



# RETURN TO LEARN

## *PLAN DRAFT*

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*Norwalk Community School District*  
*2020 - 2021*

*Growing Learners and Leaders*

***CLICK HERE*** to  
Provide Feedback

**LAST UPDATED: July 19, 2020**

**NOTE:** Recommendations within  
this plan are fluid and  
subject to change.

## Foreword

I want to thank the students, parents, staff members, and community members who helped our district successfully navigate through the end of the 2019-2020 school year. None of us knew at the start of the year that we would not be able to resume school after spring break and that we would be a fully online school district by April 6. It cannot be understated how little time Norwalk CSD teachers and administrators had to go from working in a face-to-face learning environment to a virtual learning environment. The caring attitudes, kindness, and professionalism of the Norwalk CSD staff were all on full display during the COVID-19 school closures and I am humbled to work with so many amazing educators. Our staff truly embraced the tenants of the [Norwalk CSD Continuous Learning Plan Focus](#).

Now our district and communities face a new challenge, the unknown status of how schools will reopen for the 2020-2021 school year. I do not have all of the answers or solutions to the problems our country, state, communities, and school district are facing. As the leader making many critical decisions for the district, I will need the help from a broad-based coalition of students, staff members, parents, community members, and local leaders in order to make sure our students receive the education they so richly deserve within the parameters set by the federal government, Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), Iowa Department of Education (DE), Governor Reynolds, and Warren County Health Services (WCHS). You can learn more about the “Return to Learn (RTL)” guidance from the DE by visiting the DE’s COVID-19 website located at: <https://sites.google.com/iowa.gov/returntolearn/home>.

In this plan you will find information that articulates how the district will be implementing different strategies to ensure the safety of students, staff members, and visitors to district facilities while providing a world class learning environment for students. The DE has asked each public school in the state to prepare for three learning scenarios as part of the [DE’s RTL plan](#): Required Continuous Learning, Hybrid Learning Plan, and On-Site Delivery Plan. “Required Continuous Learning ensures that academic work is equivalent in effort and rigor to typical classroom work. All students are required to participate, attendance is taken, work is graded, and credit is granted. Typically, instruction is provided through some type of online learning. Hybrid Learning Plan, this model is a combination of Required Continuous Learning and On-Site Learning Delivery. The methods may be combined by offering some student groups services on-site at different times or choosing which student groups get each delivery method by matching need. On-Site Delivery Plan, this model provides educational services onsite in traditional brick and mortar settings.”

District administrators, teachers, counselors, nurses, nutrition staff, technology staff, buildings and grounds staff, human resources staff, activities department staff, and transportation staff are all working together to create workable solutions to the complex problems this pandemic has presented and we will all need your help. That help may come in the form of reviewing documents like this, or transporting your child to school instead of requesting bus transportation; it may mean continuing to provide assistance to your student(s) at home if the district needs to implement a Required Continuous Learning or Hybrid Learning Plan, or it may mean wearing a mask or keeping your student(s) home if they are displaying symptoms. We will get through this extraordinary time and we will get through it sooner if we all cooperate and make principled decisions in order to defeat this virus and get back to an On-Site Delivery Plan.

Yours in service,



D.T. Magee  
Superintendent, Norwalk CSD

## Norwalk CSD

### INTRODUCTION

On March 16, 2020, the Norwalk CSD (NCSD) closed all school buildings for in-person learning due to Governor Reynolds' order to close Iowa public schools because of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the remainder of the second semester, students, families, and NCSD staff members engaged in Voluntary Educational Enrichment Opportunities (VEEO). While our preferred model of instruction is an in-person educational environment, the NCSD anticipates continued public health restrictions when school resumes in the fall. The overarching goals of the NCSD Return to Learn Plan are to: 1. Keep everyone safe - assume that the goal of social distancing measures in schools is to mitigate the spread of the virus — and avoid any “super spreader” events — not to reduce to zero the risk of transmission; 2. Remediate student learning deficits and move student learning forward; 3. Ensure that every student who meets current health guidelines and desires to attend school in-person daily can do so; 4. Maintain fiscal discipline. We understand that some families may prefer an online learning environment for their student(s), that a COVID-19 surge may require NCSD to revert to an online learning format for temporary periods, or that having all students who desire to attend school in-person daily may not be feasible.

