



## **Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan (“Plan”) Application Template**

As a result of COVID-19 and the closing of school buildings for the 2019-2020 School Year, school districts must submit a Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan (“Plan”) in order to continue to receive state aid for operations. Although schools are closed and not providing in-person instruction, teaching and learning must continue. Michigan educators have been called to provide our students with continued learning.

There are varied states of readiness to provide continuity in learning among districts. Even within districts of multiple school sites, there are varied states of readiness. It is expected that schools will provide instruction at a distance using a variety of methods that meet local needs, including printed materials, phone contact, e-mail, virtual learning, or a combination to meet student needs. We should avoid assuming that continuity in learning can only occur through online means.

While many educators have been providing distance learning opportunities, the Governor’s Executive Order ([EO 2020-35](#)) requires all schools to begin providing learning opportunities for all students no later than April 28, 2020. Districts who are able to begin their plans earlier are encouraged to do so.

Each District shall submit a single completed Assurance Document, Budget Outline, and Continuity of Learning Plan to its Intermediate School District. Each Public School Academy shall submit a completed Assurance Document, Budget Outline, and Continuity of Learning Plan to its Authorizer. A single Application should be filed for the District rather than multiple applications for individual schools within a district. The following items are required for the application which may be submitted beginning April 8, 2020:

1. Assurances Document
2. Continuity of Learning Plan
3. Budget Outline

## **Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan (“Plan”)**

### **Guiding Principles**

As Districts and Public School Academies complete the Assurances and Continuity of Learning Plans, they should consider utilizing the following principles to guide their work:

#### **Keep Students at the Center**

Intentional outreach to continue building relationships and maintain connections. Help students feel safe and valued. At minimum, plan to do the following:

- **Plan for Student Learning:** Build on each student’s strengths, interests, and needs and use this knowledge to positively affect learning.
- **Develop a Weekly Plan and Schedule:** Offer routines and structures for consistency and for the balancing of think time, work time, and play time for health and well-being.
- **Contact Families:** Partner to support student learning through ongoing communication and collaboration. This will not look the same for every student and family—safety remains the priority. Provide translations as necessary.

#### **Design Learning for Equity and Access**

Plan and deliver content in multiple ways so all students can access learning.

- **Teach Content:** Set goals using knowledge of each student, content area standards, and of Michigan Merit Curriculum.
- **Deliver Flexible Instruction:** Consider how to deliver content depending on tools and resources accessible to each student. Alternative modes of instruction may include use of online learning, telephone communications, e-mail, virtual instruction, videos, slideshows, project-based learning, use of instructional packets, or a combination to meet diverse student needs.
- **Engage Families:** Communicate with families about engagement strategies to support students as they access the learning. Families are critical partners. Provide translations as necessary.

#### **Assess Student Learning**

Manage and monitor student learning and plan what’s next for learning including the potential need for summer and supplemental learning.

- **Check Student Learning:** Use a variety of strategies to monitor, assess, and provide feedback to students about their learning.
- **Make Instructional Adjustments:** Use formative assessment results to guide educators’ reflection on effectiveness of instruction and to determine next steps for student learning.
- **Engage Families:** Communicate with families about assessment results in order to inform next steps and the potential for supplemental summer learning. Provide translations as necessary.

**Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan (“Plan”)  
Assurances**

Date Submitted: **April 15, 2020**

Name of District: **Dowagiac Union School District**

Address of District: **243 S. Front**

District Code Number: **14020**

E-mail Address of the District: **jwhan@dowagiacschools.org**

Name of Intermediate School District: **Lewis Cass ISD**

Name of Authorizing Body (if applicable):

This Assurance document needs to be returned to your Intermediate School District or, for Public School Academies, your Authorizing Body with your Continuity of Learning Plan and Budget Outline beginning April 8, 2020 to indicate that the District will adopt a plan to ensure continuous learning for all students through the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

Districts should submit a single district plan that relates to all of their schools.

