

Return to Learn

Union Community School District



December 10, 2020

****Highlights indicate change in plan**

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July 21, 2020

On Sunday, March 15, 2020 Governor Kim Reynolds recommended an emergency closure to the Iowa School System. As a school system and community we shifted our focus to providing and supporting student learning in a new way. Students in grades PK-8 remained in a continuous learning model while students in grades 9-11 transitioned to required on-line learning to finish the school year. I am very appreciative of the patience and resolve our school and communities have shown throughout its closure.

This is not the ending that anyone planned for the 2019-2020 school year, but it is the ending that we were given. What this closure has given us is time to reflect, recalibrate and build a plan to safely Return to Learn and Return to School. Several committees have worked many hours developing a framework to support our students, staff, and families. The committees have been working with guidance from the Iowa Department of Education and Central Rivers Area Education Agency.

The intent and purpose of this template is to provide draft guidance for all of our stakeholders as we move forward. It is important that we understand, this is the guidance as of today (June 30, 2020) and is subject to change. We will continue to utilize the Iowa Department of Education, Central Rivers Area Education Agency and county public health departments for further guidance as it becomes available. I fully anticipate this document to remain fluid as we continue to learn more about the corona virus and prevention strategies and methods.

Regardless of how our learning may take place the Union Community School District remains committed to our students, staff, and families. We have had one hundred staff members participating in a course based in on-line learning, a food service staff continuing to provide meals for students, and maintenance staff preparing buildings for our students and staff.

While it is our full intent to have students and staff return to our buildings this fall, we must be prepared to adjust and support a new experience in learning. We do not have the perfect solutions to many of the potential issues we will face, we will face them together and we will be a better school system and better communities because of these challenges.

Sincerely,

Travis J. Fleshner
Superintendent
Union Community School District

Introduction

The purpose of the Union Community Schools Return to Learn Plan outlined in this document is to maximize in-person learning opportunities in the event that school cannot resume at full capacity due to COVID-19. Our intent is to provide in-person learning to the greatest extent possible, while also taking steps to keep our students, staff, and community safe and adhering to any applicable public health orders.

This draft plan is based on available public health information at the time of its creation. The plan will be adjusted based on newly available data and guidance from national, state, and local public health officials. We greatly appreciate your support of our collaborative efforts to ensure the education and health of the entire school district and our communities.

The Return to Learn Plan is based on the following public health assumptions (subject to change):

****Note that any changes that the Governor or Public Health Agency makes in regards to health guidance or school opening guidance will be followed. These changes will not always be reflected specifically in this plan.**

Union Community School District Plan

Education - Learning Models

Union CSD plans to allow any students the ability to complete all coursework from home by creating simultaneous in-person and online options. Methods of this work are described below.

In-Person Learning

All districts and accredited nonpublic schools may also choose to move to on-site provision of educational services as part of their Return-to-Learn Plan, as long as it is deemed safe by public health officials and the school has actively planned for appropriate health and safety measures (Iowa Department of Education, May 2020). While it has been our preferred model to go back to a regular school day, we need to recognize the public health needs of our students, staff, and district. **Thus, beginning August 24, 2020, Union CSD will be changing our regular schedule to a 2:15 dismissal for each school day through the end of December. We will re-evaluate this schedule as the fall progresses.**

If the district decides to have a two hour late start due to weather conditions, the district will follow a two hour late start schedule with a regular dismissal time.

Hybrid Learning

All districts and accredited nonpublic schools may choose to offer educational services through a hybrid model of continuous learning and on-site learning for at least some portion of the 2020-21 school year (Iowa Department of Education, May 2020). We are anticipating a blended approach of face-to-face instructional and asynchronous and/or synchronous online learning to take place during the school year. Our hybrid approach will take the elements listed under continuous learning (learning management systems: Google Classroom and Canvas) and blend them with face-to-face real time instruction. Understanding that we cannot fully replicate the classroom experience, we are planning to video record

classroom instruction and discussions and post them to the appropriate classroom learning management system. Should a student be absent or a building need to be closed, students will have the opportunity to participate during normal/regular school hours with their classroom teachers, but should a student be unable to participate during the school day for whatever reasons, they will have the opportunity to observe the video(s) of the instruction and maintain their learning and stay as involved and current as possible with their school work. Please note that the use of a hybrid model may also become necessary should public health conditions require further social distancing and/or classroom size requirements. We will be abiding by guidelines established by the State Public Health Department, Black Hawk County Public Health Department, and the Department of Education.

Beginning November 2, 2020, families and students will only have an online only option if they have medical reasoning. Students must have forms on file with the school beginning November 2, 2020 or they will be counted as unexcused absences. Students and parents who choose the medical reasoning must complete this [form](#).

