be required to be individual commercially package items and will be isolated for 72 hours before serving.
- Library materials will be distributed and collected on a designated schedule and will be isolated for 72 hours before being reshelved. Materials may be selected via the district's electronic system and then delivered to the student.
- Classroom library materials will be distributed and collected on a designated schedule and will be isolated for 72 hours before being reshelved.
- Computer devices will be sanitized or isolated for 72 hours prior to fixing or returning to a student following being fixed.

Intensify Cleaning and Disinfection

- Cleaning and disinfection will be increased with the goal of two cleanings or disinfections occurring daily of each student classroom by custodial staff.
- Other high-use locations such as restrooms will have more intensified cleaning.
- Student workspaces, including desks will be sanitized between class transitions.
- High touch items such as restrooms, doorknobs and water faucets will be cleaned more frequently.

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Provide Greater Access to Fresh Air:

- Windows will be opened as possible, considering temperature and student/staff medical concerns.
- Opportunities for greater access to fresh air will be provided as deemed appropriate by administration.

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EVERYONE FEELS SUPPORTED

Reengaging our students, as well as, our staff in the school setting following this experience is anticipated to present challenges. The impact of this experience is unique, personal and often emotional to each of us.

We know that the basic needs of our students and staff such as food, shelter and the feeling of both safety and support are paramount and mutually tied to our students' needed and expected learning. The district will strive to minimize, if not eliminate, gaps in these needs, as possible. To that end we plan to take the following actions:

Provide enhanced support for teachers/staff and students social emotional well-being by:

- Enhancing identification and monitoring of students' and staffs' social emotional behavioral needs.
 - Conduct surveys and individual or small group dialogues periodically throughout the year about the social emotional behavior needs of students and staff.
 - Conduct regular check-ins with students and staff to monitor identified needs.
- Using results identify and provide supports that meet the needs of students and staff
 - Consider the unique needs of various potentially at-risk populations and students at key transition points.
 - Provide purposeful reengagement activities intended to redevelop relationships between and amongst students and staff.
- Providing additional professional learning for staff to better support students in the following areas:
 - Trauma-informed instruction,
 - Redevelopment of relationships,
 - Developing resiliency in students, and
 - Implicit Bias.

Provide enhanced support to students' families to access needed resources by:

- Enhancing identification and monitoring of students' families resource needs and of community resources available
 - Conduct surveys and individual or small group dialogues periodically throughout the year about the needs of students' families.
 - Conduct regular check-ins with students and families to monitor identified needs.
 - Review external data for trends identified in resource needs such as:
 - [2019 Community Needs Assessment \(Community Action of Southeast Iowa.](#)
- Using results identify available community resources providing supports that meet the needs of students' families.

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- Provide purposeful reengagement activities intended to redevelop relationships between and amongst students and staff.
- Identify and/or develop a comprehensive list of available regional, community and district resources including but not limited to:
 - [Des Moines County Service Directory](#).
- Consider and address the unique needs of various potentially at-risk populations and students at key transition points.
- en the district is operating in a hybrid or remote model.