



WALTHALL
COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Teachers teaching. Students learning. Schools improving.

2022-2023

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



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

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Table of Contents

Contents

District Mission	5
District Vision	5
Purpose of the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and.....	5
Educational Beliefs	6
Disclaimers/Provisions	7
Academic Programming.....	8
Instructional Delivery.....	8
Traditional:	9
Contingency Planning	10
Mastery of Carnegie Units	10
Attendance / Policies.....	10
Operations	10
Facilities	10
General Operations.....	11
Transportation	12
Child Nutrition	13
Meals for On-Campus Students.....	13
School Year Start/End Dates.....	14
Health and Safety	14
Health and Safety Committee	14
General Safety Precautions/Protocols.....	14
Screening.....	16
Confirmed Cases	17
Safety in Extracurricular Activities.....	18
Family and Community Support.....	19
Academic Support.....	19
Technology Support	19
Technology/Learning Management Systems	19
Communications.....	20

Contact and Communication Strategies 20
Appendix A 21

District Mission

Teachers teaching. Students learning. Schools improving.

District Vision

Create a productive school culture for change that increases teacher effectiveness, improves student proficiency, and builds public confidence.

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

The past year been trying times for ALL of us. One might argue that one thing is certain, we ARE ALL in the same boat, in other words, we are in this together. However, one might also reword that to say that we ARE all in a boat (not the same one), still in this situation together, *just* in different boats. We WILL come through this together, but the reality is that the trip is not the same experience for everyone. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope.”

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) provided a document to districts titled *Considerations for Reopening Mississippi Schools*. In that document, three options were described: the traditional school model, a hybrid school model, and a virtual/online learning model. In the *Restart Learning Plan* we published in 2020, Walthall County School District leaders recognized that the path(s) taken through this experience of pandemic- the choices made for ourselves and families, the sacrifices, the triumphs, and disappointments- in all aspects of our lives, and not just so in education, must not keep us from that infinite hope that Dr. King talked about.

In Walthall County Schools, we have certain educational beliefs- things that we have faith are true, and that if we believe in the good times, we must also hold to in the hard times. We have a vision of where we are going and our mission is what we do every day to get there. What is **most** important for us to do every day is for *teachers to be teaching* and *students to be learning*. Of course, we recognize that in these times, we must continue to go about our mission in a manner that puts health and safety at the forefront.

The purpose of this *Safe Return* document is to present the instructional model(s) recommended for district adoption and to describe the academic programming those models implicate. Additionally, this document will address district/school operations, health and safety, family and community supports, and communications. The decision making involved in developing this *Safe Return* plan is grounded in our vision, our mission, and our beliefs. It acknowledges that students, staff, parents, and families ARE potentially in different “boats,” and that we all must accept short-term disappointments while keeping faith that we expect WILL happen. Faith IS the substance of things hoped for. We remain #WCSDSTRONG.

Educational Beliefs

- Education is our first priority and provides a foundation for life-long learning, critical and analytical thinking, problem solving, decision-making and respect for the individual.
- Literacy is essential to personal empowerment and civic responsibility.
- All students are capable of learning and benefit from a challenging curriculum with high standards and expectations.
- Children learn in different ways, and Walthall County School District has a responsibility to help all students maximize their potential.
- Effective teaching requires thorough content knowledge and pedagogical skills, careful planning, creativity, and implementation, with reflection.
- Classroom discipline and management are integral parts of instructional practice.
- Intellectual, social, physical and emotional development is essential to a student's education.
- Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are important components of effective education.
- Cross curriculum integration is an important component of effective education.
- Parents are crucial partners in children's learning.
- Culture and community conditions influence children's learning.

