

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



River Valley School District

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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 LEA or 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

The River Valley School District's return to school maintains the health and safety of students, educators, and other school and LEA staff. Our adopted policies or practices are described in our 2021-2022 Instructional Model which were approved by the school board on September 9, 2021.

The River Valley School District will be providing in-person instruction to all students, following the school calendar, five days a week. We believe students are most successful when they are in school. Our educators will continue to support families.

Families seeking a virtual format are encouraged to utilize the Rural Virtual Academy (with the Medford School District) through our consortium agreement.

Conditions, similar to last year, are ever-changing, and we will remain responsive. We will adapt when county/state/federal mandates are provided to our district as we safely provide the best education possible for all students. We will use the guidance from the CDC, DHS, and local health officials to advise our decisions.

Description on maintaining the safety of staff and students

The River Valley School District will begin the 2021-22 school year with a five-day per week, face-to-face instructional model and adhere to the following health protocols. Accordingly, the District will:

- Maintain a healthy Environment:
 - Recommend face coverings/masking using site-based thresholds
 - Socially distance when possible
 - Communicate clear reminders to families for symptoms
 - Teach hand washing/sanitation
 - Require staff members and students to stay home or go home if they are showing COVID-19 symptoms or if household member has tested positive for COVID-19
 - Monitor symptoms and provide nursing guidance

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)

The River Valley School District will offer in-person learning five days a week according to the Board adopted 2021-2022 Academic Year Calendar. The school district has also provided families the option to enroll their students in virtual learning through the Rural Virtual Academy consortium agreement.

In the event of school closure due to the pandemic, the district purchased Chromebooks for most students to continue virtual learning.

Regardless of the mode of instruction, the River Valley School District will continue to provide meals under the community provision as long as USDA continues the allowance. Meals will be provided for summer school attendees as well as all eligible youth during the school year. If school is closed due to a pandemic, the district will assess its ability to distribute meals utilizing the same process it used during the spring of 2020.

The River Valley School District employs three full-time nursing personnel who will continue to offer health services in-person or virtually. The school district also partners with Oregon Mental Health Services to provide mental health support for families.

Mitigation Measures

Universal and correct wearing of masks when district threshold have been reached:

The River Valley School Board adopted thresholds to determine when students, staff, and visitors will be required to wear masks and when mask-wearing will be optional. These thresholds are based on COVID activity in individual classrooms or schools, while closely monitoring the level of COVID transmission within the district's geographic boundaries, and in Sauk, Iowa, and Richland Counties. Details about these thresholds can be found on the district website.

In addition, the River Valley School Board continues to support Policy 728 which states, "Masks are recommended everywhere (both indoor and outdoor) on the River Valley School District campus. Masking is required on all school transportation due to a federal mandate."

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette:

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 sanitizing stations/liquids are available in all classrooms and present in foyers for guests.

Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation:

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.

The District has installed ionization air cleaning units on all air intake ventilation units in all buildings. These units function at all times that ventilation units operate and are monitored electronically through HVAC computer systems.

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

The River Valley School District will continue contact tracing and transparent reporting to the public of COVID-19 cases within the District. To provide transparent reporting for our stakeholders, the District maintained a COVID-19 case dashboard throughout the 2020-21 school year and will continue to do so for the 2021-22 school year. This information can be found on the district's website.

The River Valley School District will guide parents/students, employees, and contractors on screening protocols. Each school will continue to provide current health information to staff, students, and families about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, when they should stay home, and when they can return to school. Procedures for contact tracing can be found on the district website.

Diagnostic and screening testing:

The River Valley School District recommends students and staff get tested for COVID by their medical provider or a local pharmacy. The turnaround time for results at the local clinic and Walgreens has been reduced to within 24 hours.

More importantly, the River Valley School District, in conjunction with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, coordinates COVID testing at our schools for students and staff. The District sees the need for on-site testing. Students have the option to be tested with parent permission when they are identified as ill or become symptomatic.

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

All eligible staff employed in 2020-2021 were provided the opportunity to be vaccinated. Students ages 16 and older were provided access to an on-site vaccination clinic in the spring of 2021. Students ages 12 and older were provided access to an on-site vaccination clinic in the summer of 2021. New staff will be given access to vaccinations by working with local healthcare partners and public health.

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

When circumstances require specific policies or procedures designed to protect the health and safety of students, 504 and IEP teams determine if modifications and/or reasonable accommodations are needed for individual students with disability-related issues.

Coordination with state and local health officials:

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 River Valley School District continues to work with Sauk County, Iowa County, and Richland County Public Health officials to implement mitigating strategies for the safety of students and staff.

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

The District will provide for continuity of services as follows:

Student Academic Needs

The River Valley School District has implemented a summer school program to assist students with academic recovery. The District plans to continue full-time, in-person instruction beginning the fall of 2021, with limited exception. Emergency plans are in place if staffing needs or county officials require a fully virtual experience for our students.

Student Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

Additional staff training has been added to address our students' social and emotional learning needs. Time has been set aside in each student's schedule titled "Blackhawk Time" to meet academic and social/emotional needs.

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

Food services will continue to provide meals under the community provision as long as USDA continues the allowance. Meals will be provided for summer school attendees as well as all eligible youth during the school year. Summer meals will be provided for summer school and all children age 18 and under.

It is assumed that the USDA will continue community eligibility provision under the new school meal application.

Staff Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

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:

The River Valley 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:

The River Valley School District has taken the following steps to make its plan available to the public:

- The plan is posted at <http://www.rvschools.org/district/rvcovidupdates.cfm>
- 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 River Valley School District Board of Education meetings on September 9, 2021. An opportunity for public comment was available during the August 12, 2021 meeting and the September 9, 2021 Board meeting.
- 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.