

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



School District of Shiocton

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ESSER I and II Background

ESSER I

On March 16, 2020, the School District of Shiocton staff said final in-person good-byes to 703 students in ECH - Grade 12 in keeping with Governor Evers' closure of physical attendance in the school building. With just one day's turnaround time, our district "opened" for virtual instruction on March 18, 2020 for all grades, all subjects, and all specific instructional needs (EX: special education, GT, EL, etc). Throughout the next three months, our bus drivers would deliver meals and curriculum materials, our paraprofessionals would provide support and accommodation via virtual and telephonic resources, and our educators would ZOOM into homes as they facilitated instruction and intervention.

Between breakfast and lunch, over 700 meals were provided on a daily basis to the children in our district, ages 1 - 18, from March 23 through June 5, 2020. Complimentary meals continued through the summer months for the children attending summer school and the Shiocton Child Care Center (SCCC). Our participation in the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) through the USDA continued throughout the entire 2020-2021 school year and remains in place today.

From March 18 - April 24, 2020, SCCC staff were provided high quality professional development in the Wisconsin Early Model Learning Standards (WMEELS) for 40 hours each week as we studied the content and planned for implementation, while also preparing our child care rooms for the return of the children and the inclusion of the recommended mitigating strategies. On Monday, April 27, 2020, SCCC reopened to provide care for the children of the essential workers within our district. Over the course of the next five (5) weeks, we gradually grew back to full capacity in time for summer break.

Despite the suddenness of the building closure and the uncertainty of the virus, the School District of Shiocton is proud to report that all staff members were provided full and meaningful employment during the spring of 2020.

ESSER I funds of just under \$52,000 were used to off-set the costs associated with employing bus drivers and our food service director during this time period.

ESSER II

In August of 2020, the District offered two weeks of summer school. This was in part a means to restart the learning process for our students, as much as to gently ease us back in to having staff and students in the building. This gradual return to in-person learning afforded us the opportunity to put mitigation strategies into place and test for their effectiveness. Many additional resources were purchased in order to provide a strong and consistent level of multiple strategies that served to diminish the likelihood of transmission and afford our students the opportunity to learn in-person.

Universal resources such as masks, hand sanitizer, and plexi-glass, were coupled with the purchase of student desks, the creation of individual work stations, and the addition of multiples sets of classroom tools in our continued efforts to decrease the likelihood of the virus' spread while maximizing the days of in-person learning. Walls were constructed, sound panels installed, and learning environments remodeled to allow for additional instructional space so that class sizes could be reduced and students could be seated six feet apart. New technology was purchased to facilitate digital instruction for students so that they could continue learning with classmates despite being out of the classroom on quarantine.

Additional staffing, including paraprofessionals and contracted substitute teachers, were hired to ensure that both adequate supervision and continuity of instruction were in place each day for our learners. These additional human resources proved to be an essential in our ability to successfully maintain in-person learning for 176 of 179 scheduled school days.

Despite the challenges presented by COVID, including students out of the classroom for weeks at a time, lack of partner collaboration opportunities, and fewer volunteers to aid in meeting student needs, our district staff, students, parents, and community pulled together. Through mutual support and willingness to adhere to stringent mitigation strategies, our district provided in-person instruction to *all student, all day, every day* for 176 of 179 scheduled school days.

ESSER II funds of \$186,468 were used to offset expenses related to contracted substitute teachers, additional paraprofessionals, EPSLA and EFMLEA coverage, additional school nurse time, and additional support staff (food service, custodians, coaches, etc.). Too, over \$60,000 was allocated to cover the cost of offering a virtual instructional program for all students, Gr K – 12, who were not able to or preferred not to participate in our in-person learning.

To date, ESSER II funds of \$147,530 have been used to offset expenses related to contracted substitute teachers, including related withholdings and benefits, through the 2022-2023 school year. Additionally, funds were used to offset the costs of ELA reading and intervention materials to meet the needs of our students with lagging reading levels. The remaining funds of approximately \$8,500 will be used to further offset expenses related to contracted substitute teachers; the use of ESSER II funds sunsets on 09/30/2023.

For the 2023-2024 school year, all ESSER II funds will be expensed (as of 9/30/23). The remaining ESSER III funds, approximately \$150,000, will be used to offset expenses related to the employment of a school psychologist, ELA Coordinator, and School Social Worker.

Maintaining Health and Safety

Overview

For the 2021-2022 school year, the School District of Shiocton will continue to implement mitigation strategies so as to maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other school staff. We will use the data collected from last years' experience during the COVID pandemic to aid us in managing the mitigation strategies, as well as the incorporation of additional actions that may need to be taken.