Disclaimers/Provisions

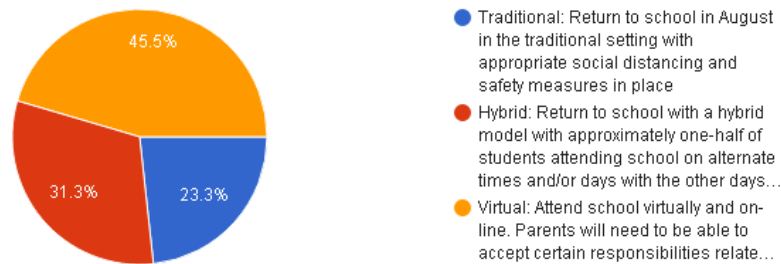
Walthall County School District leaders and Board Members recognize that decreases in the impacts of pandemic conditions have allowed state and federal public health officials to ease restrictions and minimize impacts on regular activities. Walthall County School District continues to follow the guidance of these public health entities. In the event of a return to pandemic conditions, parents, families, and the community are asked to understand that the situation may necessitate a return to precautionary measures. Should such be required, please recall:

- School districts across the country face the challenge of implementing plans that are, understandably, not ideal for everyone. Every family situation is unique, and district officials are committed to providing the best educational experience possible for students under the current circumstances.
- Social distancing will continue to be a challenge in many situations with the traditional school model. School districts have a limited number of buses, limited square footage in classrooms, and many other efficiency-related obstacles. Social distancing, according to CDC guidance for schools, will be maintained to the greatest extent possible, and strategies will be implemented by school officials based on the feasibility of the unique space at each school and in each classroom.
- Everyone must be prepared for intermittent closures. Parents must have plans that can be activated immediately if there is a school closure or if their children are not able to attend school because of a quarantine situation. Parents are urged to be prepared to change plans within 24 hours if needed, and it is critical that parents have updated email addresses and phone numbers on file with their child's school.
- This is a “living” plan, with aspects of it subject to change as we continue into this school year. We thank you for patience and understanding during these times.

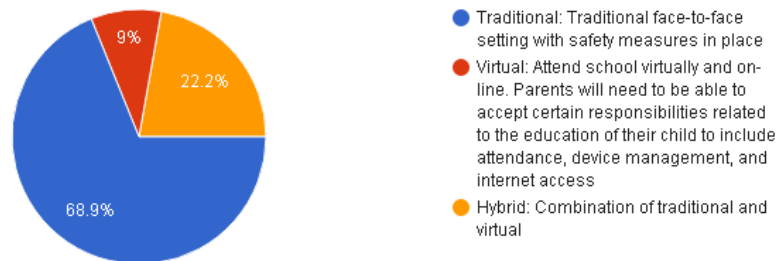
Academic Programming

Instructional Delivery

We saw evidence from stakeholder input, including that gathered from those who participated in our *Reopening Schools (2020)* survey, that a large number of parents were uncomfortable with their students returning to school even if state-level health and public health officials consider it safe to allow them to return in person, in the Fall of 2020. Cleaning/disinfecting of facilities and social distancing of students and/or staff rank highest amongst the respondents' concerns, followed closely by the potential impact on learning and/or falling behind academically. However, recent public input shows that the majority of parents believe that face-to-face learning is best for their children, with the most concern focused on students' academics and falling behind their peer group. In our recent *Return to Learning Survey*, twice as many parents indicate the highest degree of likelihood that they WILL enroll their children in our schools this fall- a strong indication of confidence of the previous school year (44% vs. 84%.)



Reopening Schools Survey (2020)



Return to Learning Survey (2021)

In response to the needs of students, parents, and families, the Walthall County School District developed the comprehensive *Restart Learning Plan* for the 2020- 2021 school year. This plan contained guidelines for parents and school officials, and it is built within the framework of considerations issued by the Centers for Disease Control, the Mississippi State Department of Health, and the Mississippi Department of Education. In

Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan (6.7.22)

preparing this document, the district leadership team utilized feedback and input received from parents, teachers, administrators, and community. Continuing along those same lines, the district revised that plan into this document, the *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services* plan.

Just as described in the previous plan, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) provided a document to districts titled *Considerations for Reopening Mississippi Schools*. In this document, three options were described: the traditional school model, a hybrid school model, and a virtual/online learning model. In this section, the adopted model(s) for our district will be described. Please understand that frequent changes could be made throughout the school year based on COVID-19 spread in our schools and community, and based on directions from the Governor's Office, the Mississippi State Department of Health, and the Mississippi Department of Education.