The applicant hereby provides assurance it will follow the requirements for a Plan for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year:

1. Applicant assures that all student learning will take place under the direction of a teacher of record for each student enrolled in the District.
2. Applicant assures that it will continue to pay school employees during the balance of the 2019-2020 school year under the same terms and conditions established prior to the school closure order period.
3. Applicant assures that the Plan was developed in collaboration with district administrators, school board members, teachers, and local bargaining units.
4. Applicant assures that food distribution has been arranged for or provided for eligible students.
5. Applicant assures coordination between applicant and Intermediate School District in which the District/PSA is located to mobilize disaster relief childcare centers.
6. Applicant assures that to the extent practicable the District/PSA will in good faith provide students with IEPs/Section 504 Plans the opportunity to participate in learning consistent with existing plans.
7. Applicant assures that Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan, Assurance Document, and Budget Outline will be posted immediately following approval to the District's/PSA's website.

## Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan

*The goal of a Continuity of Learning Plan and COVID-19 Response Plan is to ensure that each District or Public School Academy is providing, to the best of its ability, each student with alternative modes of instruction to help them stay on pace in their learning. This application recognizes that there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution; multiple means of engaging students and supporting families may be necessary that may vary by grade level, school building, or student population served.*

For the purposes of the Plan, “district” refers to school districts and public school academies.

Date Submitted: **April 15, 2020:**

Name of District: **Dowagiac Union School District**

Address of District: **243 S. Front, Dowagiac, Michigan, 49047**

District Code Number: **14020**

E-mail Address of the District Superintendent: **jwhan@dowagiacschools.org**

Name of Intermediate School District: **Lewis Cass ISD**

In accordance with Executive Order 2020-35 a Plan must include all of the following parts:

- 1. Please describe the methods the District will use to provide alternative modes of instruction other than in-person instruction and a summary of materials each pupil and the pupil's parents or guardians will need to access meaningfully the alternative modes of instruction included in the Plan. If the Plan relies on electronic instruction, the Plan must ensure to the extent feasible that pupils have access to a connected device capable of accessing the electronic instruction and must not penalize a pupil for the pupil's inability to fully participate.**

*"Alternative modes of instruction" means modes of pupil instruction, other than in-person instruction, that may include, without limitation, partnerships with other districts or intermediate districts or community colleges or institutions of higher education, use of vendors, use of online learning, telephone communications, e-mail, virtual instruction, videos, slideshows, project-based learning, use of instructional packets, or a hybrid of multiple modes of learning that still promote recommended practices for social distancing to mitigate the spread of COVID-CD.*

District/ PSA Response:

Dowagiac Union School district is committed to providing quality alternative modes of pupil instruction. This plan consists of three primary modes of learning. The paths consist of a “Learning Packet only” style, with the second being a hybrid of “learning packet and electronic instruction” and “Full electronic distance learning” delivery method. Beginning on April 2 and running through April 15, all parents/guardians were contacted via an online survey or by a direct phone call by district staff to assess which method of delivery of the learning plan they would need or prefer. We requested information regarding the family’s access to broadband and learning devices. If families have access to quality internet service but lack learning devices, the District is prepared to provide them with access to a Chromebook. If they lack both connectivity and a device, the District has established hotspots in the community and can provide Chromebooks as well. Instruction will be provided in multiple ways, including Dojo, projects, Google Classroom, Videos, IXL, PowerPoints, and other methods and programs to promote student learning.

DUS is targeting “Power Standards,” from the remainder of this year’s pacing guides, that we believe are critical for the students future learning and success. Even though we are dealing with a situation caused by forces outside of our control. The DUS plan focuses on filling learning gaps students will face in the coming weeks. Because of this, DUS is committed to the belief that no student will be penalized during the distance learning process. Additionally, the District is will provided the necessary supplies to complete the instructional requirements of our plan.

To maintain and support quality communication with parents and students, DUS will be contacting families by phone calls, e-mail, text messaging, google classroom, Facebook, the district website, and if needed, letters through the postal service. The delivery method will depend on the type of information needing to be shared.

2. **Please describe the methods the District will use to keep pupils at the center of educational activities, including outreach to continue building relationships and maintain connections and to help pupils feel safe and valued.**

*District/ PSA Response:*

Dowagiac Union Schools are committed to keeping pupils at the center of educational activities. In addition to the instructional learning interaction, Dowagiac's plan requires two-way communication weekly between staff, parents, and students. Office hours will be provided for parents and students to contact teachers. Teachers will provide weekly feedback to parents. Staff will use Google Meet and/or Class Dojo to provide positive feedback/connection between students and parents.