This Return to Learn Draft Plan is based on public health information and state guidance available at the time of its creation. The plan will be adjusted as needed based on newly available data and guidance from public health officials, Governor Reynolds, and the DE. We greatly appreciate feedback to support our collaborative efforts to ensure the education and health of the entire NCSD community.

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

- Public Health:
  - All persons are expected to follow current personal hygiene protocols, especially hand-washing and hand-sanitizing protocols
  - Staff face coverings are required
  - Student face coverings are optional, but recommended (students may be required to wear masks on buses and during passing periods)
  - All people on school grounds are expected to maintain 6 feet of social distancing whenever possible
  - Symptom screening expectations
  - Group gathering limitations
  - Short-term school closures will be required for suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases
  - Additional cleaning protocols will be required
- Educating Students (options the district is considering with a final decision in August):
  - **Return as Normal (On-Site) with Modifications** typical learning options will be available for all students
  - **Return with Blended (Hybrid) Model** a mixture of in-person and remote learning options will be available for all students
    - In the event Governor Reynolds, the IDPH, DE and /or Warren County Health Services provide a mandate to reduce the group size or increase social distancing, the Norwalk CSD will reduce the number of students in each classroom. A reduction in class size will require students to attend fewer days per week for in-person instruction. The district will employ an alternating day hybrid model where one group of students attends school on “Purple Cohort” days and one group of students attends school on “Gold Cohort” days. District staff members will make every effort to assign students in the same household to the same cohort. Students with special needs (IEPS, 504 plans, ELL, and at-risk students, may continue to attend daily)
  - **Required Remote (Continuous) Learning** virtual learning options will be available for all students

The Return to Learn Model consists of seven sections:

1. [Leadership](#)
2. [Infrastructure](#)
3. [Health & Safety](#)
4. [Iowa Academic Standards/Instruction](#)
5. [Social-Emotional-Behavioral Health \(SEBH\)](#)
6. [Equity](#)
7. [Data Considerations](#)
8. [Building Implementation Plans](#)
9. [Additional References & Resources](#)

## 1. Leadership

### OVERVIEW

District leadership is always critical in creating and supporting the vision and smooth operations across schools. This is especially true during times of district-wide or state-wide emergencies, such as the current COVID-19 crisis. The NCSD has established a District Leadership Team (DLT). The purpose of the DLT is to implement and support educational plans and allocate resources across buildings in order to improve student learning. In the current circumstances, this team will also focus on developing, implementing, monitoring, and supporting the Return-to-Learn (RTL) Plan as it directly impacts all learning across the district.

The Norwalk CSD has identified a comprehensive set of teams who will lead the district's RTL work:

- **Executive Cabinet**
  - D.T. Magee, Superintendent
  - Dawn Schiro, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning
  - Kate Baldwin, Executive Director of Administrative Services
  - Eric Neessen, Director of Student Services
  - Tim Geyer, Director of Technology
  - Alison Cornwell, Director of Human Resources
- **Building Principals**
  - Amy Gage, Oviatt Elementary
  - Sheila Taylor, Orchard Hills Elementary
  - Jill Anderson, Lakewood Elementary
  - Beth Ward, Norwalk Middle School
  - Jody Ratigan, Eastview 8th/9th Grade
  - Chris Basinger, Norwalk High School
- **Administrative Team Members**
  - Richard Sleeth, Director of Buildings and Grounds
  - Carlos Guerra, Director of Transportation
  - Dee Serres, Director of Nutrition
  - Al Lammers, Activities Director
  - Zach Lipovac, Assistant Activities Director
  - Tom Scallon, Lead Student Advocate
  - Tiffany Redman, Communications Coordinator
- **Parent Advisory Committee**
  - Jen Sigrist
  - Kim Foltz
  - Dr. Patricia Newland
  - Dr. James Bice

