

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



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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

The School District of Hilbert’s plan will 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 Calumet County Health Department; 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 School District of Hilbert will maintain the five-day per week, face-to-face instructional model for the 2021-2022 school year that it used in the 2020-2021 school year 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, have tested or have anyone in their family test for COVID-19 or if they have tested positive for COVID-19,
- modify HVAC settings to increase ventilation in all buildings,
- promote proper hand washing and respiratory etiquette,
- provide sanitizing stations throughout the building.

Description to continue to provide services regardless of the mode of instruction

The School District of Hilbert will offer in-person learning five days a week according to the Board adopted 2021-2022 Academic Year Calendar. The District will provide students in quarantine or isolation the option for virtual learning. In the event of school closure due to the pandemic, the District moved to a one-to-one setting in the 2020-2021 school year and provides all students with Chromebooks to continue virtual learning.

Regardless of the mode of instruction, the School District of Hilbert 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. 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 School District of Hilbert partners with the Calumet County Health Department to provide school nursing services and will continue to offer health services in-person or virtually. Because of the Wisconsin School Based Mental Health Grant and the Thrive Calumet Grant, the District also partners with Samaritan Health to provide mental health support for our families.

Mitigation Measures

Universal and correct wearing of masks

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

The School District of Hilbert's Board of Education approves an update to the "Our Pathway Forward" Return to School Plan each month. This update takes into account the local data, as well as local health department updates, to determine when students, staff, and visitors will be required to wear masks and when mask-wearing will be optional. These updates are based on COVID activity in individual classrooms or schools, the level of COVID transmission within the district's geographic boundaries, and in Calumet County. Local District data can be found on the District's COVID-19 Dashboard on the District website (www.hilbertk12.org).

Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

Mitigation measures such as the monitoring of symptoms before coming to school, frequent handwashing and respiratory etiquette, routine disinfecting and cleaning of common surfaces, strongly encouraging COVID-19 vaccinations, proper signage in multiple languages, the installation of water bottle filling stations, and the promotion of social distancing have been implemented at each facility.

We have implemented additional lunch periods to support social distancing while ensuring adequate time for students to consume their meals. Cafeterias and/or classrooms may be used as settings for student meals if there is an increase in COVID-19 transmission in a classroom or school.

Our busing company and school transportation services will comply with the current CDC Order mandating masks to be worn on all public transportation for the 2021-2022 school year. This will be required for daily routes, field trips and school co-curricular activities.

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 in multiple languages throughout buildings as reminders of handwashing and respiratory etiquette. In addition, hand sanitization stations/liquids are available in all classrooms and common spaces throughout the District.

The District also provides additional cleaning of the District on Wednesday nights with the use of an electro-static sprayer and disinfectant that kills the SARS virus as well as other viruses and bacteria.

Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

The District has worked with our HVAC company (Energy Control and Design) to implement settings to increase the ventilation of our HVAC units in the District. This setting provides more outside air to circulate through all rooms in the District throughout the school day.

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. In addition to daily cleaning, all rooms and surfaces are treated with an electro-static sprayer and disinfectant that kills the SARS virus weekly (Wednesday night).

Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the Calumet County Health Department

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

The School District of Hilbert works with the Calumet County Health Department to provide contact tracing, isolation and quarantine procedures with the families in the School District of Hilbert. We have partnered using a COVID-19 Tracking Sheet (Google Doc) to maintain real-time data/information on students and staff.

The School District of Hilbert will continue contact tracing and transparent reporting to the public of COVID-19 cases and staff quarantines within the District. To provide transparent reporting for our stakeholders, the District maintained a COVID-19 case dashboard throughout the 2020-21 school year and will continue to do so for the 2021-22 school year. This dashboard is located on our website at www.hilbertk12.org.

The School District of Hilbert will guide parents/students, employees, and contractors on screening protocols for the daily pre-screening process, which all parties should complete before entering the campus/building. Each school will continue to provide current health information to staff, students, and families about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, when they should stay home, and when they can return to school. Procedures for contact tracing can be found on the District website at <https://www.hilbertk12.org/district/pathway-forward.cfm>.

Diagnostic and screening testing

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

The School District of Hilbert recommends students and staff get tested for COVID by their medical provider and/or a local pharmacy if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or if they have been exposed or a close contact to COVID-19. The turnaround time for results at the Walgreens, CVS or

National Guard testing sites in our area has been reduced to within 24-48 hours. Typically, students and staff have reported results in less than 24 hours.

