

Safe Return to School Plan



2021-2022

Hamilton County USD 10

Hamilton County CUSD 10 has developed a Safe Return to In-Person Instruction Plan and Continuity of Services for the 2021 – 2022 school year. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) signed into law on March 11, 2021, provided nearly \$122 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Relief Fund (ESSER). ARP ESSER, also known as ESSER III, funds are provided to State educational agencies in the same proportion as each State received under Title I-A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in fiscal year (FY) 2020. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) published Interim Final Guidance (IFR) on April 22, 2021 requiring Local Education Agencies (LEAs) receiving ESSER III funds to submit an LEA Plan for the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services. It is important to note that Hamilton County Schools safely and successfully operated all schools all day every day during the 2020-2021 school year by providing in-person learning 5 days per week with no closures or adaptive pauses throughout the entire school year.

Hamilton County CUSD 10 Superintendent, Jeff Fetcho, formed a Transition Planning Committee to review available information, discuss options and develop a safe return to in-person learning plan based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). This plan and continuity of services was developed with collaboration from administrative staff, counselors, teachers, support staff, district nurse, various union leadership, parents/guardians, Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency, Hamilton Memorial Hospital, the Hamilton County Health Department, and other community stakeholders. The plan is developed with stakeholder feedback and will be monitored and revised based on ongoing review through September 30, 2023.

Protocols for Incorporating Mitigation Strategies

The district will continue to use a majority of the recommended mitigation strategies as outlined by the CDC and the IDPH. Should health conditions shift or stakeholder feedback necessitate, the district will continue to consult with the Hamilton County Health Department and the Illinois Department of Public Health as well as internally reviewing COVID positivity rates, case count, conditions and mitigation strategies and offer revisions.

Physical distancing - (e.g., including the use of cohorts) The District will continue physical distancing to the greatest extent possible. Visitors will be allowed but must check in at the front office. Signage will continue to be utilized in all buildings to remind people to maintain a safe distance.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette - Hand Washing will be emphasized throughout the school day. Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the buildings and students will be encouraged to sanitize their hands when entering and again when leaving a classroom. Cough and sneeze etiquette will be taught, monitored and reinforced.

Facilities - District cleaning protocols will continue as they were during the pandemic. EPA approved disinfectant will be utilized frequently on all high touch surfaces throughout the school day. Unoccupied classrooms/spaces will be disinfected daily and again in the evening.

Diagnostic and screening testing - All individuals entering the building will not be required to have a temperature check or complete a daily health-check form. However, all individuals are required to self-monitor. Any individual with COVID symptoms (shown below) should not report to school. Hamilton County Schools will continue to have testing and screening supplies at nursing stations. The District will strategically utilize BinaxNOW test kits for COVID concerns in order to keep students and staff safely in

school as much as possible. A completed Parental Consent form would be necessary prior to student testing.

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- A measured temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Known close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19

Contact Tracing - In combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial or Tribal health departments:

- Investigation: Upon confirmation of a COVID diagnosis, the District will work with a patient to help them recall everyone with whom they have had close contact during the time when they may have been infectious.
- Quarantine: Contacts will be required to stay home and maintain social distance from others (at least 3 ft) until 7-10 days after their exposure to the infected patient, in case they also become ill. The district will continue to follow the most current IDPH guidelines on quarantine issues.
- CDC cleaning protocols will be implemented. Any quarantine or school closure will be determined in concert with the County Health Department.
- The District will maintain logs in each building of contacts, dates of exposure, quarantine dates.

Protocols for Symptomatic Students and Staff

- If a student or staff member becomes symptomatic during the school day, they will be safely and respectfully isolated from others.
- If the District becomes aware that an individual has spent time in the building and tests positive for COVID 19, the district will immediately contact the Hamilton County Health Department and the family of the confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality. Contact tracing will become the responsibility of the school district and the Hamilton County Health Department.
- Should the individual test positive for COVID 19, the District will request proof of a negative test or a doctor's note clearing the individual to return to school.

Vaccinations - The district will continue to encourage faculty, staff and students to be vaccinated. The district is willing to serve as a host site as vaccinations are available.

Accommodations for children with disabilities - The District will build a health plan to meet unique health needs of students. This could include home instruction or further mitigation efforts in the school setting.

Masks - As of July 9, 2021, mask wearing will be optional in Hamilton County Schools, but required on school buses. The District will continue to follow CDC, IDPH and local health department guidance that currently allow for local control on mitigation efforts used, (ie...masks, social distancing, etc...). People with certain underlying medical conditions and certain disabilities can and should wear masks. Discuss with your healthcare provider the benefits and potential risks of wearing a mask.

Ensuring Continuity of Services

Beginning August 13, 2021 the District plans to return to a full-time in person learning schedule inclusive of all extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. The district will follow all mandates put forward by the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Center for Disease Control, but will exercise local control where allowable.

Hamilton County Schools will continuously review our framework for additional academic and social/emotional support both during and after the school day.

The District will continue full in-person food services for students. The district will provide expanded after school programs for students during the 2021-2022 school year from 3 pm - 4 pm.

Public Comment

The plan was provided on the district website, electronic communication and public comment was made available through a meeting of the Board of Education.

The District will provide a translated version of the plan to non-English speaking families via Google Translate or through other interpreter services as requested.

Professional Development will be provided so that staff is comfortable teaching in a variety of formats (like we used in the 2020-21 school year) that could be required during the school year. Our technical staff will be available daily to help them navigate through any problems that should arise.

Public Comments can be submitted via email using: fetchoj@unit10.com

Plans for the 2021-2022 School Year

The District is planning for a return to in-person instruction for the 2021-2022 school year. Details are as follows:

- Classes will begin August 13, 2021 (½ Day)
- In-person instruction will be the default learning model for all students. We know that students learn best when they are in the classroom with their teachers and their peers.
- We do not plan to offer live remote instruction, where teachers are teaching students online.
- Students who are unable to attend school in-person for medical reasons must submit medical documentation to their school principal. Please note that medical documentation must be kept up to date, particularly as vaccine eligibility and availability becomes more widespread.
- All students will be in person all days of the week from 8:00 am - 3:00 pm
- Masks are optional, but required on buses.
- Each student is allowed to carry a bottle of water with them throughout the day. There are water bottle refilling stations available. Water fountains will not be used.