Maintaining Health and Safety

The School District of Shiocton also began the 2021-2022 school year with a five-day per week, face-to-face instructional model: "all students, all day, every day". We offered a fully virtual instructional program to families who preferred to educate their students at home due to continued health concerns related to the coronavirus.

In order to maintain the health and safety of staff and students, the District implemented various strategies and actions outlined in the 2021-2022 Return to School Plan. The Plan was approved by the Board of Education in July 2021 and was modified in response to the changing needs presented by students, adults, and the multiple COVID variants.

During the 2021-2022 school year, the District hosted a vaccination clinic for children ages 5 – 11 late this fall through a partnership with the Outagamie County Public Health. This was a vital resource we were pleased to be able to provide for our small, rural community. The District also continued to provide staff with information regarding vaccination sites for persons 12 years of age and older. Too, the District continued to host a testing site on campus, Monday through Friday. The testing site was available to students, staff, family, and community members who had a school connection or might otherwise have been on school campus. On average, the testing site administered 45 rapid antigen tests with a PCR backup each day. These efforts led to many more young children becoming fully vaccinated, as well as many positive cases, including several asymptomatic persons, being identified before spread could occur.

During the 2022-2023 school year, less measures were needed in order to maintain a healthy and safe learning environment related to the coronavirus. While hand sanitizer units continued to be accessible and communication with both state and county health professionals remained, the District remained mask free and ceased offering vaccination and testing clinics as these measures were no longer necessary.

During the 2023-2024 school year, the District will continue efforts to make the learning environment healthy and safe by way of offering hand sanitizer units and communicating with county and state health professionals.

Modes of Instruction, Services

The School District of Shiocton provided in-person instruction to all student, all day, every day for 176 of the 179 scheduled student contact days in the 2020-2021 school year. This was no small accomplishment given the nuances of and challenges posed by the pandemic, as well as the shifting viewpoints that may or may not have supported our efforts to maintain a healthy and safe learning environment for all staff and students.

For the 2021-2022 school year, the District also provided in-person learning for all students, every day, five days a week according to the Board adopted 2021-2022 District Calendar. The District also provided families the option to enroll their students in a fully virtual instructional program.

The District was prepared to offer digital instruction for all students, PK – 12, in the event that COVID or a subvariant required a partial or full school closure. The District also continued to provide free breakfast and free lunch to all students under the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) as approved by the USDA. March - June, 2020.

During the 2022-2023 school year, the District maintained the necessary devices and services needed should a school closure be needed. To maintain our readiness, we continued to practice our Digital Learning processes with staff and students. Thankfully, the District did not experience any concerns related to COVID or subvariant strains that necessitated the used of Digital Learning on a large scale. When the USDA sunset the SSO free meal program, our District resumed charging for breakfast and lunch meals as had been our practice prior to the COVID shutdown.

During the 2023-2024 school year, the District will maintain the resources needed to be prepared for the use of Digital Learning.

Mitigation Strategies

2020-2021 School Year:

The District will incorporate the following mitigation strategies and implement related actions so as to maintain learning environments that are healthy and safe for all students and staff:

Communicating symptoms; Staying Home: We will share the COVID-19 common symptoms list with parents, caregivers, staff, and students through our monthly newsletter, weekly parent letters, and individual conversations.

- All will be asked to monitor their health, check for symptoms daily, and stay home from school if displaying symptoms.
- Further, those with symptoms are asked to contact the school nurse to discuss the health concerns and determine if a COVID test is appropriate.
- Testing will be provided and all family members, caregivers, and others who have been or will be in contact with the staff or student will be welcome to test.

Testing: We will partner with the Department of Public Instruction to provide on-site COVID-19 testing for all students, staff, and related family members and caregivers at least three days per week.

- Both a rapid antigen and a PCR test will be administered. The rapid antigen test will provide results within 15 minutes. The PCR test will be taken in situations where confirmation is needed; the results will be provided within 24 hours.

- On the days during which the contracted testing representatives are unavailable, the District will provide the same testing services.
- So as to minimize the risk of cross-contamination and unnecessary exposure, as well as to maintain privacy, the District will provide a separate location, on-campus and close to the main school building, for such testing but with its own access point.

Contact Tracing: The District will continue contact tracing efforts.

- Students and staff will be notified when they are considered to be close contacts. Said notification will include instructions on who to contact and next steps, such as testing at the school's testing site.
- To provide transparent reporting for our school community, notifications will be provided (a) specifically to those persons known to be close contacts and (b) generally to the families of students who were in the classroom or on a team with a known positive case but who may not have been specifically identified during contact tracing efforts to be a close contact.