- Ann Garvey
- Sarah Reisetter
- Kerrie Liedtke
- Jennifer Doerfler
- Dan Doerfler
- Nat Tagtow
- Dr. Stephanie Oppel
- **Building Implementation Teams**
  - Oviatt Elementary
    - Amy Gage, Principal
    - Nicole Banegas, Assistant Principal (beginning August 2020)
    - Sara Cross, Serendipity Preschool
    - Renee Hodge, Instructional Coach
    - Michelle Tomkins, Instructional Coach
    - Emily Gerlich, Kindergarten Teacher
    - Haley Morris, 1st Grade Teacher
    - Laurie Plowman, Special Education Teacher
    - Abby Schmailzl, Reading Teacher
    - Janna Brown, Specials Teacher
    - Kendall Verwers, Nurse (beginning August 2020)
    - Sonya Chittenden, Counselor
  - Orchard Hills Elementary
    - Sheila Taylor, Principal
    - Rodney Martinez, Assistant Principal
    - Kara Greenlee, Nurse
    - Kathie Phillips, Instructional Coach
    - Heather Scott, 2nd Grade Teacher
    - Janet Weber, 3rd Grade Teacher
    - MaryAnne Kessler, Reading Teacher
    - Dyann Vilez, Teacher Librarian (Specials Teacher)
    - Kyle Ford, Special Education Teacher
  - Lakewood Elementary
    - Jill Anderson, Principal
    - Chris Larson, Assistant Principal
    - Shawna Neifert, Nurse
    - Pam Nichols, Instructional Coach
    - Matt Ramthun, 5th Grade Teacher, Building Leadership Team (BLT)
    - Jill Martin, 4th Grade Teacher, BLT
    - Jordan Schmitt, 3rd Grade Teacher, BLT
    - Carol Wheeler, Special Education Teacher, BLT
    - Taylor Schmitt, 4th Grade Teacher, Ad Hoc Member
    - Joni Rench, Labor Relations Representative
  - Norwalk Middle School
    - Beth Ward, Principal
    - Chad Wiedmann, Student Advocate
    - Laura Johnson, Nurse, Building Assistance Team (BAT) Member
    - Deanne Berg, Instructional Coach
    - Kirsten Britt, Instructional Coach
    - Jeff Grabe, PE Teacher, BAT Member

- Brandi Wendt, Reading Interventionist, Ad Hoc Member, Building Improvement Team
- Eastview 8th/9th Grade
  - Jody Ratigan, Principal
  - CJ Degen, Student Advocate (beginning August 2020)
  - Sarah Adams, Counselor
  - Kerri Levi, Instructional Coach
  - Kelli Harris, Math Lead Teacher
  - Laura Johnson, Nurse
  - Renee McCombs, Special Education Lead Teacher
  - Emma Maudsley, Lighthouse Facilitator
  - Chris McMahon, At-Risk Teacher
- Norwalk High School
  - Chris Basinger, Principal
  - Tom Scallon, Lead Student Advocate
  - Marla Frantum, Student Advocate
  - Sara Kratzer, Instructional Coach
  - Bailey Bishop, Lighthouse Facilitator
  - Nick Menke, K-12 Music Lead Teacher
  - Sarah Hunt, Science Teacher
  - Steve Wermerskirchen, Math Teacher

## Communications

### OVERVIEW

The NCSD Communications Coordinator aims to inform, engage, and inspire all stakeholders and the community, no matter the environment. Whether functioning in a traditional school model, implementing remote learning or a blended (hybrid) plan, the district's Communications Coordinator will continue to keep NCSD employees, its families and students, and the extended NCSD community informed about the work of the district. Regardless of learning model, the Communications Coordinator relays critical and necessary information for all audiences, supports crisis situations, fortifies the district's brand, leads community relations and family engagement, responds to the media, and directs many other "business as usual" communications strategies.

Considering the changing dynamics of the 2020-21 school year and the district's intention to potentially deliver alternative learning modes simultaneously, we anticipate an increased complexity in our communications efforts. These complexities will also be triggered by potential fluctuations in status of schools (open or closed in response to virus outbreaks), changing health advisories, operational or systemic modifications, increased needs to generate additional resources, national or local government actions, and multi-layered crisis situations. To succeed we must remain agile, flexible, creative, and responsive. The NCSD anticipates the need to deploy unique communications tactics to cater to multiple audiences and fluctuating conditions simultaneously. If schools open with significant modifications to schedules, classes, or logistics, smooth transitions will require clear and consistent communication. Functional differences created by supporting two learning models simultaneously include, but are not limited to:

- In the blended (hybrid) model, delivery of relevant information to in-person students, families, and staff, as well as those remaining in the remote environment.
- Remote vs. blended (hybrid) crisis communications - occupied buildings require standard crisis response protocols and additional supports related to COVID-19 health and safety management.
- Continued use of a school status (open-closed) alert on the website.

