



Laredo ISD's Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan Updated January 28, 2022

Laredo ISD opened on August 16, 2021 for students, employees, parents and the LISD family to come back to school and resume attending school as normal as possible. Laredo ISD has planned and prepared for a safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services for approximately 19,950 students and 4,000 employees. Laredo ISD and the Laredo community have experienced an **increase** in the number of positive COVID-19 cases from November through January of this school year. LISD actively monitors the current public health situation on a daily basis through the LISD's COVID-19 Tracker posted on the LISD website. Laredo ISD is fully committed to provide for the health and safety of students, employees, parents, and community. As per ESSER requirements, LISD has updated the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan. The district's goal continues to ensure the continuity of services to address the students' academic and social-emotional needs, and a safe return to in-person instruction as outlined in this plan. In addition, this plan references the most updated guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), most recent Texas Governor's Executive Orders, Texas Education Agency guidelines and preventive measures to **mitigate** the spread of the COVID-19 virus to keep everyone safe at schools and at the extracurricular activities. Laredo ISD collaborates and communicates closely with the City of Laredo Health Department and health authorities for continued direction, guidance, and feedback on our school district's updated plan to ensure students are educated in a safe, secure and healthy learning environment.

Continuity of Services for the Academic Needs of Students

Laredo ISD continues to offer extended day, and extended week to accelerate instruction by providing small group and differentiated instruction for students not mastering skills taught during that week. We look forward to offering the extended year this summer, with a major focus on effective interventions and enrichment activities that will foster student engagement and improve student learning and progress for the different student groups. This year we will continue to offer the Jump Start Summer Program, which will take place two weeks prior to the start of the 2022-2023 school year with a focus on accelerated instruction through project-based learning.

Other instructional initiatives that Laredo ISD offers as the continuity of services for the academic needs of students:

- Reading and Math Practitioners providing specialized instruction that meet the needs of all student groups at the campus level. As well as LEAD Practitioners at the district level providing purposeful support, coaching of effective lessons to teachers.

- Tutors servicing students at all grade levels, meeting the individual instructional/learning needs of all students, including low-income students, English learners or emergent bilinguals, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children in foster care and highly mobile students.
- High Quality Programs will continue to be implemented by classroom teachers, enhancing instruction and providing the most effective strategies to differentiate instruction based on the student's needs (e.g., Blended Learning, Newsela, NoRedink, IXL, Education Galaxy, Empowering Writers, K-12 Summit, Little Medical School Program, etc.).
- Capital Outlay and Instruction that will enhance the curriculum and instructional strategies integrating technology and research-based strategies to meet the needs of all learners will continue to be implemented (e.g., Screencastify, KAMI, Google Enterprise, etc.).

Student Attendance

As per the Texas Education Code (TEC) §25.092, students are required to attend 90% of the days a course is offered (with some exceptions) in order to be awarded credit for the course and/or to be promoted to the next grade. This requirement remains in force during the 2021-2022 school year. All students are required to comply with compulsory school attendance. LISD follows TEA attendance protocols and procedures for students who are absent due to COVID-19 and code accordingly on PEIMS. Each elementary and secondary campus has an Attendance Scout to increase student enrollment, provide home visits and improve daily student attendance.

Transportation

LISD provides transportation to students following the normal routes to school. Students are seated following social distance protocols. If students have fever greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, present COVID-19 symptoms, are test-confirmed COVID-19 or have had close contact with an individual who is test-confirmed COVID-19, students are not allowed to board the school bus and parents or guardians are notified. Wearing masks and facial coverings are not required but are allowed if individual chooses to wear one. Students board the bus from back to front and unload from front to back. Buses are equipped with purifiers, cleaned and disinfected before and after each route. Hand sanitizer and masks are available for bus riders.

School Visits

Parents are encouraged to continue to participate and support their child's education through remote meetings and conferences, telephone conferences as well as in person visits. Administrators and teachers stand ready to provide open communication to address the student's educational needs through telephone, email, school messenger, remote setting or in-person meetings.

