

Return to Learn Plan Including Alternatives

Leadership

Leadership team- Supt., principals, buildings and grounds director, nurse(Kim), TLC leadership from across district(Kristi, Melinda, Ethan, Kym), curriculum directors, board member, spec ed rep(Ethan), counselor (Matt)

Meetings took place on Monday, June 1 and Wednesday, June 3. Presented to the board of education on the 15th of June.

Currently established communication channels will be used along with those established for school closure from March 17- now.

The PK-12 teaching staff will be receiving Formative Assessment instruction from the CRAEA school improvement consultant. TLC will be the main source of support of PD - formative assessment and online instruction.

Continuous evaluation of the Return to Learn plan will be completed by the district leadership team and may lead to realignment of resources and supports.

All families should have access to the internet and a device to use in case we go back to online learning.

Each classroom should have a device to livestream their classes and also one for the teacher to do their work.

Communication as needed using avenues already established including, but not limited to, Hancock County Emergency Management and Iowa Department of Public Health.

Infrastructure

Use technology in place and bolster as needed. Additional staff computer, external microphones

If a special education student stays home/online, due to being in a required learning environment, all SDI work, progress monitoring and goal work would continue per the terms of the IEP. IEPs may need modification in certain circumstances based on what is available to the student at home. This would equally be applied to students in other special populations (i.e. ELL, 504, TAG, etc.)

Students staying home, for COVID-19 reasons, can utilize curbside lunch pick-up similar to the "summer" program we did during the closure. The exception being that meals would be charged as if the student were on campus

In early August, K -6 summer school will be offered in the areas of literacy and math to address learning loss during the school closure. While we were using the voluntary model, due to our high participation rates, we are providing students in 7 - 12 the opportunity to address learning gaps to still receive credit when they return in the fall.

No calendar changes other than we will adjust the early out schedule for staff professional development this year. TLC will organize voluntary professional development options to be held in early August, to help teachers refresh, train, and prepare for teaching in a required educational COVID-19 environment.

If the state allows, we would explore and most likely implement continuous learning for days in which the school would be closed for reasons that are weather, health, public safety, etc. related.

The school board will stay informed, and involved in the decision making process.

Prior to any online learning situations we will address attendance and etiquette protocols for all students and staff to participate in a fair and equitable environment. This will most likely include both synchronous and asynchronous opportunities.

Professional learning supports for various digital tools in an online environment were provided during the spring closure. All staff were expected to finish the teaching online course prior to June 30th. Opportunities for new staff to complete that course or other similar courses will be found through the AEA. TLC will provide ongoing support and professional learning for online instruction. With a very successful run this spring we think we are well situated to go back and forth between online and face to face instruction.

Face to face instruction will take place with as many mitigations that are possible within our district to still be able to provide a good education in a safe environment. The same would go for transportation of students to and from school/ events.

Health and Safety

Staff and students- Facemasks will be encouraged if the CDC is still doing so. They will be available for purchase for those that do not have their own. Facemasks and other PPE will be added to the optional section of the school supply list. If these become required and mandatory items by the state and or public health then we will revisit this area and provide necessary equipment as needed.

Limit visitors. Parents/ caregivers will not be allowed in the building to pick up or drop off students. If entry is necessary, screening will be required before entry.

Student screening before entry by parents and also by school. We have purchased thermal thermometers. Staff will be screened upon entry and will be encouraged to use one entry point into the building.

Transportation- At home screening should be done before students are sent to school or enter school transportation. No cross town shuttles will run in fall and spring. Buses will be disinfected before the am/pm route time of use.

Continue to get guidance from state and public health.

The building and grounds director ensures supply of disinfected spray, wipes (or spray bottles and towels) for each room. Staff and students will be responsible for main cleaning of surfaces in classrooms. Custodial staff will follow up regular routine and additional steps. Full attention will be paid to high

touch surfaces such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, water fountains, etc.

All steps will be taken to comply with social distance limits within all areas of school operations to the best of our ability. Students and staff will not be allowed to give hugs, etc.

Routines may have to be altered to minimize class to class exposure.

- May have to reduce numbers in buses which would lead to the possibility of A and B days.
- A designated isolation room will be established in each building. It should be close to the nurse's office.
- Possibility of eating lunch in the classroom or using both cafeterias to spread out.
- Increased opportunities for hand washing will be provided.

Staff- We will use normal sick leave procedures. If you are sick, stay home.

