Giddings ISD
Frequently Asked Questions 2020-2021

PLEASE NOTE: The guidelines in this document are subject to revision as guidance and directives from the Governor, Commissioner of Education, and local authorities are given to public school districts. 8/04 /2020

Click on the sections below to access information for the upcoming school year.

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Remote Learning

What is required if I choose remote learning for my child?

- I am committed to At-Home learning for the six week grading period. I acknowledge that if I do not request a formal change to In-Person learning before the end of the current grading period I will be automatically continued on the current At-Home plan.

- I have access to reliable WiFi and/or the means to provide consistent access to the internet.

- My student will be **ineligible** for all extra-curricular activities (including **ALL** on-campus/ off-campus **UIL** events and sports).

- I will ensure my student completes asynchronous activities assigned **each day**.

- I will be held accountable for student attendance daily. I acknowledge that truancy will be enforced.

- I understand that I may check out a device through my child’s campus and that I am solely responsible for any damages as described in the equipment use agreement.

- I understand that the expectations for classwork and grading will follow district policy for On-campus instruction. Courses taken by students participating in At-Home Learning will be included in calculating GPA and class rank in accordance with local policy.

- I understand that it is my responsibility to maintain communication with my child’s teacher through Schoology, Google Meet, email, and/or telephone to create a learning partnership.

- I understand that conditions surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic are continually evolving and Giddings ISD’s At-Home learning plan is subject to change based on federal, state and local guidelines.
Will the remote instruction mirror the face to face instruction?

The content will be the same in remote and face to face instruction. The instructional delivery will vary. Remote instruction will utilize the same high quality, rigorous curriculum as students who are in face to face instruction. The level of rigor, workload, time commitment, and timing of classes will be different from the spring 2020 at home learning plan.

During remote instruction, time management is critical to success. Students and teachers must remain in communication regarding daily schedules and assignments. As with any traditional course, there is a risk of receiving a lower grade if a student falls behind.

Can my remote student participate in UIL activities?

Students who choose to participate in remote learning will not be allowed to participate in UIL activities.

Will lessons be taught live or via pre-recorded videos?

Some of lessons will be pre-recorded. However, some lessons may take place live through a Google Meet.

Will assignments be due daily or weekly?

Students will have lessons each day and assignments that are due at teacher discretion just like the face to face classroom. Students must engage daily in order to fulfill attendance requirements for completion of the course.

How will attendance be taken with remote learning?

TEA requires that attendance is taken daily in remote learning. Students must meet one of the three criteria stated for daily attendance: 1.) interact with the teacher, 2.) complete an assignment, or 3.) engage in the lesson in Schoology.

How will remote courses be graded?

According to TEA guidance, the grading policies for remote instruction must be consistent with the district’s grading policies for face to face assignments.
**Who will be my student’s remote teacher?**
Remote classes will be taught by the same teacher/s your child is assigned to at the beginning of the school year. If a parent chooses to change the method of instruction (remote to face to face), the child’s teacher will remain the same.

**What school supplies will I need to have at home if I choose remote learning?**
The Giddings ISD school supply lists can be found on the district website. Supplies are required for in-person and remote learning.

**When and how can I change my preferred instructional method?**
Once school has started, parents who choose remote instruction for their students may transition to face to face instruction at the completion of a grading cycle by notifying the campus Counselor. Parents must notify the school at least 1 week prior to the start of the new grading cycle if the student is changing instructional methods.

**Technology**

**What if I don't have a device or the internet?**
Contact your students' campus for guidance and help.

**How can parents receive technical support?**
Parents may email gisd.helpdesk@giddings.txed.net with technical support questions.
Health and Safety

What is the process when a student gets sick or develops COVID-19 related symptoms during the school day?

1. If a student is not currently wearing PPE, immediately place a face covering.

2. If a student has any of the following during the school day unrelated to a previously diagnosed medical condition, immediately activate the Isolation Plan (see below) and contact parent/guardian for immediate pick up (per TEA Public Health Guidance July 28, 2020):

   - Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
   - Loss of taste or smell
   - Cough
   - Difficulty breathing
   - Shortness of breath
   - Fatigue or Headache
   - Chills
   - Sore throat
   - Congestion or runny nose
   - Shaking or exaggerated shivering
   - Significant muscle pain or ache
   - Diarrhea
   - Nausea or vomiting

Isolation Plan:

- Students exhibiting symptoms will be isolated with designated staff until parent picks up child.
- Personal protective equipment will be used.
- Areas will be disinfected.