In the 2020-21 school year, WCSD provided a hybrid (4-day in-person week with 1 virtual/distance day) and a 100% completely virtual option. Continuing into 2021-22, survey response data shows that, although nearly 25% of parents prefer the hybrid option for schooling, nearly 40% do not have reliable internet for supporting online learning methods.



Return to Learning Survey (2021)

WCSD’s approved instructional delivery model for the 2022-23 school year will only include the following:

Traditional:

WCSD will return to learning for the 2022-23 school year, according to the previously-approved school calendar, on a traditional schedule. All students will receive a minimum of 330 minutes of instruction per day.

If and only if pandemic conditions return and instructional delivery modifications are directed by public health officials with either the Centers for Disease Control or the MS Department of Health, Walthall County School District will offer a virtual option utilizing the same guidance utilized in the 2021-22 Academic Year.

Contingency Planning

In the event that one or more schools in the district have to close due to an outbreak, WCSD will provide a combination of virtual/online instruction and paper packets/assignments for those who are unable to access virtual/online instruction.

In the event that one or more students in a school have to become quarantined due to contraction of COVID-19 or due to exposure (determined through nature of contact), WCSD will provide a combination of virtual/online instruction and distance/paper-packet assignments for those who are unable to access virtual/online instruction.

If an employee is required to be absent from work due to any district or public health policy, work from home may be authorized when recommended by the campus administrator and approved by a district level/central office administrator. Barring any federal or state mandates to the contrary, beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, all COVID related absences will be charged against employee's sick leave balance. This policy remains in place for the 2022-23 school year.

Mastery of Carnegie Units

WCSD teachers will ensure mastery of content for Carnegie-credit courses through each student's successful completion of curriculum-based assessment(s) at pre-determined intervals according to course/syllabus requirements

Attendance / Policies

Mississippi Code Ann. § 37-13-91 makes education for any child between the age of 6 and 17 compulsory, requires schools to report daily attendance, and requires referrals to other entities when attempts to secure enrollment and/or attendance of a compulsory-school-age child are unable to effect the enrollment and/or attendance.

Operations

Facilities

- All facilities will be cleaned before the return of students and staff, and buildings will receive a deep cleaning on a regular schedule.
- Every campus will have one maintenance employee that is devoted to cleaning frequently touched areas throughout the entire school day.

- Signage will be located throughout the building reminding students about social distancing and what to do if they are showing symptoms.
- Age-appropriate signage will be posted throughout the building with tips for proper hygiene and preventive measures.
- Custodians should ensure that all dispensers (soap and sanitizer) are properly filled.
- Teachers and staff members will also have cleaning and sanitation duties in their work areas.

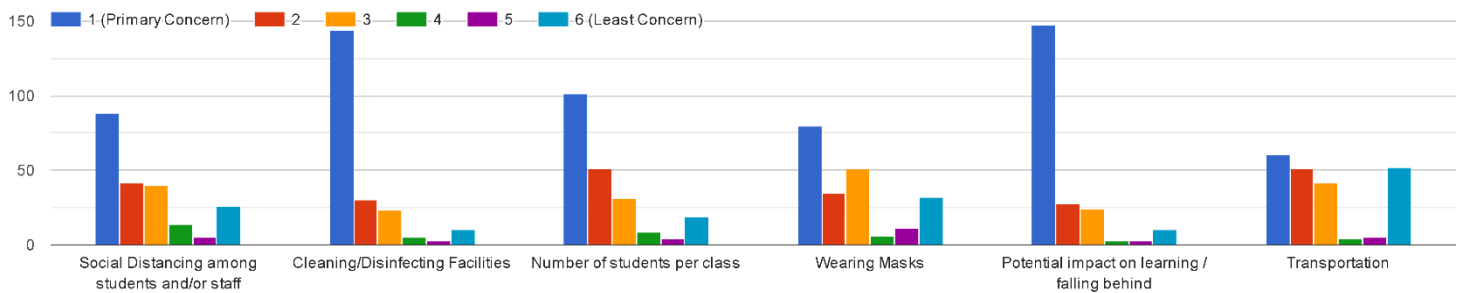
General Operations

To the greatest extent possible, activities on each campus will return to pre-COVID norms, should conditions require modifications, these changes may include:

