

Port Edwards School District 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 Port Edwards School 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 district's plan includes how it will maintain the health and safety of students, 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 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 Port Edwards 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.

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 Port Edwards School District will offer in-person learning five days a week according to the Board adopted 2021-2022 Academic Year Calendar. In the event of school closure due to the pandemic, the district purchased Chromebooks for all students to continue virtual learning. Students in isolation or quarantine due to COVID-19 will also be eligible for virtual learning during their times in isolation or quarantine.

Regardless of the mode of instruction, the Port Edwards 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 Port Edwards School District employs one part-time school nurse for two days per week who will continue to offer health services in-person. Additionally, the District employs one full time health aide to provide support health services throughout the year to families and staff. The school district also partners with Compass Counseling to provide mental health support for students on a referral basis.

Mitigation Measures

Wearing of masks

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

The Port Edwards School Board adopted thresholds to determine when students, staff, and visitors will be required to wear masks and when mask-wearing will be optional. These thresholds are based on COVID activity in individual schools. Masking will remain optional, but the District Administrator is directed to implement mandatory masking at a school building level when either of the following conditions exist:

- a. Positive case count at a school is 5% students and staff averaged over a 3-day period

Masking will remain in place for a minimum of two weeks and for masking to return to optional the case counts must fall below those levels listed above.

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 proper signage, 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 where possible in the schools 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.

K-5

- Students cohort when possible throughout the day
- Students only travel through building if necessary to reduce crossing paths with other cohorts

6-12

- Trimester Schedule with five classes of 70 minutes each and return of Blackhawk Advisory
- Staggered passing times between HS/MS
- Continue to reduce interactions between students in middle and high school
- Fewer crossover connections between students and with staff

District contracted transportation will comply with CDC guidelines that are in effect during the 2021-22 school year.

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.

Further efforts:

- Hand sanitizing stations have been placed in each classroom and common area
- Touchless faucets and toilets have been installed

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. In addition to daily cleaning, each classroom is equipped with sanitizer to clean surfaces between student and staff use. Maintenance staff utilizes electrostatic sprayers for more extensive surface sanitizing on a regular basis.

The District has installed ionization air cleaning units on all air intake ventilation units in all buildings. These units function at all times that ventilation units operate. Ductwork systems have been professionally cleaned and new filters installed on air intake units.

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

The Port Edwards School District will continue to provide transparent reporting to the public of COVID-19 cases 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. The School District will work with the Wood County Health Department in implementing procedures established by the health department. -

The Port Edwards School District will guide parents, guardians, 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.

Diagnostic and screening testing

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

The Port Edwards School District recommends students and staff get tested for COVID if symptomatic by their medical provider or a local pharmacy. The District provided COVID testing during the 2020-21 school year and will continue to provide COVID testing at our schools. Students have the option to be tested with parent permission when they become symptomatic. Staff also has the option to utilize testing through school services when possible.

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 in the Spring of 2021 and some staff are eligible for a booster shot clinic being provided in late October of 2021. Community members, parents, students and staff were provided access to an after-hours on-site vaccination clinic in early October 2021. The District will continue to make opportunities available for vaccination.

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 Port Edwards School District is in regular communication with the Wood County Health Department staff and consults with the health department on decisions about implementing school-based strategies to mitigate and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic 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 Port Edwards 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 fall of 2021, with limited exception. Additional instructional personnel are being anticipated to be added through the ESSER III program. These additional positions will be dedicated to providing academic support to students specifically in elementary reading, but also across a spectrum of subject areas if necessary in both the elementary and middle school.

Further, the District is working with the Boys and Girls Club of Wisconsin Rapids to implement the Be Great Graduate program in grades 7,8 and 9 to address students who are struggling with the high school transition.

Student Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

The District has implemented the b.e.s.t Universal Screener at all grade levels starting in the fall of 2021. The b.e.s.t. screening is a tool designed to help educational professionals identify a trajectory of behavioral health and behavioral, emotional and social traits in school aged children along with data-based universal interventions.

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

Food services will continue to provide meals under the seamless summer provisions 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. Summer meals will be provided for summer school and all children age 18 and under through July 2, 2022.

Staff Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

The staff's social, emotional, and mental health needs may also be addressed through the Employee Assistance Program provided through the District insurance program. Additionally, through a change in the District's Health Insurance Plan, those employees who are health plan members will have the opportunity to participate in wellness activities and receive reimbursement up to \$200 for those activities.

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 Port Edwards 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 Wood County Health Department 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 Port Edwards School District has taken the following steps to make its plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at pesd.k12.wi.us
- The plan was shared at the Port Edwards School District Board of Education meetings on July 21, 2021; August 18, 2021 and September 8, 2021. An opportunity for public comment was available during each of the Board meetings and the District received written comments as well.
- Plans were overviewed in communications to parents, staff and other stakeholders utilizing the District messaging system on August 19, 2021; September 10, 2021 and October 1, 2021.
- 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.
- Plan updates made by the PESD Board on March 9, 2022