Notify Parent/Guardians:

- Notify parent/guardian that their child is ill and must be picked up immediately
• Parents or guardians will be instructed to remain in their vehicle and call the campus from their car upon arrival.
• A staff member will escort the student to the parent’s vehicle, verify identification, and release the student.

**Will my child’s temperature be taken at school for COVID-19 related screening? What is the screening process for students?**

No, students’ temperature will not be checked at school for COVID-19 related screening at the beginning of the day. However, we do require parents or guardians attest to a daily screening on their children at home to ensure they do not have one of the following exclusionary criteria for going to school:

• Experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
• Lab-confirmed positive COVID-19 diagnosis
• Close contact with an individual with a lab-confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis

If students meet any one of the above criteria, they must stay home from school. Cooperation from parents and students will be critical to ensure we limit possible viral exposure. It is understood that if a student arrives at school or at a bus stop, the parent / guardian screening indicates the student is free from the above criteria.

**Will face coverings be required for students?**

Per executive orders from Governor Abbott, GISD will follow the face covering mandate. Additionally, TEA guidance requires school districts to comply with the governor’s executive order regarding the wearing of face coverings. Students in grades PK-3 will be encouraged to wear face coverings and face coverings will be required for students in grades 4-12. Although it is not required, students may want to consider having more than one face mask for the day.

**Are there times during the day when a student can remove their face covering?**

Face coverings are most effective in protecting students and staff when social distancing is not possible. There may be times throughout the day when social distancing is not possible based on activity and space limitations. Conversely, there will be times in the classroom and other locations on campus where students are able to socially distance, and as a result, could remove their face covering for a period of time. However, we strongly encourage students to wear their face covering as much as possible to help protect themselves and others.
Will masks be provided for students?

We have found that most people prefer to obtain their own masks in order to personalize them to their comfort and style. If a parent cannot afford to provide a mask, the campuses will work with them.

What are campus administrators doing to limit the interactions between students and the possibility of viral spread during the school day?

Campus administrators are creating plans to increase safety by limiting possible exposure, designating traffic flow for specific hallways and stairways, social distancing, and creating alternate lunch period plans. These strategies will continue at each campus and will be adjusted as needed for the safety of students.

How will schools look different than last school year?

There will be many precautions that are taken to protect students and staff from COVID-19 that may not be visible to parents. However, there are some precautions that will be evident; some of those include:

- Classrooms will be spaced out to provide social distancing space, to the extent possible.
- Increased signage to educate our students on important mitigation measures like hand washing, wearing a face covering, staying home when sick, maintaining social distance, and to indicate direction of traffic flow.
- Reduced seating options in the cafeteria to ensure social distancing while dining in the cafeteria, to the extent possible.
- Clear partitions in various locations throughout the campus.

What cleaning and disinfecting procedures have been added to protect students and staff?

GISD is committed to enacting additional practices to reduce likely spread inside the school, specifically related to our standard and enhanced sanitation plans. As part of our standard sanitation plan and as a basis for keeping the environment safe and healthy for students and staff, GIDS custodians will continue to execute our routine cleaning and disinfecting of classrooms, offices, and common areas within district facilities. In addition to our routine cleaning, frequently touched objects like doorknobs, hand railings, desks and shared resources like computers will be cleaned and disinfected multiple times throughout the day.
How will the district reinforce mitigating strategies for reducing the spread of illness?

It is critical that students understand the importance and effectiveness of personal mitigating practices in keeping themselves and others safe and healthy. This includes, but is not limited to hand washing, covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, wearing a face covering and staying home when not feeling well. Signage will be posted and students will be taught these important mitigating strategies.

Will there be recess/PE?

Yes. Although recess and PE will be handled differently, students will have the opportunity for movement during the day. Face coverings will not be required during outdoor recess if social distancing; however, students will be monitored so they are not in close contact.

Will there be limitations to visitors on campus?

Yes. Although we need and value our volunteers and visitors, we must limit the visitations on campus. Visitors will be limited to individuals that are essential to school operations. This includes but is not limited to no visitors for classroom visits, eating in the cafeteria, and class parties, etc. Parents will not be allowed to walk their child to their classroom. No outside lunch can be dropped off for the students.

How do I know when my child can return to school?

Any individuals must stay at home who are lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 or experience the symptoms of COVID-19 throughout the infection period. Individuals cannot return to campus until the school system screens that individual to determine that the following conditions have been met:

- In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following conditions have been met:
  1. at least one day (24 hours) has passed without fever or the use of fever-reducing medications;
  2. the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
  3. at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
In the case of an individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and who is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, such individual is assumed to have COVID-19. The individual may not return to the campus until that individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.

If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must obtain a medical professional’s note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis.

What is considered close contact?