Vaccination: In Spring 2021, the District co-hosted a vaccination clinic for all staff members interested in receiving the two-dose Moderna vaccine. In November and December of this year, the District co-hosted a vaccination clinic for children ages 5 – 11.

- Staff were also provided paid time in the event that the side effects of the vaccination precluded them from performing their work the next day.
- Staff members new to the district this school year were provided information on accessing the vaccine through local healthcare partners and the Outagamie County Public Health Department.
- Access to the vaccination for children ages 5 – 11 was provided on November 17 and December 8 for the two-shot Pfizer vaccine.
- The District shared information with adults of the community via newsletters and parent letters regarding the National Guard's vaccination clinic held just two blocks away at the local fire hall on Wednesdays from 2:30 – 5:30PM, as well as the clinic held just six miles down the road from 9:00AM – 12noon on Wednesday. The District also prominently posted notices regarding the vaccination clinics on entrance doors, on bulletin boards, and in staff lounges.

Face Coverings: The District will use data from our summer school experience and encourage all staff and students to wear face coverings while indoors.

- All students and staff riding on school-sponsored vehicles will adhere to the CDC Order requiring face coverings to be worn while on public transportation.
- Volunteers and speakers will be limited again this year. Only those persons who have an integral tie to instructional lessons and learning activities will be afforded the opportunity to be in classrooms and other learning areas. All visitors will be asked to wear face coverings.

Facilities and General Operations: As a whole, staff and students will continue to implement hand washing, hand sanitizing, and assigned seating. Staff will be provided with sanitation solution and rags to maintain clean surfaces in their classroom throughout the day.

- The District will maintain the additional custodial staffing that affords the daily the sanitation of school-wide shared objects and high touch surfaces, as well as the refilling of sanitizing stations posted throughout the building and in large learning environments (EX: cafeteria, library, etc.).
- Custodial staff will continue to use electrostatic sprayers on tables, chairs, desks, seats, and the like each evening; bus drivers will use the sprayers after the completion on each route, run, or trip.
- Modifications and remodeling of classrooms and larger learning environments will take place to more effectively support student instruction.
 - Additional cafeteria tables will be purchased so as to provide more table space and seating options.
 - Acoustical sound panels will be installed in a former computer room that was remodeled into a larger music classroom to provide increased space for vocalists to observe social distancing
- An audit of the heating and air conditioning system was conducted in Fall 2020. The HVAC system was determined to meet current expectations and standards to sufficiently address concerns regarding the spread of COVID.

Coordination, Communication with Public and State Health, Medical Providers: Working in tandem with other school districts in the Fox Valley area, the District Administrator and School Nurse engaged in ongoing discourse with local and state professionals in an effort to stay abreast of developing research, recommendations, and rules. The information learned was used to guide decision making and best course of action.

- The District Administrator met weekly with public health officials from Calumet, Winnebago, and Outagamie Counties. Data updates regarding level of transmission, positive cases, hospitalizations, and deaths, as well as vaccination updates and trend line analyses were discussed at these meetings.
- The District Administrator and School Nurse attending monthly state-wide meetings sponsored by the Department of Public Instruction and Department of Health Services. Professionals such as Dr. Westerguard, Louise Wilson, and Traci DeSalvo shared updated information and research, as well as revised guidance.
- Weekly and bi-weekly meetings with our specific county public health professionals were also attended by the district administrator and school nurse.
- The District Administrator also attended statewide meetings held by CESA 5, CESA 6, and WASDA that provided additional insight into the administrative aspects of working through the pandemic including EPSLA, EFMLEA, CDC requirements, and the like.

2021-2022 School Year: The District maintained the above strategies to a large extent.

2022-2023 School Year: The District continued to monitor the health of staff, students, and others in the building. However, due to lack of need, the District discontinued the other strategies.

2023-2024 School Year: The District will continue to monitor the health of staff, students, and others in the building.

Continuity of Services

Overview

The School District of Shiocton will continue to provide for the continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs, as well as the social, emotional, and mental health of student and staff.

2020-2021 School Year:

Nutrition. We will continue to participate in the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) through USDA. This program provides all students enrolled in the school district *and* in our on-site child care center (SCCC) a complimentary breakfast and lunch each school day. This year, we were able to expand the participate to include even the infants as young as 6-weeks of age.

