

Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

District Name: Wisconsin Heights School District

District Contact: Craig Gerlach

Website: www.wisheights.k12.wi.us

Phone: 608-767-2595

Address: 10173 US Hwy 14 - Mazomanie, WI 53560



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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 Wisconsin Heights 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

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

WHSD response: The Wisconsin Heights School District will begin the 2023-24 school year with a five-day per week, face-to-face instructional model and is adhering to the following health protocols. Accordingly, the District will:

- strongly encourage students and staff members to self-monitor for symptoms 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.

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)

WHSD response: The Wisconsin Heights School District will offer in-person learning five days a week according to the Board adopted 2023-2024 Academic Year Calendar. The school district has also provided families the option to enroll their students in virtual learning. In the event of school closure due to the pandemic, the district purchased mobile computing devices for all students to continue virtual learning. This includes iPads for PK and kindergarten, Chromebooks for grades one through eight, and laptops for all high school students.

The Wisconsin Heights School District provides meals through the federal food service program.

The District employs two part-time school nurses who will continue to offer health services in-person or virtually. The school district also has an on-staff mental health support specialist to provide mental health support for students and families.

Mitigation Measures

Universal and correct wearing of masks

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

WHSD response: Students and staff will not be required to wear masks.

Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (for example, the use of cohorts and podding)

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

WHSD response: Mitigation measures such as proper signage in multiple languages, the installation of floor decals and water bottle filling stations have been implemented at each facility.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

WHSD response: 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 sanitization stations/liquids are available in all classrooms.

Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

WHSD response: 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. Air handling systems have been upgraded throughout the District and are providing air exchange levels that exceed recommended levels.

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

WHSD response: The Wisconsin Heights School District will not contact trace during the 2023-24 school year.

Diagnostic and screening testing

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

WHSD response: The Wisconsin Heights School District is no longer participating in the DHS school-based testing program. We will continue to have a limited number of rapid COVID tests if there is a need to test a symptomatic student/staff on campus.

Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

WHSD response: All eligible staff employed have had the opportunity to be vaccinated. Students ages 5 and older were provided access to on-site vaccination clinics during the 2021-22 school year. New staff will be given access to vaccinations by working with local healthcare partners and County Public Health.

Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies and practices

Description of Policies or Practices, if applicable

WHSD response: 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

WHSD response: 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 Wisconsin Heights School District continues to work with County Public Health to implement mitigating strategies for the safety of students and staff. Our District has also formed a medical advisory team that consists of local health care professionals and staff members.

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

WHSD response: The District will provide for continuity of services as follows:

Student Academic Needs

The Wisconsin Heights School District implemented a summer school program in 2021 to assist all K-12 students with academic recovery. We continued this program in 2022 and plan to in subsequent years. The District started the 2022-23 school year with full-time, in-person instruction. We plan to maintain this instructional delivery model unless our case numbers reach a threshold where it is no longer practical to do such. Instructional personnel has been actively monitoring student progress to ensure we are able to strategically implement further academic recovery efforts in core curriculum areas. These services are being provided by both classroom and intervention staff members.

Student Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

Social-emotional screeners have been utilized for all students in the District. Our student services staff have reviewed the results and are working with students, families, and our staff to best meet their needs.

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

Food services will continue to provide meals through the federal lunch program.

Staff Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

The District has provided staff with opportunities for social and emotional support through post-school hour meetings with the counseling staff and nursing staff. The staff's social, emotional, and mental health needs may also be addressed through the Employee Assistance Program provided through the District insurance program.

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

WHSD response: The Wisconsin Heights 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 (entire section needs to be finalized)

WHSD response: The Wisconsin Heights School District has taken the following steps to make its plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at www.wisheights.k12.wi.us
- The plan is available in multiple languages through the use of our web provider powered by Google Translate. The plan is available in more than ten languages.
- The plan was sent to parents, students, and employees via our messaging systems.
- The plan was shared at the Wisconsin Heights School District Board of Education meeting on December 13, 2021. An opportunity for public comment was provided at this meeting.
- The plan was reviewed at the Wisconsin Heights School District Board of Education meetings on May 9, 2022, August 22, 2022, and January 23, 2023.
- The plan will be reviewed at the Wisconsin Heights School District Board of Education meetings on July 24, 2023, and January 22, 2024.
- 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.