Continuous Learning

All districts and accredited nonpublic schools must have a plan for offering continuous Learning and requiring the participation of students as schools reopen for the 2020-21 school year (Iowa Department of Education, May 2020). This learning plan will be implemented should the school district or a building within the school district be unable to open on August 24, 2020 or need to be closed for COVID-19. It is the intent of this model that we will transition as seamlessly as possible from traditional face-to-face instruction to on-line learning. It is important to note that if we are forced to move on-line all instruction and learning is required. At the time of this posting, Union CSD will be utilizing Google Classroom for PK-5 students and Canvas for 6-12 throughout the school year, by utilizing these learning management systems will allow for a more centralized location of resources for students, parents, and teachers. The leadership team made the decision to implement these tools based on research by the leadership team and feedback from students, parents, and staff requesting a consolidation or centralized platform for school materials. All students have or will be issued a chromebook to access their materials. As conditions may change, we request that parents contact the school district office at 319-342-2674 if your Internet access or connectivity changes during a closure.

Decision Process for Online Learning Decision

On Thursday, July 30, 2020, the Iowa Department of Education released the following [guidance](#) to consider if the district were to move to a complete online learning environment. The district will make this decision based on close consultation with the Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa Department of Public Health.

Iowa Academic Standards

All students will be progressed to the next grade level. Teachers will be focused on using an accelerated focus of learning that will use current grade level standards and build upon them by using previous grade level standards to ensure that all students meet their current grade level standards. Teachers will be utilizing local testing data to assist in decision making, and intervention times will be used to make up for learning that was missed during our closure.

Online Teaching and Learning Considerations

Elementary

Teachers will be utilizing Google Classroom for the 2020-2021 school year. All staff will have a Google Classroom that can be used simultaneously while in the classroom and out of the classroom as needed.

Instructional time frames may vary depending on the closure of buildings, classroom needs and outside considerations.

Middle School and High School

Teachers will be utilizing Canvas as the Learning Management System for the 2020-2021 school year. All teachers will utilize Canvas for all classes and they will be used simultaneously while in the classroom and out of the classroom as needed. Students will be required to complete the work in the classroom as if they were in the classroom. Lectures will be videotaped, if necessary, and posted to Canvas for student use.

Communication Overview

All district staff will primarily use Canvas and Google Classroom to communicate classroom materials to parents and students. Teachers may use email for reminders or other information that may be useful for parent and student consideration. All district staff should respond to email communication within 24 hours of receipt. We want you to be aware, though, that the major source of classroom information will be communicated through Canvas and Google Classroom.

Teachers will primarily use Google Meet as our video conferencing service. The district will also continue to provide updates through JMC, email, and social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook.

Student Services

Students who qualify for specific student services such as special education and/or 504 plans will continue to receive services in building or online if the situation mandates. Students and families will meet with the teachers in charge of those programs to continue those services as appropriate. Individual meetings may be scheduled to best communicate those expectations.

Health and Safety

Union CSD intends to follow the [guidelines](#) as presented by the Department of Education and the Iowa Department of Public Health.

Face coverings that cover the mouth and nose will be required for all PK-12 (including 4 year old preschool) students and staff on buses, hallway passing time, commons and in classrooms where social distancing is difficult to maintain. Face covering breaks will be given each class period. Some classes might be able to make covering exceptions, as directed by the teacher, if students are participating in non-verbal work such as reading or assessments. Union CSD recognizes that student abilities and tolerances for wearing a face covering will differ by age and thus, expectations may differ at the elementary level. Students with medical exceptions will be required to have documentation.

In addition, students entering and exiting the building will not be required to have their temperature checked. Union CSD encourages parents to check their children’s temperature prior to coming to school in the morning. If a student has any symptoms related to COVID-19, they should remain home. Online learning should be utilized when home.

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	

Face coverings and face shields will be provided to staff members who need them. Staff are required to wear a face covering when social distancing is difficult to maintain.

Symptomatic Students and/or Adults

Any student or adult who becomes ill will be isolated at much as possible in the nurses station in each building. The area where the student or adult was present will be cleaned and disinfected in the same manner that has been our practice as in previous years as quickly as practically possible. We will call the parent or guardian and have them come pick the student up from school and encourage them to call their primary care physician for advice on how to best proceed.

On Thursday, July 30, 2020, the Iowa Department of Education released the following [guidance](#) in regards to exclusion from school due to COVID-19. Students who self report any one of the high risk symptoms including new cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, or new loss of taste or smell will be excluded from school for 10 days unless the student receives a negative COVID-19 test verified by the school. At that point, a student may return to school after 24 hours of being fever free and symptoms are improving.