- Morning arrival procedures and class changes may be altered on each campus to promote social distancing.
- Social distancing will be encouraged and expected in hallways.
- Direction of travel will be determined for hallways.
- Site principals will determine location(s) and provide for placement of distancing markers on floors in all hallways where applicable.
- Classroom changes and restroom breaks will be staggered to minimize exposure and maintain social distancing.
- Continuously train & encourage proper restroom etiquette and hand washing techniques.
- Site administrators and teachers will limit the number of students in a restroom at a time.
 - Social distancing markers used for sinks.
 - Soap and paper towels will be available for use.
 - Restrooms will be cleaned/sanitized multiple times a day.
- Social distancing will be encouraged on playground and in break areas
 - Break/Recess times will be staggered to minimize large gatherings.
 - Playground equipment will be cleaned/sanitized regularly (after each class use).
- School assemblies will take place virtually or outdoors with social distancing procedures as feasible.
- Students will hear frequent intercom announcements about fever, sickness, and good hygiene.
- The use of shared materials in class will be limited. Each student will have separate materials, pencils, crayons, etc.

- Excess classroom furniture, etc. will be eliminated to accommodate more classroom space.
- In elementary grades, teachers may rotate and students may stay in the same classroom all day when feasible.
- Group work and small groups will be limited in order to promote social distancing.
- Students should all face in the same direction in class when feasible. This is dependent upon classroom furniture, enrollment, and room size.
- Assigned seating is REQUIRED.

Please rank each of the following concerns about students safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services from MOST concern to LEAST concern.

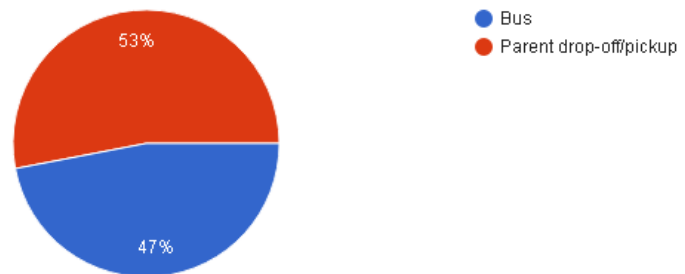


Return to Learning Survey (2021)

Transportation

To the greatest extent possible, activities on each bus will return to pre-COVID norms, should conditions require modifications, these changes may include:

- To minimize the number of students utilizing bus transportation, and to increase the ability to socially distance students during their bus ride, parents are encouraged to drop off and pick up their children from school.
- NO students are to be dropped off by parents before 7:30.
- Parents may not leave their child until the child’s temperature is taken by school personnel.
- If a student who is transported by a parent is found to have a fever, she/he will remain with the parent and not enter school.



- It is strongly recommended that parents provide masks for their children for bus transportation.
- Drivers will run morning and afternoon bus routes based upon the district schedule.
- Students will sanitize their hands when loading.
- Upon entering the bus, students will treat their hands with hand sanitizer.
- Students will have assigned seating designed to maximize distance between students.
- WCSD will take CDC guidelines into consideration and seat siblings together.
- Drivers will run routes with windows down whenever possible for better ventilation.
- During morning unloading, assigned personnel will utilize contactless infrared thermometers to take temperatures as they come onto campus.
- If a student who rides the bus is found to have a fever, she/he will be isolated.
- Buses will unload one at a time.
- Students will load from back to front and unload the one at a time, from front to back.
- Drivers will sanitize their bus at the end of each morning and afternoon route- sweeping the bus floor & spraying the bus with disinfectant from the rear of the bus to the front, spraying backs and fronts of seats.
- No changes allowed for bus transportation.
- WCSD Transportation Supervisor will train drivers on proper cleaning procedures and ensure daily cleaning and sanitation of buses.