Mental Health Services

Laredo ISD's commitment to provide mental health education by the district's Guidance Department for employees, parents and the community through the "Mental Health Mondays" sessions continues. These are some of the topics being covered:

- Identification of mental health problems, illnesses and disorders;
- Range of interventions available;
- Warning signs and symptoms of suicide; and

- Implementation of the **ALGEE** action plan:
 - Approaching the youth,
 - Listening nonjudgmentally,
 - Giving reassurance and information,
 - Encouraging appropriate professional help, and
 - Encouraging self-help and other support strategies.

Social Emotional Learning Services

Laredo ISD's continues to provide social emotional learning services for students through social emotional lessons across the grade levels embedded in the district curriculum. Campus Counselors are also be available to provide teachers and staff members in need of social, emotional, and mental health support.

- SEL lessons are being provided to students by teachers, every day for the first 5 minutes of instruction, some of the topics include:
 - Identifying feelings;
 - Helping others;
 - How to make friends;
 - Building relationships;
 - Random acts of kindness;
 - Important people in my life;
 - Managing worry and anxiety;
 - Stress management; and more.
- SEL lessons are also being provided to students by counselors, at a minimum of once a week as a class guidance session and as needed for individual students when requested. Some of the topics discussed within the curriculum are:
 - Responsibility;
 - Citizenship;
 - Fairness;
 - Trustworthy;
 - Respect;
 - Self-Care;
 - Controlling emotions;
 - Caring people in my life;
 - Making smart choices;
 - Setting goals; and more.
- The district's Parent and Family Engagement Department is also providing SEL lessons to parents and the community through monthly sessions. The sessions are provided monthly, in English and Spanish, and include two topics a month. Some of the topics discussed within the curriculum are:
 - August- How to Bring Social Emotional Awareness at Home and Nurture Your Children Self-esteem;
 - September- Discipline and Routine to Create a Safe Environment and Healthy Discipline Strategies;
 - October- Emotionally Available Parents and The Importance of Communication

- Among Family Members;
- November- Sharing is Caring: Building Social Awareness in our Family and Gratitude and Appreciation in the Family;
- December- A Positive Attitude to Face Difficult Times and Human Values for Life;
- January- Bringing Emotional Intelligence and Empathy at Home and The Importance of Emotional and Professional Support;
- February- Love and Friendship: The Base for Meaningful Relationships During Life and Family: The Most Important Circle of Trust;
- March- Building the Citizens of the Future at Home and Social Awareness and Empathy for Others;
- April- Violence and Abuse Prevention at Home and Prevention of Addictions and Other Destructive Behaviors.

Laredo ISD continuously takes necessary steps to reduce the risks of this viral spread to students, teachers, staff and their families. LISD continues to implement required and recommended practices including the following:

- 1) **Notification** of test-confirmed cases in school to the City of Laredo Health Department in accordance with confidentiality requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- 2) **Reporting** to the Texas Department of State Health Services and TEA on a weekly basis upon receipt of information that any teacher, staff member, student, or visitor at a school is test-confirmed to have COVID-19.
- 3) Implementation of **preventive practices** to keep the virus from entering the school,
- 4) **Respond** to a test-confirmed case in the school(s) as per Texas Education Agency's School Health Operations requirements.
- 5) **Mitigation strategies** preventing the spread of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases.

The following updated summary addresses the major points in communicating LISD's Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan to **mitigate** COVID-19 spread in LISD schools and departments.

LISD COVID-19 District Contact

Mr. Victor Mora, LISD Director of Safety/Risk Management and Emergency Management, is the LISD designated staff member responsible for responding to COVID-19 cases/concerns. Mr. Mora's contact information is **956-273-1171** or vmora@laredoisd.org. The designated Campus/Department Safety Officer(s) also address COVID-19 concerns at the campus and department respectively.

LISD School Year 2021-2022

Approximately 19,950 LISD students have returned safely to school for in-person instruction. All students and approximately 4,000 employees are following all CDC layered preventive measures including but not limited to social distancing 3-6 feet, washing of hands, use of sneeze guards, staying home if sick, covering cough and sneeze, screening/testing and vaccinations. The wearing of face covering for students, employees and visitors is optional and not a requirement as per Texas Governor Abbott's Executive Order.

