

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



Template Developed by CESA 5



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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

A district's plan must include how it will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and LEA staff, and the extent to which it has adopted policies or practices and a description of any such policies or practices on each of the CDC's safety recommendations including the universal and correct wearing of masks; modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding); hand washing and respiratory etiquette; cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation; contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the state, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments; diagnostic and screening testing; efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible; appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies or practices; and coordination with state and local health officials.

Description on maintaining the safety of staff and students

The Altoona School District will begin the 2022-23 school year with a five-day per week, face-to-face instructional model and adhere to the following health protocols. Accordingly, the District will:

- 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,
- Requesting all staff and parents of students screen for symptoms prior to coming to school.
- provide handwashing and hand sanitizing options throughout the buildings.

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 Altoona School District will offer in-person learning five days a week according to the Board adopted 2022-2023 Academic Year Calendar. The school district has also provided families the option to enroll their students in virtual learning in grades 6-12. In the event of school closure due to the pandemic, the district purchased Chromebooks for all students to continue virtual learning.

Regardless of the mode of instruction, the Altoona 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 Altoona School District employs one full-time school nurse who will continue to offer health

services in-person or virtually. The school district also partners with Wisconsin Mental Health to provide mental health support for families.

Mitigation Measures

Universal and correct wearing of masks

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

The Altoona School District asks that each family review all available information from health officials and/or their own physician and decide what is the best option for their child and communicate their choice to their son or daughter. Resources on how to appropriately wear and care for a mask are on the district website.

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

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

Mitigation measures such as the installation of floor decals and water bottle filling stations, and the promotion of social distancing have been implemented at each facility. Extended and/or staggered meal service will be implemented to support social distancing while ensuring adequate time for students to consume their meals. Individual schools will determine the cafeteria service that best suits the needs of their students. Cafeterias and/or classrooms may be used as settings for student meals.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette is taught to students with high emphasis in the primary grade levels. Signage is posted throughout buildings as reminders of handwashing and respiratory etiquette. In addition, hand sanitization liquids are available in all classrooms.

Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

Enhanced sanitation procedures have been implemented and continue at all schools focusing on high-touch surfaces. The District uses cleaning solutions that are rated to kill the SARS virus. Classroom teachers and other staff members are helping to support these additional cleaning measures.

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

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The Altoona School District maintained a COVID-19 case dashboard throughout the 2020-21 school year and continued to do so for the 2021-22 school year.

Diagnostic and screening testing

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

The Altoona School District recommends students and staff get tested for COVID by their medical provider or a local pharmacy. The Altoona School District currently does not host an onsite clinic, but if the need should arise the school district would work with providers.

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

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

As a service to our families, the Altoona School District provides communication about the vaccination as information becomes available.

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, 504 and IEP teams will determine if modifications and/or reasonable accommodations are needed for individual students with disability-related issues.

Coordination with state and local health officials

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

The CDC recommends that all decisions about implementing school-based strategies should be made locally, collaborating with local health officials who can help determine the level of transmission in the community. The Altoona School District continues to work with Eau Claire County Public Health to implement mitigating strategies for the safety of students and staff.

Continuity of Services

Overview

Districts must describe how the LEA will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services.

District response on continuity of services

The District will provide for continuity of services as follows:

Student Academic Needs

The District plans to continue full-time, in-person instruction beginning the fall of 2022.

Student Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

The District will continue to provide School-Based Mental Health Services and will additionally provide school counselors for small group and individual supports. The District will monitor student well-being using a nationally-normed benchmarking tool and be responsive to the needs of students.

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. Opportunities and locations for access to additional food and clothing/hygiene items will be provided to families.

Staff Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

The District will continue to follow national, state, and local governing agencies' laws and directives concerning staff employment benefits. Staff will be provided social, emotional, and mental health support through the Employee Assistance Program and District insurance benefits program.

Other Staff Needs

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

Periodic Review

Overview

Districts are required to review and, as appropriate, revise their Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan at least every six months through September 30, 2023, including seeking public input and taking such input into account in determining whether

to revise the plan and, if revisions are determined necessary, on the revisions it makes to its plan.

District response on ensuring periodic updates to its plan

The Altoona School District will periodically review and, as needed, revise the plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services. The plan will be reviewed at least every six months, and the school system will seek and take into account public input during the review process. Plan revisions will address updated CDC and Eau Claire County Public Health guidance on safely reopening schools if any are issued.

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

The Altoona School District has taken the following steps to make its plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at <https://www.altoona.k12.wi.us/>
- The plan is available in multiple languages through the use of our web provider powered by Google Translate. The plan is available in more than ten languages.
- The plan was sent to parents, students, and employees via our messaging systems.
- An opportunity for public comment was available during the August 15, 2022, Board meeting.
- The plan will be continued to be shared at regular Board of Education meetings.
- 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 district office.