If staff have Covid we will follow state guidelines for leave and getting staff back to work. Same for students. We will want to minimize staff and student absences while keeping everyone else healthy and safe.

If a staff member or student would need to be quarantined, we would make arrangements for them to work and learn from home as their condition allows.

If an individual is in a high risk category we will do what is required to do for employment or required learning.

Iowa Academics Standards:

Consecutive grade level meetings were held allowing teachers to share what standards and benchmarks were not instructed during the continuous learning time from March 17 to May 22. In the upper grades electives and non-sequential courses become a bigger part of the curriculum and the crossover between courses is not as high. Therefore not as worrisome for those staff members.

It is our belief that teachers and staff will do what they do every year. They receive their students and as they teach they will assess where students are at. They will figure out how much students have lost and retained during the school closure and adjust instruction accordingly.

To maximize instructional time we will reduce the number of 2 hour early outs this year.

Teachers will work on identifying essential standards, with TLC support, during the school year to address any future closures. Elimination of some or all of educational opportunities that do not meet any required standard and benchmark may be necessary to close the gap this year.

TLC leadership will be the main resource for teachers to get help on how to narrow the scope of their classes. It will be imperative that screening, data collection and analysis is a focus of each teacher and building to track progress of all students. The TLC coaches will have to spend more time in this area rather than coaching strategies, technology, etc.

It may be necessary for teachers to be able to operate face to face and online simultaneously. We will consider how that will look in each classroom and if it is possible with current infrastructure and technology.

We have many avenues of communication set up from email, phone, alert system, Facebook, newspaper, radio, etc set up to continue to have good two way communication. All information will be complete and timely to all stakeholders about our plan for returning this fall. Any health concerns and information for the public will be addressed and decimated by our school nurse. Any issues and concerns with academic and learning needs will be communicated and addressed by the building principals.

We will stay on our original calendar with the exception of adjusting our 2 hour early out schedule for staff PD. If it becomes evident by the last midterm of the first semester we need more time, we will lengthen student hours at the end of first semester and add hours to the second if needed.

We will continue to take advantage of professional development through the AEA and state whether it be face to face or virtual. The focus will be online instruction, health and welfare and all other initiatives ongoing in the district.

All teachers will undergo Formative Assessment training through the AEA this school year for professional development. This will ideally provide a structure and support for staff to better assess the impact of standard acquisition, student learning, and effectiveness of instruction while using quality data to make proper instruction decisions that will impact student achievement in a positive way.

We will follow the mandates of the state for summative assessments. Analysis of this data will direct our instruction for the 2021-2022 year.

Our staff and students are familiar with certain online learning platforms which include but not limited to SeeSaw and Google Classroom. Due to this familiarity both staff and students are already aware of how to access instruction, and submit assignments. For staff and students who are new to the district, and any others needing a refresher, we will provide training and instruction in how to access online content.

Social-Emotional-Behavior Health:

As we always do we will use our staff, counselors, parents, community, religious leaders, student groups, and social workers to do our best to make sure our students and staff have the basic needs such as clothing, food, shelter, mental well-being, access to a nurse, and a safe environment. We may rely heavier on AEA and state resources if student needs rise. Further efforts will be made to follow up on students already identified as At-Risk and any potential situations that may put students in any At-Risk category, especially in the event that online learning continues. We will devote time at our back to school in service for social emotional learning in an online environment.

Equity:

Families were surveyed to determine availability to internet access and barriers to online instruction. Based on information received though that survey, we ensured that all families had online access and devices to learn online during the spring school closure.

We will work with current state guidelines to meet the learning and working needs of those families impacted by Covid and chronic conditions.

We will target as we always do those with special needs, at-risk and language barriers. If supplemental supports are needed, they will be implemented in a timely manner. Because we have developed multiple channels of communication for the delivery of instruction the providing of any new or additional distance learning should be as successful as it was this spring.

While we have ensured that all stakeholders have internet access we realize there may still be special situations in which that alone is not conducive to continuing educational opportunities. Individuals that need paper resources will be given the opportunity to receive and return those as needed.

If a special education student stays home/online, due to being in a required learning environment, all SDI work, progress monitoring and goal work would continue per the terms of the IEP. IEPs may need modification in certain circumstances based on what is available to the student at home. This would equally be applied to students in other special populations (i.e. ELL, 504, TAG, etc.)