Child Nutrition

To the greatest extent possible, food service on each campus will return to pre-COVID norms, meaning that all meals will be served in the cafeteria, should conditions require modifications, these changes may include:

Meals for On-Campus Students

When Meals are Served Outside the Cafeteria

- All student breakfasts will be “Grab and Go” meals with dining locations determined at each school site.
- All meals will be issued in covered plates or brown bags.
- The covered plates or bagged meals will be delivered on a mobile cart.
- There will be two (1-2) cafeteria staff members per delivery cart.
- The cafeteria staff will deliver meals to each classroom or designated location.
- Empty cart(s) will be left in the cafeteria for the other staff to clean/sanitize and refill in order be

ready to distribute when the delivery staff returns.

- There will be POS system or a checklist for each cafeteria worker that is serving meals to check the name of each student that receives a meal.
- Cafeteria staff will wash hands immediately after unpacking and storing deliveries.
- There will be a garbage cart in place at a neutral location for teachers and students to deposit their trash from breakfast and lunch.
- The custodian will transport the garbage cart to the dumpster to empty. The garbage cart will be sanitized daily.

School Year Start/End Dates

Start date for fall semester: 08/04/2022

End date for fall semester: 12/16/2022

Start date for spring semester: 01//03/2023

End date for spring semester: 05/25/2023

Health and Safety

Health and Safety Committee

WCSD will utilize a Health and Safety Committee to make recommendations and determinations as needed.

This committee includes the following personnel:

Tina Ginn – District/School Nurse

Lauren Bivens – CTE Allied Health Instructor

Joel Lofton – Director of Safety, Response & Compliance

Vanessa Boyd – Principal

Brad Morgan – General Education Teacher

Shannia Dozier – Special Education Teacher

Sydney Stogner Byrd – School Nurse

WCSD will follow general health and safety precautions recommended by local, state, and federal authorities to the fullest extent possible and will implement the following protocols for the 2022-23 school year.

General Safety Precautions/Protocols

- Parents and students are asked to immediately self-report to school personnel if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in their household.
- Teachers will decrease clutter and furniture in classrooms in order to provide more space for social

distancing.

- Students and/or employees who choose to continue wearing masks/facial coverings should make sure they do not contain any inappropriate graphics, slogans, themes, or colors symbolizing or associating with any unapproved group or organization (as determined by the principal.) School themed masks/facial coverings with monogrammed initials of individual names will be allowed (example: WCSD schools or college/universities).
- Students will be taught and reminded about proper handwashing and cough covering.
- Students and staff will wash hands frequently with required handwashing before and after breakfast and lunch AND before and after any snack periods/breaks.
- Students and staff are discouraged from sharing items that are not easily cleaned or disinfected.
- Students' personal belonging should remain separated, such as in personal backpacks/lockers/cubbies or other containers. No sharing lockers/cubbies.
- Students and employees will be encouraged to sanitize their backpacks and personal items at the beginning and end of the day.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles from home.
- Restroom schedules should be established by site administrators to ensure that only members of one class are in a restroom at any given time.
- Hand sanitation stations will be available in classroom/buildings.
- Door handles, light switches, stair railings, and other frequently touched surfaces will be disinfected frequently.

If and only if pandemic conditions return and general safety modifications are directed by public health officials with either the Centers for Disease Control or the MS Department of Health, Waltham County School District will return to the same guidance utilized in the 2021-22 Academic Year. This includes:

- Students and staff are encouraged to practice social distancing on all campuses, staying six feet apart whenever possible.
- Staff are not required to wear face masks/coverings, but they are strongly encouraged to wear them in situations where adequate social distancing is not possible.
- Because social distancing among children is challenging, it is strongly recommended that parents provide

masks for their children that are age-appropriate. Students are strongly encouraged to wear masks/facial coverings in certain situations, such as in common areas like hallways, buses, and in situations where social distancing is not possible. Students are NOT required to wear face masks at all times, but it is strongly encouraged to wear facial coverings (face mask) while at school. While masks are not required, masks could reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, and masks significantly reduce the possibility of a student being quarantined by the Mississippi State Department of Health because of close contact at school with a confirmed COVID-19 case.