The District will be providing support for students and families through the system initiated by Lewis Cass ISD. This will include wellness checks and social-emotional learning and check-in for providing remote services. Staff not involved in the day to day instruction will assist in the wellness/social-emotional check-ins. Plans for families affected by COVID-19 will be developed.

3. **Please describe the District's plans to deliver content in multiple ways so that all pupils can access learning.**

*District/ PSA Response:*

Dowagiac Union School district is committed to delivering content in multiple ways so pupils can access learning. The overall format will be hardcopy media, digital media, or a hybrid of the two. Parents were surveyed regarding their access to the internet and the availability of a device. The week of April 13, 2020, first-hour and homeroom teachers called all parents/guardians to check on the families and to determine their preferred mode for distance learning. As a part of this check-in, Non-English-speaking families were called by staff who spoke to the family's native language. Parents who were not able to be reached were put on a list, and other contact forms will be utilized in an attempt to reach all families.

Families that preferred digital media who did not have access to a device will be allowed to borrow learning devices from the District in the form of a Chromebook by signing an agreement of responsibility. Also, DUS has devices that are scheduled to be taken offline this coming summer as they will no longer be able to meet the specification for next year's online state testing. These devices are still capable and will work well as a distance learning tool. Therefore, we have decided to provide an opportunity for families to purchase a machine for \$20.00. This price was determined by assessing the fair market value if they were sold to used technology vendors. Families that did not have access to the internet are provided remote hot spot sites at all 6 schools. This would support social distancing requirements as family members would remain in vehicles while using the hotspot. Families that preferred hard copy media will be provided with packets that replicate the digital format or cover the same material.

4. **Please describe the District's plans to manage and monitor learning by pupils.**

*District/ PSA Response:*

Feedback and monitoring will focus on the continuation of learning and prioritize the connectedness and care for students. Staff will grade work submitted electronically and on paper and will provide feedback. Logs will be kept on student and parent contact and participation. Students who are not engaging or completing work will be contacted to determine the reason for the nonengagement. If needed, plans may be modified to meet the students' needs. Parents of students who are not engaging will be contacted to determine the reason.

5. **Please attach a budget outline estimating additional expenditures associated with the Plan and sources of revenue to pay for those expenditures.**

*District/ PSA Response:*

- Mailing Costs for Hard Copy-approximately \$2,000 to \$7,000 depending on the demand and frequency and number of packets distributed (General Fund)
- Establishing Hot Spot on the exterior of each of the District's buildings: \$13,000 (General fund)
- Copies: \$4,000 to \$8,000 depending on the requests and frequency and number of packets distributed (General Fund)

- If DUS needs to significantly expand the accessibility to learning devices for the distance learning plan, we anticipate a startup cost of \$220,000. We would also have to account for a replacement plan of any current or new devices to be used in a distance learning plan. (General Fund)

**6. Please describe the manner in which district administrators, board members, teachers, and any representatives of teachers collaborated in development of the Plan.**

*District/ PSA Response:*

Dowagiac Schools believes that it is essential to collaborate with staff, board members, administrators, and teacher representatives to build a strong plan. Board members met in person in March to discuss the potential of the need for a plan. In addition, two-way communication through e-mail and phone calls will be used.

Administrators in the County have communicated through e-mail, phone, and Zoom meetings.

Administrators in the District have communicated through e-mail, phone, and Zoom meetings. They have been assessing ideas of the plans for alignment between the K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 building levels.

We have been committed to collaboration with teacher leaders during the development of our plan and maintain a quality and productive relationship.

- All teachers were invited to participate in a survey regarding the program/methods they have used or would prefer to use regarding packets and online learning.
- Grade Level Chairs and Department heads have held virtual meetings are to discuss ways to determine the "Power Standards" and areas of focus for student learning.
- Building staff meetings are used to seek input on the plan as well as to support each other through sharing of academic ideas, strategies as well as social-emotional support for each other.
- These meetings will continue throughout the rest of the school year to assess progress and possible adjustments.

**7. Please describe the methods the District will use to notify pupils and parents or guardians of the Plan.**

*District/ PSA Response:*

DUS will use the district-wide mass phone call/text message process similar to a school cancellation, a mass e-mail distribution system, the district/building Facebook and the district website to inform parents of our District's plan. The more specific building level plans will be distributed in a formal letter from the building principals to explain how the process will be implemented by grade levels, via the same systems the District plan will be shared.