Screening for Students, Employees, Parents and Visitors

Laredo ISD requires all students, employees, parents, and visitors to self-screen before entering the school or district facilities. All teachers and staff must report to their supervisor if they have COVID-19 symptoms, are test-confirmed with COVID-19, or have had close contact with an individual who is test-confirmed with COVID-19. Parents are not to send a child to school if the child has COVID-19 symptoms, is test-confirmed with COVID-19 or if the child has had close contact with an individual who is test-confirmed with COVID-19. If an individual experiences COVID-19 symptoms or is test-confirmed with COVID-19, the individual must **stay home** and cannot return to campus until the most updated CDC and LISD requirements have been met.

Laredo ISD collaborated with Community Labs, LLC, and a non-profit organization from San Antonio, to provide PCR testing to students and employees on a weekly basis. Community Labs administers the tests every Thursday at District campuses to students in PK-12 who register and have parental consent. Community Labs also tests LISD employees on a voluntary basis. Approximately 4,517 LISD students and staff have registered in the Community Labs testing program with 10,132 tests administered during the past seven weeks in October and November.

COVID-19 Symptoms

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Chills
- Sore Throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Shaking or exaggerated shivering
- Significant muscle pain or ache
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting

Health Services for COVID-19 Cases Reported on Campus

At Laredo ISD, nursing staff and health services facilitators attend trainings and conferences (virtual or face-to-face) to ensure knowledge of the most recent nationwide health trends and protocols to follow.

If a student, teacher or staff shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school, the individual is immediately taken to the campus nurse, evaluated, separated from others (isolation room), sent home or if it's a student he/she will be picked up by a parent or guardian or seek medical assistance if needed. The areas used by the individual are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Test-Confirmed Cases on Campus

If there is a test-confirmed COVID-19 case in a school, the school will notify the local health department and follow confidentiality requirements. Areas heavily used by the individual are closed off and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. The campus provides timely notification to all teachers, staff and families of the school if a test-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers, or staff of that campus.

LISD Health Guidelines

Laredo ISD will take the necessary steps to reduce the risks of this viral spread to students, teachers, staff, and their families. Our district has implemented and will continue to implement, required and recommended practices from the CDC, TEA, and local health authority. Therefore, this guidance is subject to change as new information becomes available.

Employee Guidelines for Returning to Work

LISD Employees in “Close Contact” with a COVID-19 positive individual

LISD employees who are not fully vaccinated or have only received one dose of the Pfizer or Moderna must adhere to the following district isolation protocols:

- Stay home for 5 full calendar days.
- Get tested for COVID-19 at least 5 calendar days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- May return to work on calendar day 6 after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19 *if* you have no symptoms, **fever free** **and** test negative on an antigen or PCR test.
 - In the event of a conflict between a COVID-19 antigen and PCR test result, the District shall consider the PCR test as the decisive test for the purpose of these protocols.
 - LISD highly encourages the use of a well-fitted mask through day 10 after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.
 - Employees must communicate with the supervisor regarding symptoms (or lack thereof) and COVID-19 test results before returning to work.

LISD employees who meet the close contact threshold, are not symptomatic, and meet the criteria below, will be expected to report to work:**

- Received all recommended vaccine doses (2-Pfizer, 2-Moderna, 1-J&J) including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people; or,
- Was confirmed COVID-19 positive within the last 90 days and has fully recovered.

Employees who have symptoms or are positive for COVID-19

Laredo ISD will exclude employees from attending school/work in person who are actively sick with COVID19, who are suspected of being actively sick with COVID-19, or who have received a positive test result for COVID-19, including **Antigen or PCR test**.

Employees that test positive must follow the district protocols below:

- Stay home for 5 days and isolate from others to the extent possible.
- May return** after 5 full calendar days from the day employee tested positive (no sooner than day 6) if **fever free and if symptoms have improved*.

**Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications. Fever is a temperature of 100° Fahrenheit (37.8° Celsius) or higher.*

***Additionally, Employees have access to their accrued leave and may consult with Human Resources under extenuating circumstances.*

STUDENT Guidelines for Returning to School

Students Who Have Tested Positive for COVID-19

- As per the document, “Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Rule”, Laredo ISD will exclude students from attending school in person who are actively sick with COVID-19 or who have received a positive test result for COVID-19.
- Parents will be made aware that they must ensure that they do not send their child to school until the conditions for re-entry have been met.