- Online and other supports and resources driven by school status or learning mode.
- Messaging to build community confidence that robust learning and rigor continues regardless of learning mode.
- Increased real-time communications at school level for enrolled students and families.

The importance of timely communications to all stakeholders cannot be overstated. Complexity notwithstanding, in order to serve the information needs of NCSD's entire community, the Communications Coordinator utilizes a variety of **real-time delivery mechanisms** for critical information.

## **KEY POINTS**

### **1.0 External Communications:**

External communication will be situationally responsive. Major announcements and day-to-day messaging for the community (families, students, employees, community members, media, elected officials, and others) will include emails, newsletters, phone and text messaging, websites, media engagement and news coverage, social media, and video. Highlights of key communications tools to support the Return to Learn Plan:

- **Norwalk CSD Return to Learn** - A new public-facing web page named **Norwalk CSD Return to Learn** has been developed to convey remote and blended (hybrid) learning plans, implementation, and supports for families and students. Content will include high-value topics: school schedules, curriculum resources, student expectations, tech support, meal distribution, mental health, special education, FAQs, and community resources.
- **Media Response** - Reactive and proactive activity with media outlets to provide timely and accurate responses to inquiries. Produce and promote NCSD stories about schools, student achievement, and district activities. Our objective is to position the district as a leader in education and expert resource.
- **Social Media** - Maximize the use of our three district social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) to provide content that encourages interaction and participation with external audiences. A key tool to engage students and staff to share learning experiences with a wider audience.
- **Voice & Text** - The district and all schools provide important updates and crisis alerts utilizing the Infinite Campus Messenger platform. With the potential for fluctuating schedules and plans in the blended (hybrid) model, these immediate contact tools become increasingly important.

### **1.1 Crisis Communications - Community and School Supports**

The success and safety of the NCSD students and staff, whether in an in-person, blended (hybrid), or remote learning environment, is our top priority. Crisis communications encompasses community messaging and school support related to incidents and issues such as lockouts, lockdowns, threats, etc. For all learning modes, schools will be the primary resource for determining and delivering building level emergency messaging under the direction of the Superintendent and Communications Coordinator.

Returning to in-person learning during the ongoing pandemic creates the potential for fluctuations in school status (open-closed) in response to virus outbreaks. This reality, together with rapidly changing health advisories drive the need to continue to use the school status (open-closed) alert on the website.

### **1.2 Community Outreach & Engagement**

The district must continue to develop and nurture partnerships and relationships with community organizations, interest groups, and initiatives that align with and support NCSD's mission and strategic needs. The Communications Coordinator provides leadership, coordination, and information dissemination for outreach and engagement initiatives conducted by, or in cooperation with, other district departments. Examples include securing funding or other resources to resolve critical needs and food insecurities, mental health support, and affordable internet access for families and students.

### 1.3 Family Engagement

Family engagement initiatives create opportunities, programs, and resources for families to partner with their student's school, connect to educational progress, and engage in aspects of learning with their student. Engaged families have a direct impact on learning outcomes, and are especially critical for the success of remote learning.

In all three learning models (traditional, remote, blended (hybrid)) the Communications Coordinator works with other district staff members to facilitate the distribution of learning support materials and "critical needs" resources to families through the district website and other communication media.

### 1.4 Internal Communications

The Communications Coordinator will work with district staff members to provide crisis and regular updates to employees via multiple channels including website, email, newsletters, dedicated social media channels, video, face-to-face, or virtual meetings.

### 1.5 School and District Office Marketing & Communications Support

In tandem with activities driven by remote and blended (hybrid) learning, business-as-usual initiatives will continue to support the strategic communications needs of the NCSD. We anticipate constant fluidity and priority shifts for what's necessary today, while simultaneously executing for the future state of schools.