Students who self report two of the low risk symptoms including fever, headache, muscle and body aches, fatigue, sore throat, running nose, congestion, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea will be excluded from school for 10 days unless the student receives a negative COVID-19 test verified by the school. At that point, a student may return to school after 24 hours of being fever free and symptoms are improving.

Note: Students and adults that present symptoms may very well be ill with a host of common ailments. Parents and community members should not expect notification each and every time a student becomes sick at school (except, of course, the parent of the child who is sick). Those communications will be reserved for confirmation of positive cases of COVID-19 in our school buildings.

Exclusion from School

Students and staff who are ill from COVID-19 or who have been identified as close contacts to a COVID-19 case will be excluded from school **unless the students are wearing masks. Students wearing masks will be notified they are a close contact but are not required to quarantine.** As stated in the July 30, 2020 guidance from the Iowa Department of Education, close contacts are defined as individuals who have been within 6 ft for more than 15 minutes with a positive COVID-19 case during the infectious period. Union CSD staff who have been identified through contact tracing may be considered critical personnel and may be required to return to work if there are staffing shortages as long as the staff member remains asymptomatic. If symptoms occur, staff will be asked to isolate immediately.

Those who test positive for COVID-19 or otherwise decline testing should self-isolate at home until 10 days have passed since their symptoms, they have been fever free for three days (without the use of fever reducing medicine) and all other symptoms have improved.

Those who test positive for COVID-19 and are asymptomatic should self-isolate at home until at least 10 days have passed since they were tested and have had no symptoms since the day of testing.

Those who test negative and are not a close contact to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 should self-isolate at home until 24 hours after the symptoms resolve.

Those who test negative or are otherwise a close contact to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 should self-isolate at home until 14 days after their last contact with the person who tested positive.

Students and staff who are a close contact to a person who tested positive for COVID-19 will be notified by building administration or school nurses. If proper mask guidance is being followed they will not be required to self-isolate at home until 14 days after their last contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19.

Anyone who is being tested for COVID-19 should self-isolate at home while awaiting test results.

Anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 by serology should not be excluded unless they meet one of the categories above.

Communication of Communicable Disease Protocol

On most days, our district will have students who are absent from school due to illness. That stated, not every student who is ill from school will ultimately be diagnosed with COVID-19. In addition, we will have to rely on the public health department and individual families to communicate with the district if a positive case has been diagnosed within our school.

We will have to balance the privacy of students along with the healthy and safety of all our students and staff members in our district. Only when a positive case of COVID-19 has been confirmed through the Black Hawk, Tama, or Benton County Public Health Department (or a parent otherwise informs us) will we

notify the school community of the case, while **not identifying the individual**. This communication will come from individual school building principals and will include steps the building is taking with regard to additional mitigation efforts and contact tracing as appropriate. Please note that a single case of COVID-19 **may not** result in building closure. Building closing decisions will be made in conjunction with the local public health department.

Cleaning of Buildings and Transportation

Union CSD will continue to clean all buildings and transportation using cleaning equipment and supplies that specifically address the concerns regarding COVID-19. Extra attention will be given to high touch areas. Maintenance staff will have more specific guidelines and protocols for cleaning facilities and transportation.

Food Service

Further information and guidance will be forthcoming regarding breakfast and lunch in individual buildings.

Transportation

Transportation guidelines will be updated pending the release of further guidance from the state. Union CSD will continue to consider the recommendations as set forth in the [summer sports transportation guidance](#).

District Leadership Team		
Name	Email	Title
Travis Fleshner	t_fleshner@union.k12.ia.us	Superintendent
Jason Toenges	j_toenges@union.k12.ia.us	High School Principal
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Jim Cayton	j_cayton@union.k12.ia.us	DG Elementary Principal
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Additional Resources Consulted

[Iowa Department of Education Return-to-Learn Support](#)

[Iowa Department of Education COVID-19 Guidance and Information](#)

[Return-to-Learn Support Structure](#)

[Reopening Guidance for Schools](#)

[Reopening Guidance for Schools: Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[COVID-19 Reopening Guidance: Summer Learning and Activities](#)

[COVID-19 Reopening Guidance: Summer Sports](#)

[COVID-19 Guidance: Summer Sports Transportation](#)

[Restarting School: Planning for Acceleration in the 2020-2021 School Year](#)

[Black Hawk County School Reopening Guidelines](#)

[Proclamation of Disaster Emergency signed 07/17](#)

[Senate File 2310: Guidance for Schools](#)

[Senate File 2310 and Governor's Proclamation Frequently Asked Questions](#)