We will use our translator to make any adjustments to communications needs. Our alert system has the ability to translate also. This can be done through a phone call, email, text and social media.

Teachers may have to be more open to late in the evening communications from parents and students.

Data Considerations:

Continuous evaluation of the Return to Learn plan will be completed by the district leadership team and may lead to realignment of resources and supports.

Return to Learn Plan Update #1

We wanted to keep you updated on where we are at with plans to reopen on August 24th.

We believe education is an essential part of children's' development and there is no better way to educate them than through a traditional school setting. This is why our full intent is to have students back here on August 24th.

We will continue to use established communication channels to keep you informed.

Continuous evaluation of the situation may lead to changes over time. We will always base our decisions on Hancock County Emergency Management, Department of Education, the Governor, and Iowa Department of Public Health guidelines.

We have eliminated half of the professional development early out days in order to gain more instruction time this year. We have also canceled parent/teacher conferences at the beginning of the school year.

All families should have access to the internet and a device to use in case we go back to online learning. We will reissue hotspots and devices to those families needing them should we go back to online learning or if an individual has a need to learn from home. Each classroom will be prepared to livestream their classroom to those who may not be able to attend school. Prior to any online learning situations we will address attendance and etiquette protocols for all students and staff to participate in a fair and equitable environment.

Face to face instruction will take place with as many mitigations possible within our district to still be able to provide a good education in a safe environment. The same would go for transportation of students to and from school/ events. Staff and students are encouraged to wear facemasks/shields should they fill the need. We will provide throw away masks for those that request them.

We will limit visitors to only those deemed essential to education during the school day.

Initially parents/ caregivers will not be allowed in the building to pick up or drop off students. If entry is necessary, screening will be required. Student screening by parents each day before entering a school vehicle or building is highly encouraged. Initially, no cross town shuttles will run in the fall. Buses will be disinfected before the am/pm routes and any other time of use.

If staff get infected with COVID we will follow state guidelines for leave and getting staff back to work. The same will apply to students. We will want to minimize staff and student absences while keeping everyone else healthy and safe. If a staff member or student would need to be quarantined, we would make arrangements for them to work and learn from home as the situation allows. If a staff member is in a high risk category we will do what is required to do for employment or required learning. A doctor's note will be required stating staff and students are not allowed to attend work or class. If students do not attend school we will follow our current policy which states, "If you do not attend a full day of school you are not allowed to participate in extra/co-curricular school activities."

Students staying home, for COVID-19 reasons, can utilize curbside lunch pick-up similar to the "summer" program we did during the closure. The exception being that meals would be charged as if the student were on campus.

Both athletic associations are planning on allowing schools to have fall sports. More details will be sent out by the AD concerning mitigations and other items that may look different this fall.

Look for more information to follow as we get updates and specific plans for building operations are finalized. More detailed information from building principals, the AD, teachers and activity supervisors will be delivered as we get closer to school starting.

Return to Learn Update #2

As we approach the start of school we wanted to remind you that it is always your option to transport your own children to and from school. We will continue to provide transportation, but if you feel that our mitigations are not enough to protect your child(ren) then please feel free to transport them yourself. Stacey Goepel is making plans with building administration and drivers to mitigate as much as we can while still running buses each day. Some changes in busing practices include but are not limited to: families sitting together, filling the bus from front to back, limit bus hopping, sanitizing buses before each use, and making buses grade specific when possible.

Return to learn Update #3

This morning the school board met in special session to make changes to the Return to Learn plan. These changes were put in place in response to Iowa Department of Health and the Governor's announcement on Tuesday.

This is all being done to protect your children and to decrease the chances of students having to quarantine, which in turn makes them miss school and school activities. I have attached the document explaining these change from the state.

Starting Monday, October 5th until further notice these are the changes.

1. Middle School and High School students, staff and anyone else entering the building(we are still limiting entry across the district as of this time during the school day) will have to wear a mask when social distancing rules(6 feet for 15 minutes) cannot be met,
2. At this time these rules do not apply for the Elementary School but he school board is still highly recommending the use of masks. We will still be taking all the precautions and mitigations we have been thus far this year.
3. All students and staff will have to also wear a mask when using school transportation and while in the hallway.
4. All people, while attending any school event, whether inside or outside, if they cannot meet the 6 feet for 15 minute rule will have to wear a mask.,

Please take time to explain the rules the best you can to your children and we will do the same. Thank you for understanding and we hope that you're staying safe and healthy.

