2021-22 WDMCS RETURN-TO-LEARN PLANS

To prepare for the 2021-22 school year, West Des Moines Community Schools (WDMCS) reviewed the 2020-21 Return-to-Learn plans as required by the Iowa Department of Education. The Return-to-Learn plan was created and approved by the WDMCS Board of Education on Aug. 12, 2021, with the understanding that the plan could change based on changes made by state or federal authorities.

WDMCS adjusted the 2021-22 Return-to-Learn plan based on a Sept. 13, 2021, federal court ruling. The Court issued a Temporary Restraining Order and Preliminary Injunction against the enforcement of Iowa Code section 280.31, which banned Iowa school districts from issuing mask mandates for students, staff, and community members present on school grounds.

In preparation for the second semester, WDMCS leadership updated the Return-to-Learn plan. The plan would go into effect on the first day of the second semester, which is Tuesday, Jan. 18, 2022. The plan will remain in place until the end of the school year unless brought back to the WDMCS Board of Education with recommended changes.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Items in **bold** indicate changes.

COVID-19 TRACKING

- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 are required to stay home for 10 days and be 24 hours fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medications prior to returning to school or work. Individuals who test positive will be emailed COVID-19 resources. An email notification will be sent to the entire grade level within an elementary school when a positive case is confirmed.
- Contact tracing will ONLY BE COMPLETED within the immediate household of the positive individual, and those individuals are highly encouraged to quarantine. The Iowa Department of Public Health adjusted COVID-19 surveillance to follow the influenza model. This means districts cannot independently contact trace. Any contact tracing and follow-up would need to be led by the Polk County Health Department (PCHD).
- Individuals who are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine are highly encouraged to receive one. Numerous organizations offer free vaccines within Polk County.
- Free COVID-19 testing kits **~~may be~~ are** available in each building**~~, based on availability~~**. These kits are to be used at home and mailed to a testing facility to receive results. These kits are not to be returned to any WDMCS building. Central Iowa testing locations will be frequently shared with families and staff. WDMCS is not allowed to independently administer tests.
- WDMCS will post confirmed cases of COVID-19 that have been reported to the district on a weekly basis. The dashboard will include building-specific positive cases, grouped by both students and staff.

BUILDINGS AND BUSES

- Students and staff will be asked to stay home if they feel ill and/or have a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher. Student absences will be recorded in Infinite Campus, and staff absences will be recorded through their standard leave process.
- All individuals, including students, staff, and visitors, are **~~required~~ highly encouraged** to wear face masks while indoors. **Preschool students under the age of five are required to wear face masks because they are not eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine.** Face masks are available in each building. **~~Contact your building administrator to request an exemption based on documented medical and/or religious situations.~~**
- Face masks are required on all school buses.
- Hand sanitizer and handwashing stations are available and encouraged.
- In 2020, WDMCS upgraded the HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) system to remove viral particles. (We changed from MERV 8 to MERV 13-14 filters.)
- Federal emergency relief funds will be used to continue HVAC updates across the district as part of ongoing construction work.
- Water bottle stations are available in all school buildings. Students and staff are encouraged to bring their own reusable water bottles.
- Cleaning and disinfecting will continue in each area. This will occur on an enhanced schedule in elementary buildings.
- High-touch areas will be cleaned and disinfected regularly throughout the day.
- Plexiglass barriers will remain within district and school office spaces that have public-facing interaction. Face shields will continue to be made available to students and staff as an extra layer of protection.
- Cleaning and disinfecting supplies will be provided for each space in buildings.

IN CLASSROOMS

- Teachers are able to take students outside for fresh air.
- Students will participate in recess and P.E. with their peers.
- Breakfasts will be eaten in the cafeteria. **~~Elementary students will eat in the cafeteria at assigned tables.~~** Hand sanitizer will be available.
- Lunches will be eaten in the cafeteria. **~~Elementary students will eat in the cafeteria with their class and have assigned seating.~~** Hand sanitizer will be available.
- Parents and guests will not be allowed to eat with students at school.
- Volunteers will be on an invitation-only basis from a building administrator/teacher/program. All volunteers are **~~required~~ highly encouraged** to wear face masks indoors.
- **~~Elementary assemblies, concerts, field trips, and events must have mitigation strategies created and submitted to building administrators for review. Building administrators will submit final proposals to Superintendency for approval.~~**
- Kids West child care will proceed with normal enrollment numbers.
- Extracurricular activities will take place. Students who participate in athletics and/or activities are **~~required~~ highly encouraged** to wear face masks while indoors. WDMCS will continue to reference guidance from several state and local agencies.
- **~~Spectators and visiting teams are required to wear face masks while indoors on district property.~~**
- PK families had the opportunity to select online learning. WDMCS teachers will work with a classroom of PK students, which is similar to the 2020-21 school year.
- K-6 families had the opportunity to select a third-party, state-approved online learning system, Edgenuity, for their students. **Students who are CURRENTLY enrolled will have the opportunity to continue with Edgenuity for the second semester. ~~Students will work independently, and Iowa-certified Edgenuity teachers will oversee their work.~~**

updated 12/10/21