## REFERENCES & RESOURCES:

[NCSD Return to Learn Webpage](#)

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

## 2. Infrastructure

### OVERVIEW

Infrastructure includes organizational structures critical in day-to-day operations. This includes ensuring everyone has access to the technology needed to support student learning, establishing district/school calendars to maximize student learning opportunities, understanding how to approach attendance and grading/promotion across delivery models, supporting needed professional development opportunities for teachers and staff, and adhering to privacy/FERPA concerns. If a traditional return to school is not possible by August 24th due to social distancing or other limitations, the most recent public health guidelines will determine whether schools begin the school year in a remote, blended (hybrid), or normal with modifications learning environment. The information below has been organized around three possible scenarios for school restart: Return as Normal with Modifications, Return with Blended (Hybrid) Model, or Required Remote Learning.

### KEY POINTS

Expectations for teaching and learning look different in remote and blended (hybrid) learning environments. Teachers adapt expectations to meet student needs and may provide more independent learning experiences to support student application and transfer of skills or concepts.

Remote learning provides an opportunity for students and teachers to remain connected and engaged with the content while working from their homes. Transitioning to remote learning can keep students on track until they return to in-person learning environments. Remote learning is different from virtual school or virtual learning programs, such as E2020 or Net High Academy, that typically have gone through an official process of establishing a school, adopting an online curriculum, and creating a dedicated structure to support

students enrolled in those programs. Opportunities for remote learning are typically linked to emergency situations that pose a threat to student and staff safety.

In a blended (hybrid) learning environment, students may attend school in-person and engage remotely. At school, desks or seating arrangements are spaced apart and smaller teacher to student ratios may be implemented to adhere to social-distancing limits.

Symptom screening checks clear each visitor's entrance into the school building. Visitors are limited during the school day in order to preserve the safest learning environment possible for staff and students. While a blended (hybrid) model presents challenges, providing students opportunities for in-person interaction for academic and social-emotional well-being is a priority.

## **2.1 School Day Structures and Weekly Meeting Patterns**

Given the guidelines and constraints of social distancing and best practices to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, schools will develop new practices and models of structuring the student school day. Current models are developed under specific assumptions, primarily the desire to provide in-person learning opportunities to the greatest extent possible while adhering to public health guidelines. School structures also provide time for teachers to plan and deliver instruction to students remotely and in-person at the same time. This presents unique challenges for leaders, teachers, support staff, and families. Several models are in development with consideration for the type of training and support staff and families will need to be successful. To the extent possible, in-person learning for students will be maximized. However, limitations based on standing public health guidelines will also be applicable to our schools and will determine the model of in-person vs. remote learning.

## **2.2 Child Care**

As a school district, we recognize that many community members rely on us to educate and supervise children while they are at work. While public health and social-distancing guidelines may limit our functional use of space, structures are being explored to support this need for our families. We are partnering with Cadence Academy to offer before and after school child care. Determination of locations and availability will be made based on public health guidelines. These guidelines will include the potential of limited capacity of school buildings, reduced ratios, and the need to clean and disinfect spaces for before and after school sessions. Communication to families regarding availability will occur as soon as possible.

## **2.3 Onsite Procedural Guidance: Student Movement (arrive, during session, depart)**

Arrival, dismissal, passing time, and recess may take place on staggered schedules and through specific doors to promote social-distancing. There is potential for Middle and High School students to transition between classes, while interacting with limited cohorts of classmates. Teachers may also rotate classrooms to limit the number of contacts with cohorts. Children's developmental levels are considered when planning for new routines and procedures. Opportunities to familiarize students with these protocols will be offered prior to school starting.

## **2.4 Fiscal and School Accountability Compliance**

Guidance from the DE for the 2020-21 school year is fluid and subject to change. The DE recognizes that the COVID-19 situation is continuously evolving, and accordingly, guidance may change if the context changes (e.g. if the state or select communities are under more or less stringent public health orders).

### **2.4.1 Registration/Enrollment**

Current district policies for registration, and enrollment still apply in both remote and blended (hybrid) learning environments. **Families who select the required remote learning option will need to make that decision by August 1, 2020.**

### 2.4.2 Attendance

Student attendance reporting will be used for DE compliance reporting, NCSD public health reporting, truancy, accountability, and media requests.

- This will include reporting to the appropriate health officials on students and staff who are absent due to COVID-19 symptoms or quarantine.
- Attendance will be reported for traditional start, remote learning, and blended (hybrid) learning models.