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

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

In the late winter/early spring of 2021, eligible staff employed in 2020-2021 were provided the opportunity to be vaccinated against COVID-19. The District worked with the Calumet County Health Department to provide COVID-19 vaccination clinics for our staff. In August of 2021, the District coordinated an on-site COVID-19 vaccination clinic in coordination with our District Open House for all eligible students, staff and parents. New staff will be given access to vaccinations by working with the Calumet County Health Department, as well as staff looking to receive the approved COVID-19 booster shots.

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 School District of Hilbert has been very proactive in working with local and regional health partners to implement mitigation strategies for the safety of students and staff. In the summer of 2020, the District became involved in a regional partnership with local health departments, local school districts and local healthcare providers. We have met weekly with local health departments from Calumet County, Outagamie County, Winnebago County, City of Appleton, City of Menasha and healthcare professionals from ThedaCare and Ascension. Included in this partnership were representatives from the following school districts: Hilbert, Chilton, Brillion, Stockbridge, New Holstein, Kaukauna, Kimberly, Wrightstown, Freedom, Little Chute, Appleton, Hortonville, Seymour, Neenah, Oshkosh, Menasha, New London, Omro and Winneconne. This partnership has endured the length of the pandemic and still continues to meet on an at least bi-weekly basis and plans on continuing through the 2021-2022 school year.

Continuity of Services

Overview

The School District of Hilbert will 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 School District of Hilbert was able to provide full-time, in-person instruction during the 2020-2021 school year and the plan is to continue that model of instruction through the 2021-2022 school year as well. The School District of Hilbert has added additional instructional staff in early elementary school grades to implement further academic recovery efforts in core curriculum areas. With these additional staff, we feel we have been able to lower numbers in classrooms (avoiding classroom splits).

The School District of Hilbert has purchased and implemented two assessment and academic support programs to help determine the current academic levels of all of our students K-12. Once the assessment levels are determined, our teachers will be able to use these additional resources to initiate Individual Academic Plans for these students. The programs we have purchased are IXL and Fastbridge.

Along with purchasing these academic support programs, we have updated our District curriculum in the areas of Social Studies and Mathematics the last two years. These updates have allowed for full online access for our students to these curricular areas. This has been beneficial, especially for those students who may be quarantined or isolate due to COVID-19.

Our District utilizes the end of the day to implement our Extended Learning Time (middle and high school students) and W.I.N. Time (elementary students). This time is dedicated to working with students who are behind in class, missing homework, need to finish an assessment or project, and need to get caught up for time missed in school. At the high school level, we have implemented an additional Algebra math period during the ELT time to assist our students in achieving success in Algebra.

Student Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

Our District provides our students with a lot of support in the area of Mental Health. For the 2021-2022 school year, we have added the Character Strong curriculum for both Middle and High School students in order to support their mental health needs. This curriculum is taught by a

classroom teacher during the school day. Along with Character Strong at the High school, we are also continuing our Sources of Strength program to support all students and bringing in Challenge Day for our freshman, Sophomores and Juniors. At the Elementary School level, we have added Conscious Discipline in grades 4K-5 and Safe Spots throughout the Elementary and Middle School for students to use.

District-wide, we continue to monitor our student's mental health needs by using an SEL survey (grades 7-12) and the b.e.s.t. Screener (grades K-12). We also use a screening tool through Samaritan Health. Samaritan Health will utilize these tools to provide counseling to our students at our on-site counseling opportunities twice a week.

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.

Staff Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

The District has provided staff support with the social, emotional, and mental health needs through the Employee Assistance Program provided through the District insurance program.

In addition to the EAP program, we have created two Staff Wellness Areas in the building where the staff can relax, use calming techniques and utilize various stress relieving protocol; provide a free Yoga opportunity twice a week for staff after school; provide two early release opportunities during the week for staff to access our fitness center and weight room after school; and provide various Staff Appreciation days throughout the school year.

Periodic Review

Overview

The School District of Hilbert 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 plan was originally approved by the School District of Hilbert's Board of Education on July 20, 2020. It has been discussed, modified, updated and re-approved at every school board meeting since that initial approval date. An opportunity for public comment after the Administration provides the Board of Education with an update has occurred at every meeting since July 20, 2020. At this time, the Board of Education plans on continuing this review process.

Public Input

Overview

The ARP Act requires that the School District of Hilbert 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, the School District of Hilbert will 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 School District of Hilbert has taken the following steps to make its plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at <https://www.hilbertk12.org/district/pathway-forward.cfm>.
- The plan is available in multiple languages through the use of our web provider powered by Google Translate.
- The plan was sent to parents, students, and employees via our messaging systems.
- The plan was originally approved by the School District of Hilbert's Board of Education on July 20, 2020. It has been discussed, modified, updated and re-approved at every school board meeting since that initial approval. An opportunity for public comment after the Administration provides the Board of Education with an update has occurred at every meeting since July 20, 2020.
- 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.