

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

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 Almond-Bancroft School District began 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,
- focus on consistent cleaning procedures during and after school hours.

On October 7, Covid Clinic opened an in-house Covid testing site. Students, staff and immediate family are able to get tested with a rapid test as well as a PCR test. These tests can be completed in the building or through a drive up test, as needed. The clinic is open during school hours five days a week.

On November 5, we held a Vaccine Booster and first time vaccine clinic at the school for our staff.

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 Almond-Bancroft 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 utilizing Google Meet. The district also has virtual options available on an as needed basis through WVS and

APEX Learning.

Regardless of the mode of instruction, the Almond-Bancroft 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.

Our school counselor as well as a mental health counselor contracted by the district to provide virtual counseling services for certain students will continue to provide services for students as needed.

Mitigation Measures

Universal and correct wearing of masks

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

In August 2021, the Almond-Bancroft School District Board of Education adopted the district reopening plan which included optional masking at the schools and mandatory masking on buses. This decision was made in collaboration with community and county partners and based on analysis of local, state and federal guidance as well as community trends in regards to the pandemic. This plan is flexible based on local Covid numbers and spread and can always be altered. The Reopening Plan can be accessed on the Almond-Bancroft School District website:
<https://www.abschools.k12.wi.us/domain/2133>

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 in our building. Our elementary students are having breakfast in their classrooms and our schedule allows for a limited number of students in our cafeteria for lunch. We added more seating in the lunchroom, so the students can be spaced.

If public health conditions warrant the use of hybrid or distance instructional models, we will utilize the same system as we did last year to provide instruction. Transportation will comply with CDC guidelines regarding capacity 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.

In addition, hand sanitizing stations/liquids are available in all classrooms and high traffic areas in the schools.

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.

The District has upgraded the air handling and ventilation control unit. This allows the head custodian to control the hours and days of operation of the unit - including increasing use as needed for increased ventilation for the pandemic. Now we can run each air handler separately (6 areas) or the whole system at once.

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 Almond-Bancroft School District will continue contact tracing and communication to stakeholders of COVID-19 cases and staff quarantines within the District.

Students, staff and families are encouraged to stay home if they are ill or if they have COVID-like symptoms. 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. The district is following CDC and state/county guidelines for quarantines as noted in the Reopening Plan on the website.

In collaboration with Portage County DHS, the Almond-Bancroft School District implemented a Test-to-Stay protocol beginning November 22, 2021. Guidelines for this program can be found on the district website: <https://www.abschools.k12.wi.us/Page/7092>

Diagnostic and screening testing

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

The Almond-Bancroft School District recommends students and staff get tested for COVID by their medical provider or a local pharmacy. The District is also working with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to coordinate COVID testing at our schools. Should the District see the need for on-site testing, students could have the option to be tested with parent permission when they are identified as close contacts or become symptomatic.

On October 7, Covid Clinic opened an in-house Covid testing site. Students, staff and immediate family

are able to get tested with a rapid test as well as a PCR test. These tests can be completed in the building or through a drive up test, as needed. The clinic is open during school hours five days a week.

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 at a District Vaccination Clinic. The district held a Vaccination Booster Clinic which also gave unvaccinated employees the opportunity to get their first vaccination on November 5, 2021.

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 Almond-Bancroft School District continues to work with County Public Health to implement mitigating strategies for the safety of students and staff. The school district participates in regular virtual meetings with Portage County DHS and other Portage County school districts as well as whole county virtual meetings and state meetings to discuss pandemic concerns, mitigating strategies and best practices.

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 Almond-Bancroft 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 has been added to staffing to implement further academic recovery efforts in core curriculum areas including a middle school interventionist.

Student Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

Our school counselor is implementing additional social/emotional online and blended curriculum for students. The district has also partnered with an area mental health clinic to provide virtual counseling sessions for students in need.

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 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 1 and then through the second summer session. Summer school sessions in 2021 are June 14-July 1 and July 19-July 29. No meals will be offered outside summer school dates. It is assumed that the USDA will continue community eligibility provision under the new school meal application.

Staff Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

The staff's social, emotional, and mental health needs will be addressed through the Employee Assistance Program provided through the District insurance program as well as through support from administration and colleagues throughout the year.

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 Almond-Bancroft 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 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 Almond-Bancroft School District sought public input in the plan in a two step process. The district then sought public input from all stakeholders (community members, parents, students and staff) on the priorities the district should focus on in regards to the plan. The district leadership team along with district staff including custodial and food service staff developed the initial Safe Return to In-Person & Continuity of Services Plan taking this feedback into account.

Once the plan was developed,

- The plan was presented to the school board including a period of public comment.
- The plan is posted at <https://www.abschools.k12.wi.us/>
- The plan was sent to parents, students and employees via our messaging systems. Along with the plan, a survey for public comment was included to provide stakeholders an opportunity to make additional suggestions for the plan.
- Upon request, a stakeholder 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.