Per the TEA Public Health Planning Guidance August 4, 2020:

This document refers to “close contact” with an individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19. The definition of close contact is evolving with our understanding of COVID-19. In general, close contact is defined as:

a. being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on); or

b. being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes; however, additional factors like case/contact masking (i.e., both the infectious individual and the potential close contact have been consistently and properly masked), ventilation, presence of dividers, and case symptomology may affect this determination.

Either (a) or (b) defines close contact if it occurred during the infectious period of the case, defined as two days prior to symptom onset to 10 days after symptom onset. In the case of asymptomatic individuals who are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, the infectious period is defined as two days prior to the confirming lab test and continuing for 10 days following the confirming lab test.

My child is sick and must quarantine for COVID-like symptoms and there are siblings that are district students in the household, do they need to quarantine and stay out of school?

CDC recommends that anyone who has been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 should quarantine. Individuals who are sick or infected should separate
themselves from others by staying in a specific “sick room” or area and using a separate bathroom (if available) while at home.

We expect parents/caregivers to keep sick children at home. If a student is exposed to COVID-19 through a close contact, a parent/caregiver must call the school to report. The student should not report to campus. After review by the school nurse, the student may be required to remain off-campus for up to a 14-day incubation period.

**Will I be notified if anyone in my child's school or class tests positive for COVID-19?**

Yes, schools must notify all teachers, staff, and families of all students in a school if a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participate in any on-campus activities. Having a confirmed case in your child’s class will not necessarily require your child to quarantine if it was determined your child did not have close contact with the person who has COVID-19.

**Transportation**

**Are all students eligible to ride a school bus in Giddings ISD?**

Yes, all eligible students that live within a designated GISD route zone can elect to receive transportation services. Aligned with TEA's guidance on public health, Giddings ISD encourages families that can provide transportation for their students to please do so. **ALL students must** wear a mask on a GISD school bus.

**Do families have the ability to add transportation services after the annual enrollment process/commitment period or after school starts?**

Yes, families can elect for their students to ride the bus after the annual enrollment process/commitment period and any time after school starts. Transportation changes must be made with the child’s campus 24 hours in advance.

**What guidance was given by TEA regarding Transportation Services?**
Per the SY 20-21 Public Health Planning Guidance documents released on August 4, 2020 by TEA, the following recommendations were made for school bus transportation:

- School systems should consider requiring students and staff to use hand sanitizer upon boarding the bus.
- When possible, schools should open windows to allow outside air to circulate in the bus.
- School systems should encourage families to drop students off, carpool, or walk with their student to school to reduce possible virus exposure on buses.
- Buses should be thoroughly cleaned after each bus trip, focusing on high-touch surfaces such as bus seats, steering wheels, knobs, and door handles. During cleaning, open windows to allow for additional ventilation and air flow.

GISD and the Transportation Department will comply with recommendations set forth by TEA. However, no guidance, provisions, or restrictions were placed on the number of students that can be transported by school bus. Giddings ISD will balance the safety and wellness of students and staff and the need for safe access to transportation to and from school. In a true partnership, Giddings ISD and parents must work together and support the requirements put in place for safe transport of our students.

**What does transportation do to make sure the buses are cleaned and disinfected?**

After each bus trip the buses will be thoroughly cleaned, focusing on high touch surfaces such as bus seats, steering wheel, hand railing, knobs and door handles.

**Will hand sanitizer be available on the school bus?**

Yes, hand sanitizer will be provided for every student when they board the bus. It will be a requirement that every student sanitize their hands when they board the bus.

**What will social distancing look like on the bus?**

ALL students **must** wear a mask on a GISD school bus. Given the limitations on space, it is very difficult to distance students on a bus. We will ask students in the same family to sit together. Because social distancing is not always possible on a school bus, we have put in place other safety measures to protect our students and
drivers: use of face coverings, hand sanitizing upon boarding the bus, and cleaning and disinfecting between routes.

**Meals**

**What will the breakfast & lunch period look like for students?**

Campus administrators are working with GISD’s Child Nutrition department to create a plan that works for each campus. Cafeteria tables will have seats specifically designated to ensure social distancing to the extent possible. Schools may have a variety of options available based on logistics and age of students.

**Will the schools offer meal service for Face to Face Learning?**

Yes, meals will be served each day at each campus as done in the previous years for all students attending face to face instruction. All food will be prepackaged in separate containers.

**Extracurricular**

**Can my remote student participate in UIL activities?**

Students choosing remote learning will not be able to participate in UIL extracurricular activities such as athletics and fine arts.

