



Ironton City Schools

2021-2024

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

A Plan in response to the ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER)

This plan is subject to change based on added Federal & State requirements and public input.



Purpose

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) provides federal resources to support states and local school districts. Recent federal guidance clarifies that districts must submit to the state of Ohio a plan that fulfills the requirement that the districts publish local “Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plans” by June 24, 2021. This plan is being built upon existing district operations that address the elements of the federal requirements.

Plan Overview

All Ironton City Schools will return to in-person instruction for all students in August 2021. We recognize that we still have vulnerable students who have health concerns that may require that they be given home options pending age-appropriate vaccines being made available to them. We will accommodate these needs via the IEP, 504, and/or principal and parent engagement process.

- **Section 1) Policies and Mitigation Strategies:** Implementation of prevention and mitigation strategies that are to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with the most recent CDC, Ohio Department of Health, and the Lawrence County Health Department’s guidance on reopening schools in a manner that promotes the health and safety of students, staff and community stakeholders.
- **Section 2) Continuity of Services:** Addresses both academic and non-academic needs to include, but not limited to, students and staff; social, emotional, and mental health.
- **Section 3) Periodic Review and Public Input:** Meaningful consultation with stakeholders that results in meaningful revisions of the plan through September 30, 2023.
- **Section 4) Projected Allocation of ESSER Funding**

Message From The Superintendent

“Let me begin by thanking everyone for making the 2020-2021 academic year a success. It wasn’t always easy and many sacrifices were made, but in the end our doors remained open excluding the planned two week virtual period at the beginning of the second semester. All indications suggest that the 2021-2022 academic year, pending state and federal mandates, will see a return to more normal routines within our schools. It is important to recognize that many of the safety protocols implemented to combat COVID-19 worked. Many will become part of our “normal” moving forward, which will aid not only with COVID but also to combat annual cold and flu season and/or other communicable diseases which may cause negative effects to the health of our students and staff.”

The health and safety of our students and staff will always remain our highest priority. Working together, everyone in the school community can take steps to reduce transmission, particularly to those at high risk, while balancing the need to maintain a strong educational system that effectively supports the needs of each staff member, student and family."

Section 1: Policies and Mitigation Strategies

Facial Coverings

As of June 2, 2021, public health orders mandating facial coverings in the school setting have been rescinded. The CDC recently released guidance on the ability of fully vaccinated individuals to resume pre-pandemic activities without wearing a facial covering except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance.

At this time, all Ironton City Schools plan to begin the 2021-2022 academic year without a facial covering mandate. However, the district strongly encourages individuals who are not fully vaccinated, ineligible for vaccination (ie, children under the age of 12), and immuno-compromised students and staff to continue the wearing of face coverings in the school setting.

The CDC and Ohio Department of Health will update its guidance for schools throughout the summer and we will continue to update plans for the 2021-2022 academic year as these recommendations become available.

Social Distancing

Physical distancing of at least 3 feet will be maintained between students in the classroom. In some classrooms, physical barriers (ie., plexiglass dividers) will continue to be utilized.

Hand Hygiene

The district will continue efforts to teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If handwashing is not possible, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol will be made available in the classroom and strategically placed throughout the school buildings. Appropriate signage will be placed throughout the school buildings to promote hand hygiene.

Facilities

Many improvements to equipment, materials, and systems will continue to be implemented or modified in school operation for the 2021-2022 academic year. These improvement include but are not limited to:

- Indoor air filtration systems to include, at minimum, MERV 13

- Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) setting to maximize ventilation
- Elimination of drinking fountains, replaced with bottle fillers
- Routine disinfecting of high traffic surface areas
- Daily sanitization of buildings using state of the art equipment, safe chemicals, and techniques
- Access to hand sanitizer in the classroom and strategic locations throughout the buildings
- Access to cleaning supplies and disinfectant in the classroom
- Limiting of visitors to the buildings
- Temperature checks
- Cleaning of communal spaces before/after use (ie., playgrounds)
- Modified schedules and layouts

Isolation / Quarantine / Contact Tracing

We will continue to work with the Lawrence County Department of Health, to the extent permissible by law, to provide confidential information about individuals diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19.

Students and staff with who test positive for the COVID-19 virus will be required to isolate as directed by health authorities and/or quarantine if so instructed. The district is required to report confirmed cases to the local health department, and together, will work to notify close contacts. The district will maintain its COVID Dashboard on our website at www.tigertown.com for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Visitors

Visitors to our campuses will be allowed but will be limited to the core functions of school business. All visitors will be subject to a health screening and no one exhibiting COVID symptoms will be permitted on any ICSD campus. Our ability, and that of our stakeholders, to utilize technology as an effective communication tool has served us tremendously during the 2020-2021 academic year. When permissible we encourage parents, students and staff to continue this practice.