Release From Quarantine Rule For Positive Students

- 24 hours without fever and no use of fever-reducing medication.
- Improvement in symptoms (at times cough may linger)
- 11 days have passed since symptoms first appeared
- 11 days have passed since test date (those with no symptoms)

Students Who Have Symptoms, Possibly Related To Covid-19

- Parents must ensure that they do not send a child to school if the child has COVID-19 symptoms.
- If symptoms begin while the student is on campus, they will be sent home with a medical referral.
- Any student who has symptoms that could be related to COVID-19 is to remain at home until the condition for re-entry are met.

Re-Entry Criteria For Students With Covid-19 Related Symptoms

- A student must provide a negative COVID-19 PCR test result; the test must be dated after exposure/symptoms onset. A rapid antigen test will not be accepted for re-entry, **OR**,
- Student must obtain a note from a United States licensed Medical Professional indicating that the student is cleared to return to school based on an alternative diagnosis; **AND**,
- Students must have an improvement in symptoms, and be fever-free for 24-hours (without fever reducing medication).

Students in Close Contact with a COVID-19 Positive Individual

As a reference, close contact determinations are generally based on guidance by CDC, TEA, and DSHS.

- Due to the District being in a current area with high or rising COVID case rates, Laredo ISD will require household-based close contact students to stay at home during the below stay-at-home period. (This applies specifically to students who are close contacts because an individual who lives in the same household is COVID-19 positive.)

Re-Entry For Students With A Positive Individual In The Same Household

Regardless of vaccine status, the student must stay home until the household member clears quarantine and there are no other COVID-19 risk factors in the household.

- Possible risk factors include, but are not limited to:
 - Someone else in the home pending results;

- Another person in the home with symptoms that have not been seen by MD or tested; OR,
- Students start with symptoms (follow re-entry criteria for students with symptoms).

Re-Entry For Student With Close Contact To Someone Outside Of The Household

Students that are close contacts need to test on or after the 5th day of their last contact/exposure with the positive person. Students may test before if they choose, but that result will not be valid for return.

The COVID-19 test collection date needs to be on or after the 5th day of the last contact to the positive individual. Those that are close contacts need to remain out of school until one of the following is met:

- 10 days have passed after the last close contact, so long as they continue to monitor themselves daily for symptoms and take appropriate precautions through day 14.
- 6 days have passed after the last close contact, after receiving a negative COVID-19 (PCR or Antigen) test result (administered on or after 5 days from the last exposure/contact).

Negative COVID-19 Antigen Test Return Requirements

- Tests conducted at home will not be accepted.
- Tests must be conducted on campus, physician's office, urgent care, or medical clinic.
- If the test was not conducted on campus, it must have complete information and be from a reputable testing site.
- Students must wear well-fitting masks for the next 5 days around others.

Health and Hygiene Practices

Trained LISD custodial staff thoroughly clean and disinfect Laredo ISD campuses and facilities using cleaning solutions and misters. Frequently touched areas in the classrooms are consistently cleaned before and after use. Campuses throughout the day implement additional cleaning practices. Hand sanitizer will be available for use by students, teachers, and staff. Frequent hand washing (for at least 20 seconds) is highly encouraged, monitored, and practiced by students, teachers and staff. Everyone is encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and used tissues are thrown in the trash, as well as washing hands immediately. Campuses practice improving airflow by allowing outside air to circulate in the building and improve the ventilation through increased maintenance and improvements/upgrades of the HVAC system. Air filtration units (Jade Air Purifiers SCA5000C) have been placed in every District classroom to add another level of protection for students and staff and prevent the spread of communicable diseases. These air purifiers have two layers of filtration (Carbon and HEPA) and a UV lamp and are easy to operate. Water fountains throughout the school district have been retrofitted with Elkay EZH2O Retrofit bottle filling station kits, which include the following features: Hands Free, Visual Filter Monitor, Filtered, Green Ticker, Laminar Flow, Antimicrobial, Real Drain, Electronic Bottle Filler and Sensor activation. Laredo ISD has also employed twenty (20) additional Custodians as the Mitigation Crew members whose sole purpose is to mitigate the extra workload added to address the COVID-19 pandemic. These twenty FTEs have been assigned to each elementary campus.