**Special Education / 504**

**Can my child receive Speech Therapy/Occupational Therapy/Dyslexia Services in-person if they are enrolled in the virtual model?**

Giddings ISD will provide tele-therapy services for eligible students who choose the virtual model of instruction. In some instances, tele-therapy may not be appropriate for the student. The ARD committee will convene to determine whether there are any alternatives available.
How will Giddings ISD serve special education students in a virtual classroom?

Each student’s special education providers will carefully consider that student’s individual needs and present levels of academic and functional performance (PLAAFPs). This will include consideration of each student’s goals, supports, services and regular education remote learning activities.

Special Education teachers, speech therapists and service providers are required to offer services in accordance with each student’s IEP. Each student’s ARD committee, which includes the parent or guardian as an integral member, will have the ability to modify the student’s IEP as appropriate for the virtual instructional context.

The district has provided special educators with an online instructional curriculum and materials for instruction. However, teachers will use a variety of strategies and approaches to meet the individualized needs of students with disabilities to implement IEP goals. The following are examples of how special education services may be provided in a virtual classroom:

- Digital learning activities or assignments (e.g., watch videos, read online books, play Web-based games, complete online documents)
- General instruction – academic activities or functional skills appropriate for multiple students (e.g., social skills lessons)
- Special education provider consultation with general education teachers of record and special education support staff to collaboratively plan or keep informed of weekly lesson plans.
- Individualized instruction – academic activities or functional skills related to unique, student-specific goals/objectives or touching base with the student for relationship-building and social and emotional check-ins
- Provide video modeling of hands-on tasks expected of students
- Telephone calls, chat, or text communication with the student (e.g., practicing communication skills)
- Determine social skill lessons using direct instruction to address behavior goals through lesson planning and activities that can be done at home.
- Determine specific student needs for “inclusion” support in the general education virtual classroom and provide staff (special education teacher or paraprofessional) assistance during the class period, lesson planning, or task for that course.
● Special education teachers/providers may supply the students with any needed visual support items and materials required to maintain the Behavior Intervention Plan and other IEP supplements.

● Special education teachers/providers may facilitate online training via Google classroom to assist parents/guardians.

● Campus principals will intentionally schedule and set clear expectations for all relevant staff (e.g., general education teachers, ESL teachers, special education teachers, instructional/related services providers) to have regularly scheduled, documented planning time together as virtual meetings. During these meetings, staff will coordinate specially designed instruction, IEP implementation, review progress monitoring data and make instructional adjustments, and administer accommodations, and/or modifications for students at home, as well as establish office hours and tutoring availability.

● The district will provide teachers with a resource (e.g., form template, electronic system) and frequency expectations for documented communication with families about academic expectations and academic, behavioral, and IEP-specific progress monitoring systems.

● The district-level special education support personnel (SLPs, LSSPs, OTs, PTs, and special education counselor) will communicate office hours for availability.

How will Admission, Review, and Determination Meetings (ARD) and Section 504 Meetings be conducted for students enrolled in the virtual learning environment?

Requirements related to the legal timelines for initial and annual ARD meetings still apply. The ARD/504 Committee may meet by video or teleconference; however, all required members must be in attendance. Giddings ISD personnel will contact parents to schedule ARD/504 meetings. The parent may choose to participate via video conferencing or telephonically. ARD/504 meetings shall be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time in collaboration with parents and campus staff including administrator(s) and teachers. The ARD/504 Committee will address all elements of an annual, including services.

Service providers will monitor the student to ensure progress on the General Education curriculum as well as on their IEP goals. Additional ARD/504 meetings may be necessary if a student begins to struggle and cannot remediate while participating in virtual learning and/or once the student returns to school for in-person instruction. After review of student progress towards IEP goals and
objectives for students in Special Education or review of progress in the general education curriculum, a discussion for compensatory services may need to be addressed.

How will Special Education/Dyslexia evaluations take place for students enrolled in the virtual learning environment?

Pursuant with guidelines published by TEA, neither state nor federal law provide flexibility to LEAs in times of emergency regarding their obligation to provide FAPE to students receiving Special Education/Section 504 services. Although evaluation timelines pause in situations where the district is closed and not in session, if the district is offering educational services, the 45 school-day timeline requirements of Texas Education Code §29.004 apply. Thus, all initial and reevaluation timelines concerning FIEs/Dyslexia Evaluations remain in effect; this includes requests made pre- and post-closures related to COVID-19.

Career Technical Education (CTE)

Can my remote student attend classes requiring face to face learning like labs or certain hands on courses?

Students who choose to enroll in remote instruction will not be allowed to attend certain face to face activities that require hands on engagement that cannot be accomplished in a remote platform. (Ex. welding, BIM, and graphic design)