Return to learn Update #4

COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Infected people have had a wide range of symptoms reported – from mild symptoms to severe illness.

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

Fever or chills

Cough

Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Fatigue

Muscle or body aches

Headache

New loss of taste or smell

Sore throat

Congestion or runny nose

Nausea or vomiting

Diarrhea

Look for emergency warning signs for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately:

Trouble breathing

Persistent pain or pressure in the chest

New confusion

Inability to wake or stay awake

Bluish lips or face

Return to learn Update #5

The district continues to look at mitigations. Yesterday the board of education decided to have the 3rd and 4th grade wear masks for the time being. Please continue to be diligent in checking for COVID symptoms (keep students home if in doubt) and wearing masks around each other if you cannot socially distance. This will help keep the spread away from school and each other.

Return to learn Update #6

We continue to be vigilant when it comes to assessing the situation with COVID and cleaning our schools. The leadership of the district takes this issue very seriously. We are doing what we believe is best for our students, staff, and community at this point, not only considering public health but the students' education and well-being.

In the last 11 weeks of school we have had 15 students and 3 staff members who tested positive for the Coronavirus. We have quarantined hundreds of kids with very, very few ever turning into a positive case. Our positivity rate therefore only equates to about 2.5% of our population of students and staff. Across the county the 14 day positivity rate has spiked up to around 20% in the last week with it leveling out there in the last few days. Only 2 % of children in the county ages 0-14 have tested positive and 0% have become critically ill. The numbers are similar in the 15-18 range. Parents are also doing a very good job of watching for COVID symptoms and keeping kids away from school if warranted. By continuing to hold in person schooling we know for at least 7+ hours a day we have students and staff practicing and reinforcing positive mitigation efforts like mask wearing. We are doing our best to provide an environment with as many mitigations as our facilities allow.

We will continue to watch all of these rates. We will also take into consideration other factors to include, but not limited to; availability of day care, parents that work outside of the home, student absentee rates, staff absences, public health recommendations, state and local government regulations and guidelines, and consultation with other districts in the area and across the state.

Return to learn Update #7

The board agreed last night to extend the thanksgiving break and extra day. We will not have school on the 30th. This day was created in order to have a longer period of time for all of us to be apart to possibly help slow the spread. Hopefully this will help the staff get a chance to breathe(no pun intended). It has been a long road and we do appreciate the extra work that everyone has done to make our system continues to operate.

I would encourage all staff to do whatever you can to stay healthy. We have been pretty fortunate so far to have minimal student and staff positive cases. The one area I believe that is not being pushed enough during this situation is how important it is to be healthy. Make sure you are exercising and

eating right. Consult with your doctor on whether or not you might need some supplements such as vitamins. As you know the largest percentage of people who have had a hard time with this virus are older and unhealthy. Please do what you can to protect yourself in this way. Exercise, of course, is always a good way to relieve some of the extra stress.

Return to learn Update #8

The clinic will be coming to us for vaccines. There is no need to call and schedule as the email suggested yesterday. I will let you know as soon as I know when they will be coming. They will vaccinate those that work one on one with students all the time (teachers, paras) first. Then we will most likely go by age (older to younger) and likelihood of increased contact with students and other adults.

1. Teachers, paras, other support staff working with students
2. Principals, bus drivers, current coaches, secretaries
3. Cooks, custodians, subs in all areas
4. Everyone else (out of season coaches, business office, etc)

The Board of Education voted last night to add back in some early out dates that were eliminated earlier this year. February 3, March 3, and April 7 will now be 2 hour early out dates. Thank you for understanding.

Return to learn Update #9

The county positivity rate is down to 4% the last couple of days and the 7 day average is even lower. The state Covid cases are very low also. Our school numbers have been very low for a while now. Considering all of these things we will not be requiring mask for 3 year old preschool through 1st grade for students. Staff will still be required to wear them. You are still encouraged to have your child wear a mask if you so choose. We will continue to provide masks. If the numbers continue to stay low consistently and we do not see any issues at school we will move to higher grade levels; possibly through 6th grade. If we start to see issues we will put the masks back on our kids. We love the fact that the students have been here every day this year and that we can continue to educate them through classroom and after school activities.