- Parent visits to schools/classrooms will be restricted and visits may only occur in the school office or designated conference room(s).
- Only essential guest speakers will be allowed on campus (as determined by principals). This situation will be monitored throughout the school year.
- Only essential vendors will be allowed on campus (as determined by principals.) Essential vendors will be asked to complete a self-screening form. Essential vendors will be encouraged to wear masks.
- Assemblies and meetings will be held virtually as needs require.
- Site administrators should consider moving teachers from classroom to classroom throughout the school day when feasible instead of students from classroom to classroom to limit the number of people in the hallways.
- Site administrators should adjust schedules so that only one class is on a playground at a given time. Playgrounds may be divided into distinct areas, with only one class in an area of a playground at a time and sanitation between groups. Recess times should be limited to those classes which use recess to attain P.E. minutes. Teachers of each group will be responsible for maintaining sanitation of playground equipment as needed.
- Recommend that classes and employees create their own hand signals to replace shaking hands, hugging, or giving high-fives.

Screening

- Home is the first screening point on the continuum. It is requested that parents check for symptoms and check their child's temperature each morning before leaving for school. Families are encouraged to self-report symptoms of illness to school personnel.

- School nurse and/or teachers or designated personnel may conduct temperature checks and well-being checks as deemed necessary throughout the school day
- WCSD highly encourages ALL students, parents, teachers and staff to self-screen themselves daily.
- Symptoms that would exclude a child/teacher/staff member from attending school this list of symptoms may be changed based upon guidance from authorities including MDE, MSDH, CDC, etc.
 - Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater
 - Headache
 - Watery and/or red eyes and nose
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills
 - Repeated shaking with chills
 - Skin rash
 - Muscle pain
 - Sore throat
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Nausea and/or Vomiting and/or Diarrhea
- ANY student/teacher/staff member with fever will be logged, isolated, and safety precautions taken immediately.
- An isolation area will be designated for students exhibiting symptoms while they wait on their parents.
- A minimum of masks and gloves will be provided for the room monitor.
- Mental health support will be available for students on each campus.
- Face coverings will be required and worn by all adult visitors entering a school campus with each adults' temperature being taken before entering a building.
- Barring any federal or state mandates to the contrary, beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, all COVID related absences were charged against employee's sick leave balance and were counted as absences for students. This continues to be the rule.

Confirmed Cases

- In the event of a suspected or confirmed case, WCSD will follow Mississippi Department of Health

guidance regarding notification and sanitation. The Health and Safety Committee will review instances on a case-by-case basis to determine:

- Exclusion from campus / quarantining
 - Return to campus
- WCSD Health and Safety Committee will utilize the *Return to Work/School* form to document recommendation of approval or disapproval (See Appendix A.)
 - When a student has a confirmed case of COVID-19, he/she will isolate according to recommendations of the Mississippi State Department of Health. The student will be able to make-up any missed assignments during his/her time away from school or participate in virtual/online learning while isolated.
 - When a teacher or staff member has a confirmed case of COVID-19, he or she will isolate according to the recommendations of the MS Department of Health and quarantine for those potentially exposed will be determined by “nature of contact” as recommended by the Health and Safety Committee.
 - Confirmed cases will be reported by the school district to the Mississippi State Department of Health. After contact tracing, the Health Committee will follow Mississippi State Department of Health guidance to determine if any students and/or staff will be subject to a quarantine period as recommended by the MS Department of Health.
 - School officials will follow all directions given by the Mississippi State Department of Health regarding contact tracing and quarantining of staff and students that are deemed as "close contacts" by the Mississippi State Department of Health.
 - Deep cleaning/sanitation procedures will be implemented.