Wellness. We will continue to promote staff health and wellness by working collaboratively with our on-site Wellness Club and our offsite EAP provider. Our on-site efforts include: healthy treats and meals throughout the months; complimentary membership to the Shiocton Fitness Center; district-sponsored fitness classes (twice weekly); provide work time, wellness time, and personal time during PD days.

Through our Employee Assistance Program, we are offering staff the continued opportunity to meet with therapists and mental health specialists. Each employee receives six (6) complimentary visits. The out-of-pocket costs for follow-up sessions related to these visits are run through our district's HRA fund so as to minimize expenses to the employee and maximize the likelihood that the staff member will continue to participate.

Pet Therapy. This past November, we were able to launch a pet therapy program for select students who have experienced significant ACEs (adverse childhood experiences) due to COVID or for whom COVID has exacerbated the effects being experienced from previous ACEs. The offering has been well received and is producing strong benefits to the students who are currently participating. As a result, we look to expand this program after the Christmas and New Year holiday break.

Conscious Discipline: The District began training all educators and support personnel this past August in Conscious Discipline (CD). Designed to inform and train educators on how to proactively and positively meet the growing social and emotional needs of students, the Conscious Discipline program, while very much in its infancy, has already resulted in significant shifts in our ability to engineer classrooms, set up routines, and manage our own interactions with struggling students.

Expanded Learning Time (ELT): Teachers are working directly with students during ELT at the middle and high school levels to ensure students in need of academic assistance are receiving targeted support. ELT runs for one period in the middle of the day for middle school students and during the final period of the day for high school students.

After-school Tutoring (AST): Two Spanish speaking educators and two other classroom teachers work collaboratively to offer a 45-minute after-school tutoring session for all students, Grades K – 12. One of our bilingual educators leads ELAST (English learners afterschool tutoring) program, which is specifically designed to address learning loss and academic gaps for our English learners in Grades K and 1.

Summer School & New Comers: The District continued its rich tradition of a summer school program in June 2021 to address learning loss and academic gaps created or exacerbated by COVID-19. Both in-person and on-line opportunities were provided, as were enrichment, enhancement, and exploration courses. Next summer, our program is set to grow to a full four (4) weeks and will include a ‘new comers’ program. This program will provide experiences for English learners so as to build their background knowledge and provide the foundation for language and learning prior to the start of their kindergarten and first grade years.

Complimentary breakfast and lunch will continue to be provided to the extent possible through the USDA’s Seamless Summer Option (SSO) program.

2021-2022 School Year: The District continued services as described related to nutrition and wellness. Pet therapy remained an effective strategy for which the demand exceeded the availability of service. Too, the District continued our efforts to implement Conscious Discipline, offering AST, and utilizing ELT to meet students’ needs. Summer school participation remained strong and afforded many students access to education and nutrition for an additional month.

2022-2023 School Year: The District continued to offer all services described above with the exception of the nutrition program given that the USDA sunset the funding for SSO as of June 30, 2022. Additionally, the District added all-day 4K to assist the youngest learners consistent instruction for a greater portion of the school year. Too, the District invested in a Behavioral Interventionist to assist school leaders and educators in meeting the growing needs displayed by students.

2023-2024 School Year: The District will continue the strategies implemented in the 2022-2023 school year, including the four-day 4K and employment of a behavioral interventionist. In addition to these many services, the District will add a full time School Social Worker to further address the growing needs of students and families, including the coordination of wrap-around services.

Periodic Review

Overview

The School District of Shiocton will organize periodic reviews of the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan. The reviews will take place at least once per quarter and will be conducted by school administration in consultation with school nurse, county and state health representatives, and members of the public. Where and as appropriate, revisions to the Plan will be drafted by stakeholder representatives, vetted and approved by the Board of Education, and communicated out to parents, caregivers, and other members of our larger community.

Public Input

Overview

As required by the ARP Act, the School District of Shiocton will continue to seek public comment on the Plan and develop the plan after consideration of said public input. The District will make our Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan available to the public online in a format that is understandable and uniform. To the extent practicable, the Plan will be written in a language that parents can understand; translations and/or an alternative format will be available upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability or where English is a second language.

Once approved by the Board of Education, the Plan will be posted to our District Home website where other resources such as our earlier Return to School plans, as well as our ESSER III budget are posted. The Plan will be accessible at <https://www.shiocton.k12.wi.us/district/>. Further, the plan will be sent to families and staff members via Skylert and email; the weekly parent letter will also contain a web link to the Plan, as well as notification when the Plan is updated.

NOTE: The School District of Shiocton provides this Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan in English but will make the plan available in other languages or accessible formats upon request.