**8. Please provide an estimate of the date on which the District will begin implementation of the Plan, which must be no later than April 28, 2020.**

*District/ PSA Response:*

Our plan has already started, but the instructional/academic portion of the plan will start rolling out for K-12 on April 20, 2020.

**9. Please describe the assistance, to the extent feasible, to pupils enrolled in any postsecondary dual enrollment courses under Public Act of 1996, as amended, MCL 388.511 to 388.524, and Career and Technical Preparation Act, 258 PA 2000, as amended, MCL 388.1901 to 388.1913, in completing the courses during the 2019-20 school year.**

*District/ PSA Response:*

Students enrolled in dual enrollment were able to continue their learning through the college and the use of online learning. They had started their distance learning plan back in mid to late March.

Students enrolled in Van Buren Tech and SMC Academy will continue their learning through a "Mix Media" instructional delivery system, but modified as needed once internet connectivity data is available.

As with all K-12 students, there will be a “No Educational Harm” philosophy for these programs.

Dowagiac Union Schools is also partnering with our local community college and career center providers in the monitoring of student progress as in the requirement for Dual Enrollment and CTE programs. These providers have greater access to the students’ academic progress in these programs as they are housed on their campuses.

Students who are seeking specific state or national certification career-focused programs will still need to pass the qualification assessment for employment purposes.

**10. Please describe how the District will continue to provide or arrange for the continuation of food distribution to eligible pupils.**

*District/ PSA Response:*

Breakfast and Lunch delivery to 13 locations have been taking place since March 16. We will continue to be provided at the same 13 locations for the rest of the school year. Currently, Friday backpacks are provided with meals for the weekend.

We are also preparing for the Summer “Meet Up and Eat Up” program.

**11. Please confirm that the District will continue to pay school employees while redeploying staff to provide meaningful work in the context of the Plan, subject to any applicable requirements of a collective bargaining agreement.**

*District/ PSA Response:*

Dowagiac Union Schools is committed to the continuation of payment to school employees at the same level of weekly compensation pre-C-19 closure, as a component of E.O. 2020-35. We will be redeploying staff to meet the needs of our Distance Learning Plan as allowed by the E.O. 2020-35.

**12. Provide describe how the District will evaluate the participation of pupils in the Plan.**

*District/ PSA Response:*

Student participation will be monitored as part of the plan. Student feedback will be provided to the student and will be recorded. Students who return in the fall will be assessed regarding the content provided during the last three months of school. Students who regularly participated in one of the three modes of distance learning will be compared to those who did not participate. This will be a key tool to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction.

The grading system is focused on there being no harm to students. Students' academic progress as of March 13, is the starting point. Students working through distance learning will maintain the grade status they had earned as of 3/13. They will also have the opportunity to improve their academic grade. Again, there will be no negative impact on a student's academic progress due to the distance learning plan.

**13. Please describe how the District will provide mental health supports to pupils affected by a state of emergency or state of disaster prompted by COVID-19.**

*District/ PSA Response:*

Dowagiac Union Schools is committed to providing mental health supports to pupils affected by COVID-19. Counselors, Teachers, and staff will make weekly contact. We will be utilizing the Wellness Check provided by Lewis Cass ISD.

**14. Please describe how the District will support the efforts of the Intermediate District in which the District is located to mobilize disaster relief childcare centers as described in Executive Order 2020-16 or any executive order that follow it.**

*District/ PSA Response:*

Dowagiac Union Schools is a strong partner of Cass Lewis ISD and will support any efforts of the ISD if they are called upon for mobilized disaster relief childcare centers or other duties.

**Optional question:**

**15. Does the District to adopt a balanced calendar instructional program for the remainder of the school year? Does the District plan to adopt a balanced calendar instructional program for the school year?**

*District/PSA Response:*

Dowagiac Union Schools intends, in collaboration with other county schools, to begin the 2020-21 school year earlier. This will include a pre-Labor Day start.

**Name of District Leader Submitting Application:** *Jonathan M. Whan, Superintendent*

Date Approved: **4-16-2020**

Name of ISD Superintendent/Authorizer Designee: **Brent Holcomb, Lewis Cass ISD**

Date Submitted to Superintendent and State Treasurer: **4-16-2020**

Confirmation approved Plan is posted on District/PSA website: **4-16-2020**