Safety in Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular/Cocurricular activities are governed by the MS High School Activities Association (MHSAA), and WCSD will follow guidance provided by MHSAA.

Closure of Campus/Transition to Online Learning

The decision to close one or more campuses will be based on the numbers of stakeholders in isolation and/or quarantine and the advice or direction of the MS Department of Health. Variants of COVID have demonstrated broad impacts, transmission rates and outcomes, making the identification of a specific student

count or percentage difficult. All information is considered, reviewed by numerous health officials and then actions implemented based on what is believed to be the best for all involved.

Family and Community Support

Academic Support

- The district will provide Active Student and Active Parent access to students and parents to monitor academic progress and attendance records.
- District teachers will communicate academic progress with parents/families via SchoolStatus.
- Interventionists are available to work with students identified as at risk.
- Special education teachers will work with students identified with special needs.
- Teachers will provide extension opportunities to enrich learning opportunities for students.
- Teachers may employ flexible grouping strategies, to include peer-tutoring, labs, etc.
- Teachers will provide differentiated instruction to meet student learning needs.
- Teachers will utilize effective high-quality curricula and students will have access to high-quality online curricula to supply and/or augment instruction.
- The district will screen ALL students with a universal screening instrument known to be effective and approved by the MS Dept of Education in order to identify individual learning needs.

Technology Support

Technology/Learning Management Systems

WCSD will equip teachers to provide virtual learning for students:

- WCSD will implement a digital learning management system (LMS) to conduct classroom instruction and manage assignments/assessments. Google Classroom will continue to be the LMS utilized in WCSD.
- District and school personnel will compile resources such as YouTube how-to videos to share with teachers, students, and parents regarding use of LMS
- Teachers will receive ongoing technology support/training through the district via an outside vendor (Synergetics.)

WCSD will ensure parents/families can meet the technical requirements for virtual/online learning:

- Parents will sign an assurance(s) document indicating that they can provide the appropriate required technological requirements and environment conducive to online learning.

Communications

District Point of Contact: **J. Bradley Brumfield**

Phone: **601-876-3401**

Dedicated email address: jbrumfield@wcsd.k12.ms.us

Contact and Communication Strategies

- Age-appropriate hygiene and COVID-19 signage should be posted throughout each school.
- Custodians and cleaning crew shall use checklists of completed cleaning and sanitation tasks for public viewing.
- Parent publications describing the health and safety efforts made by the school and district will be sent to parents and guardians of students to ensure they are aware of our efforts to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment.
- Publish completed re-entry plan on district website.
- Publish link to this plan on social media and local news outlets.
- Should there be an outbreak that necessitates immediate closure, the district will communicate with families through utilization of an automated all-call system that is integrated into our student package. Teachers will communicate with parents/families via SchoolStatus. Posts will also be to the superintendent's Facebook page.

COVID-19 Pandemic-Return to Work/School Checklist

Name: _____ School: _____ Date: _____

Are you an: (please circle one) Employee Student

In order to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19, we require that you respond to a number of questions prior to returning to work/school. For the safety of our staff, your child, and your family, please be truthful and candid in your answers.

1. Were you tested for COVID-19? yes no
 If yes, what date was the test given? _____ What was the result? _____

2. Have you been exposed to someone that has tested positive for COVID-19? yes no
 If yes, what date was exposure? _____

3. Are you currently having signs/symptoms? yes no
 If yes, what date did symptoms start? _____ List symptoms: _____

By signing below, you are stating that you have read and answered the above questions truthfully and to the best of your knowledge.

_____ Date: _____
 Signature of Employee/Parent Signature (if applicable)

_____ Date: _____
 Student's Name (if applicable)

<i>Office Use Only</i>	WCSD Health and Safety Committee Recommendation
Having met on _____ and discussed the return of _____ to school/work. WCSD Health and Safety committee recommends a return date of: _____, based on the information provided by the subject requesting to return, considered in light of the most current information available from the Centers for Disease Control and the MS Department of Health.	
Signed _____	Dated _____
Notes: _____	
Citations: <u>https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html</u>	

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