



Laredo ISD's Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

Greetings and welcome back Laredo ISD family! After experiencing a very challenging year of remote instruction, we welcome back our students, teachers, administrators, employees, staff and parents to the 2021-2022 academic year. LISD school doors open on August 16, 2021 and we look forward to a safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services for all students. The district's goal is 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. The district's safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services plan is aligned to the guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Texas Department of Health Services, 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. Laredo ISD 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 and healthy learning environment as we welcome them back to in-person instruction.

Continuity of Services for the Academic Needs of Students

Laredo ISD will continue 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. The extended year will also continue, with a major focus on intervention and enrichment activities that will foster student engagement and improve student learning and progress for the different student groups. This year we will offer the Jump Start Summer Program, which will take place two weeks prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year and will provide accelerated instruction through project-based learning.

Other instructional initiatives that Laredo ISD will be providing as continuity of services are:

- Reading and Math Practitioners who will provide specialized instruction that meet the needs of all student groups.
- Tutors who will serve all grade levels and meet the individual instructional/learning needs of all students, including low-income, English learners or emergent bilinguals, children with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children in foster care and highly mobile students.
- High Quality Programs that will enhance instruction and provide 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 (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 expected to comply with compulsory school attendance.

Transportation

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

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 or any remote setting.

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 which include the following topics:

- 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 pledge to provide social emotional learning services for students through social emotional lessons across the grade levels embedded in the district curriculum. Campus Counselors will also be available to provide teachers and staff members in need of social, emotional, and mental health support.

- SEL lessons will be 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 will be 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:
 - 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 will provide SEL lessons to parents and the community through monthly sessions. The sessions will be provided monthly, in English and Spanish, and will include two topics a month. Some of the topics discussed within the curriculum:
 - 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 will take the necessary steps to reduce the risks of the spread of the COVID-19 virus to students, teachers, staff and their families. Our district has implemented and will continue 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) Submission of a report to the Texas Department of State Health Services 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) Follow practices to respond to a test-confirmed case in the school as per Texas Education Agency's School Health Operations requirements.
- 5) Consistently implement practices to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, as well as other communicable diseases inside the school.

The following 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 the district schools.

LISD COVID-19 District Contact

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

LISD Start of School Year

The first instructional day for registered and enrolled LISD students to safely return to school for in-person instruction is August 16, 2021. All students and staff are expected to return to in-person instruction and follow all CDC preventive measures including but not limited to social distancing 3-6 feet, washing of hands, staying home if sick, and covering cough and sneeze. The wearing of face covering for students, staff and visitors is optional and not a requirement as per Texas Governor Abbott's Executive Order effective June 4, 2021.

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.

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 will continue to 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 will be immediately taken to the campus nurse, evaluated, separated from others and picked up by a parent or guardian or seek medical assistance if needed. The areas used by the individual will be 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 will be closed off and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. The campus shall notify all teachers, staff and families of all students in the school if a test-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers, or staff of that campus.

Health and Hygiene Practices

Laredo ISD campuses and school facilities will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected by trained custodial staff using cleaning solutions and misters. Frequently touched areas in the classrooms will be consistently cleaned before and after use. Campuses throughout the day will implement additional cleaning practices. Hand sanitizer will be available for use by students, teachers, and staff. Frequent hand washing (for at least 20 seconds) will be highly encouraged, monitored and practiced by students, teachers and staff. Everyone will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and used tissues thrown in the trash as well as washing hands immediately. Campuses

will 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 filtration system and the implementation of purifiers.

Facial Coverings/Masks/Face Shields

As per Texas Governor Greg Abbott's Executive Order-36, LISD cannot require students or staff to wear a mask. LISD recommends, highly encourages and will allow individual 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 are to practice social distancing of three to six (3-6) feet apart from others and taking responsibility for the safety of others. Classrooms, hallways and cafeterias should be arranged and designed allowing for social distancing of three feet (3 ft.) using labels, stickers, or markers for students to know where to sit, stand or wait. Cafeterias will also be 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 ft.) social distance is needed in gyms and choir rooms. Entry and exit areas should also have labels or marker indicating the 3-6 feet distance between individuals to avoid any close proximity or 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, 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 will operate during the course of the new school year as students return to school. Standard Operating Procedures are designed 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, Counseling, and Health Services;
- 3) Compliance and School Safety including Attendance, Discipline, Police Department and School Safety;
- 4) Curriculum and Instruction including Assessments, Special Education, and Instructional continuity;

- 5) Human Resources;
- 6) Communications; and
- 7) Finance.

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 Clinic, 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.

Human Resources

The LISD Human Resources Department has provided employee information, flyers and resources on district policies and protocols related to COVID-19.

District employees must continue to meet the work expectations set by their employer subject to any applicable employment contract terms or legal requirements. The school district will work with teachers 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.

Once again, Laredo ISD takes pride in providing the most effective education, including but not limited to providing differentiated instruction to address the students' academic needs, and the services to maintain a positive mental health. 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.