Facial Coverings/Masks/Face Shields

As per Texas Governor Greg Abbott's Executive Order-36, facial coverings are not mandatory and therefore, LISD does not enforce or require students or staff to wear a mask. LISD recommends and highly encourages the use of facial coverings and will allow individuals to wear a mask if they

choose to do so. Reusable or disposable masks and face shields are available if requested by the students and in an effort to reduce the anxiety levels and maintain a secure social-emotional mental health while at school.

Social Distance

All students, employees, parents, and visitors practice social distancing of three to six (3-6) feet apart from others and take responsibility for the safety of others. Classrooms, hallways and cafeterias are arranged and designed allowing for social distancing of three to six feet using labels, stickers, or markers for students to know where to sit, stand or wait. Cafeterias are also equipped with plexi-glass shields for extra protection, as well as air purifiers, and specialized equipment to provide curbside meals if the need arises. As per CDC guidelines, six (6 feet) social distance is practiced in gyms and choir rooms. Entry and exit areas also have labels or marker indicating the 3-6 feet distance between individuals to avoid any close proximity or close contact with others.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

LISD has an inventory of personal protective equipment (PPE) to provide for the protection of students, employees, parents, and visitors. These resources include face shields, disposable and reusable masks, Plexiglas barriers, hand sanitizer, sneeze guards for classrooms/cafeteria, and protective gear for custodial staff.

Infectious and Communicable Disease Plan

Laredo ISD has adopted the Infectious/Communicable Disease Plan from the Texas School Safety Center to provide standardized guidance in response to the onset and spread of an infectious/communicable disease within the district.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

With the presence of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, LISD uses standard operating procedures in conducting school business and explaining how the district operates during the course of the 2021-2022 school year as students return to school. LISD provides Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to guide LISD students, employees, parents and community in the following areas:

- 1) Operations, including Fixed Assets, Child Nutrition Program, Transportation and Maintenance;
- 2) Student Services, including Athletics, Police Department, Parent Engagement, UIL activities, and Health Services;
- 3) Health and Occupational Safety Support Services, including school safety and security and Emergency Operations Plan;
- 4) Curriculum and Instruction, including Assessments, Special Education, Counseling and Instructional continuity;
- 5) Human Resources;
- 6) Communications; and
- 7) Finance including attendance and discipline.

Vaccinations and Coordination with Local Health Officials

Laredo ISD is an approved vaccine provider in the State of Texas and continues administering vaccines to students, employees, parent volunteers and community members. In addition, Laredo ISD has collaborated with the City of Laredo Health Department as well as formed partnerships with other health organizations such as Gateway Community Health Center, National Guard, hospitals,

and other health agencies, to enhance efforts to vaccinate as many members of our school communities as possible to keep everyone safe from COVID-19.

Weekly scheduled vaccination clinics for District employees at the elementary, middle and high school campuses provide opportunities for them to participate in the District's vaccination program. All doses and boosters for Moderna and Pfizer are available to participants.

In November 2021, the Pfizer 100 Pediatric (Ages 5-11) vaccines were approved and LISD Health Services Department implemented a vaccination program for 5-11 year olds with parental consent. Vaccination clinics were scheduled at each of the elementary campuses and middle schools to offer these vaccines to eligible students. Clinics will be scheduled on an as needed basis throughout the rest of the 2021-2022 school year.

Human Resources

The LISD Human Resources Department has provided updated employee information, flyers and resources on district policies and protocols related to COVID-19. LISD employees have had an opportunity to complete training modules on these district policies and protocols during the Fall semester.

District employees continue to meet the work expectations set by their employer subject to any applicable employment contract terms or legal requirements. LISD works with teachers and staff on a case-by-case basis to address teacher and staff needs of those in a higher risk category and those staff members who have not been fully vaccinated or received their third dose or booster shot.

In conclusion, LISD continues to work and communicate closely with the City of Laredo Health authorities for continued direction, guidance, and feedback on our school district's plan to ensure students are educated in a safe, healthy and a productive in-person learning environment.