Vaccinations

During the second semester of the 2020-2021 academic year, ICSD partnered with the Lawrence County Health Department to provide vaccinations to district staff and students aged 12 and up. For student vaccinations, individuals were transported to a vaccination clinic off site or the district hosted a clinic. Research has shown that the higher the percentage of vaccinated individuals in a school setting greatly reduces negative impacts on school operations. It is strongly recommended that individuals eligible to get vaccinated. We will continue our partnership with the LCHD in supporting their vaccination efforts into the 2021-2022 academic year and beyond.

Food Service

As required the District will continue to make food service accessible to all students, regardless of the student learning environment and during summer sessions. During the school year, the cafeteria will be available to all students grade K-12.

Section 2: Continuity of Services

In-person Instruction

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 peers and teachers.

Remote Learning

Evidence supports the conclusion that a remote learning environment, even under the most defined system, does not meet the needs of most K-12 students. However, the district recognizes that learning is not “one size fits all” and in some instances a remote environment is an acceptable educational setting specific to medical reasons. Students who are unable to attend school in person must submit up to date medical information and request an exemption from attending in-person. Please note that the district does not intend to offer concurrent instruction, where teachers are instructing students who are in-person and students who are working remotely at the same time. For students approved for remote learning for medical reasons only, the district will work with families individually to provide appropriate educational services.

Extended Learning

The district is committed to offering extended learning opportunities for all students. Research has shown that learning gaps, caused by the pandemic, range from 4 months up to a year's worth of growth. Examples of extended learning opportunities include; traditional summer school, after school programs, small group instruction, “pull out” classes, and embedded extensions built into the school day (ie., TigerTime). All examples of extended learning will have elements of acceleration and enrichment. Acceleration refers to the objective of “catching up” in core subject area content. Enrichments activities serves as a catalyst to engage students, develop life skills, promote knowledge and reasoning, provide pathways to social-emotional awareness, and engage in community service

Social-Emotional / Health / Mental Health

Health: Our district is serviced by a team of health professionals, including Registered Nurses at each campus, to ensure that student health needs are met. Our health professionals will follow the Ohio

Department of Health and CDC guidelines related to COVID-19 and will assist administration and staff in understanding and implementing those guidelines. Our staff will continue to administer daily medication and attend to injuries and illnesses that occur at school. Mandated health screening will continue with appropriate safety precautions in place. Parents are directed to contact a school nurse regarding their child's health. Students exhibiting COVID-19, flu like symptoms, or registering a fever of 100 degrees or higher, should never be sent to school without consulting with a district health professional.

Counseling Services: School Counselors work in each of our buildings and are an integral part of a student's educational environment. School counselors can support transitions and are available to students in need of immediate assistance with behavioral or social-emotional concerns. Regardless of the learning model, counselors can help students with the following:

- Short term counseling
- Referrals for long term counseling services
- Academic achievement strategies and academic planning
- Managing emotions and using interpersonal skills
- Planning for college and other postsecondary options

Mental Health Support: In addition to school counselors all district buildings are serviced by licensed mental health providers (NECCO). These individuals provide small group and individual services to address mental health concerns, concerns with substance abuse, and trauma care.

Identifying Academic Needs

The focus of student identification will be through the utilization of the Ohio Improvement Process and a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) structure in all schools. Multiple data sources will be incorporated, to include but not limited to the following:

- Course completion rates
- Star Reading and Math
- State Assessment
- Quarterly Assessments
- Student engagement impacting academic achievement
- Teacher recommendation
- Attendance

Section 3: Periodic Review and Public Input

Periodic Review

The district will periodically review all key aspects of this plan at least every six months for the duration of the APR ESSER grand period (ie., through September, 30, 2023). Revision to the plan will be made when deemed appropriate in order to execute the core mission of teaching and learning and/or upon the receipt of new guidance from local, state and federal agencies. Plan review will include, but is not limited to, collaborative work by the district administrative team and building/department leadership teams.

Public Input

The district will continue its efforts to include our constituents in providing input into our operational plans including our Restart/Readiness Extended Learning Plan, Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan, and the District Improvement plan.

The parent compact process for our school-wide Title 1 program, district/campus automated call system, emails, social media, our website, and in-person community events all serve as formats to engage stakeholders and create meaningful two-way conversations about our operations and planning. The district will, at times, utilize online surveys to collect feedback to measure program impact and design.

Section 4: Projected Allocation of ESSER Funding

The following does not provide an exhaustive list of either current initiatives, plans or actions to be taken by the district but is provided to serve as a reference. On-going data collection is paramount in determining the appropriate “next steps” needed to close instructional learning gaps and continuance in providing an environment that is safe and conducive to learning.

- Additional social-emotional / mental health staffing (NECCO)
- Additional district health professional(s)
- Continue efforts to build and develop district technology infrastructure
- Provided up to date and relevant curriculum materials (ie., textbooks)
- Employ additional support personnel in the areas(s) of Math and English Language Arts
- Employ additional school counselor at IES campus
- Employ additional personnel to support Gifted and Talented students
- Continue efforts to increase HVAC efficiency
- Explore options to increase capacity of existing structures