Return to learn Update #10

The county positivity rate is down to 1%. The state Covid cases remain very low and continue to drop. Our school numbers also continue to be very low. For those reasons we will not be requiring masks for 3 year old preschool through 4th grade for students while in school. Students will have to wear masks while on school transportation however. Staff will still be required to wear masks even though they have all had the opportunity to be vaccinated. You are encouraged to have your child wear a mask if you so choose. We will continue to provide masks for free. If we start to see any issue we will put the masks back on our students.

Return to learn Update #11

Public health will be at West Hancock on March 12th to administer the 2nd round of the Covid vaccine. The time frame will be the same, starting at the Kanawha building at 12:30pm then they will travel to the Britt building and begin around 1:30pm.

Return to learn Update #12

There will be an opportunity for those who either missed the first dose, or were not able to receive the first dose in February to receive their first dose that day. Please let me know if you plan to receive a first dose on March 12th. I will have paperwork for you to fill out prior to receiving your first dose.

Return to learn Update #13

The county positivity rate continues to hover around 1-2% and the state Covid cases remain very low. Our school's positive cases and quarantines have been non-existent for a while now. For those reasons we will not be requiring masks for students in 3 year old preschool through 12th grade.. Staff in the elementary and middle school buildings may remove their mask when they can ensure they can meet the 6 feet for 15 minute rule. All other staff will still be required to wear masks until further notice.

We will continue to enforce the following mitigations in the district:

1. Limit outside adult visitors during the day and if they are allowed then they must be masked
2. Use water bottles instead of water fountains
3. Extra sanitation efforts by students, staff, and custodians
4. Socially distance staff and students when possible
5. Push good hygiene practices
6. Alternative classroom settings and schedules
7. Staff and students are encouraged to wear a mask during the school day if they so choose. We will continue to provide masks for free.
8. Masking at school evening events is mandatory if you can't socially distance 6 ft. for 15 minutes
9. Continue to work through the vaccination process with staff. March 12th all staff will have had a chance to be fully vaccinated.
10. other minor mitigations

Return to learn Update #14

The Covid positivity rates continue to remain very low. Masks for students in 3 year old preschool through 12th grade are optional during the school day. Masks are optional for all staff when they can ensure they can meet the 6 feet for 15 minute rule during the school day.

We will also continue to enforce the following mitigations in the district:

1. Limit outside adult visitors during the day and if they are allowed then they must be masked
2. Use water bottles instead of water fountains
3. Do extra sanitation efforts by students, staff, and custodians
4. Socially distance staff and students when reasonable
5. Push good hygiene practices
6. Use alternative classroom settings and schedules when reasonable
7. Staff and students are encouraged to wear a mask during the school day if they so choose. We will continue to provide masks for free.
8. Masking at school indoor events when adults are attending is mandatory if you can't socially distance 6 ft. for 15 minutes
9. other minor mitigations

Return to learn Update #15

Unfortunately I have to be the bearer of bad news. We have had a couple of cases pop up in the high school tonight. Masks are now required at the high school during the school day(unless outside) for both students and staff until further notice. Mask will also be required for everyone at any indoor event if you cant socially distance until further notice. Masks will also be required for all students (Preschool- 12th grade) and staff on school transportation. Unfortunately it would be too difficult for us to manage masking or non-masking for those that have or have not been vaccinated or have the COVID antibodies.

We have free masks available at the school but students are encouraged to bring their own if they have them.

Please make sure you are keeping your student(s) home if they are showing symptoms that are related to COVID. Allergy symptoms have been the most common I have heard about lately. We will also continue to enforce the following mitigations in the district:

1. Limit outside adult visitors during the school day, and if they are allowed then they must be masked.
2. Use water bottles instead of water fountains
3. Extra sanitation efforts by students, staff, and custodians
4. Socially distance staff and students when reasonable
5. Push good hygiene practices
6. Use alternative classroom settings and schedules when reasonable
7. other minor mitigations

21-22 School Year Update

West Hancock will continue the following mitigations as move into the beginning of the 21-22 school year:

1. Extra sanitation efforts by students, staff, and custodians
2. Socially distance staff and students when reasonable
3. Push good hygiene practices
4. Use alternative classroom settings and schedules when reasonable
5. Follow current state and local guidelines for contact tracing and quarantining
6. Continue diligent screening of students for COVID symptoms(we ask parents to do the same)
7. Encourage adults and students(ages 12-18) to consult with your doctor about vaccines
8. other minor mitigations