## 2.5 Business, Operations, Nutrition, Transportation, Activities, and Technology

### OVERVIEW

The NCSD understands the need to be flexible and respond to the educational model that maximizes in-person instruction and complies with local health orders. Business, operations and support groups include the following:

1. Business Office 2. Buildings and Grounds 3. Nutrition 4. Transportation 5. Activities 6. Technology

### KEY POINTS

The implementation of a service model may be adjusted or modified dependent upon the needs of students for access to district facilities and services. The guidelines followed are designed to maintain safe environments and health practices for NCSD staff, students, and community members.

#### 2.5.1 Business Office

The business office will monitor state and federal guidelines related to COVID-19 expenditures to make sure the district is positioned to receive any funds appropriated for public schools to address pandemic expenditures. The business office will also provide support to buildings and departments in order to assist district staff members with the maintenance of district operations.

#### 2.5.2 Buildings and Grounds:

The Buildings and Grounds Department will provide necessary student accommodations, both internal and external, to support educational learning. To the extent necessary, district sites will be available to create an atmosphere that is “warm, safe and dry” for student experiences.

Whether remote or blended (hybrid) learning environment, the Buildings and Grounds Department will provide the following:

- The [20-Year Master Facility Planning](#) will continue as scheduled.
- Ongoing site repair, remodel, renovation, and reconstruction projects will continue.
- Facility cleaning and disinfecting following use will be completed and monitored.
- Staff allocations will be right-sized to meet the needs of the educational model.
- Work schedules modified depending on building and site use.
- Evaluate ventilation systems to maximize circulation of outdoor air.

##### 2.5.2.1 School Safety:

The NCSD will continue to provide ongoing daily coverage of all sites to ensure safe environments for students, staff, and our community. The service includes:

- Emergency management
- Threat assessment
- Partnering with law enforcement agencies
- COVID-19 “isolation rooms” established in each student attendance center

### 2.5.3 Food And Nutrition Services:

The NCSD will continue to provide meal service to students to the extent possible given on-site and remote learning environments. Therefore, the meal service program may be a combination of in-school serving and a “grab & go” program similar to the one implemented in spring and summer of 2020.

- Remote and on-site attendance dictates the serving model(s) used
- Health and safety standard protocols by staff and serving support
- Continued compliance with Federal requirements for meals served
- Cleaning and disinfecting of facilities aligned with [CDC cleaning/disinfecting School Guidance](#)
- Specific information will be sent out to parents through the building RTL implementation plans.

### 2.5.4 Transportation:

The Transportation department supports students by providing safe and timely transport services for eligible riders attending on-site programs whether the education model is traditional or blended (hybrid). The district continues to serve special education and out of district student needs.

- Capacities of the transport service will follow public health guidelines:
  - Number of students permitted to ride at any time
  - Symptom screening protocol enforced for all bus riders
  - Cleaning and disinfecting protocols following student pick up and drop offs
- Scheduling dependent on ridership and capacities
- Students will be required to wear face coverings unless they have an approved religious or medical waiver

### 2.5.5 Activities:

- The NCSD will continue to promote and support student participation in activity programs to the extent permitted in the fall. The NCSD has maintained excellence in the extracurricular programs afforded to students and will facilitate whatever is necessary and allowed to continue.
- Adherence to the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union (IGHSAU), Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA), DE, IDPH, Governor Reynolds, and WCHS parameters for sports and activities programs. (Guidance has not yet been provided for the fall of 2020).

### 2.5.6 Technology

During the Fall of 2020, the Technology Department will prioritize:

- Ensuring that all students and staff have access to a working device (Chromebook, iPad, laptop, desktop computer, or other);
- Collaborating with various departments, community partners, businesses, and others, as needed, in problem-solving efforts to ensure all students and staff have reliable internet access to complete their work remotely;
- Supporting NCSD students and their families, and our staff as they utilize our core digital learning tools and existing system applications (see the additional resources section for these);
- Modifying existing tools and applications to meet the needs of remote and blended (hybrid) environments;
- Optimizing efficiencies and minimizing changes that will impact our existing tools and applications to provide stability across our system for all end users;
- Introducing new tools and applications in a way that continues to offer flexibility, but also moves toward a model of standardization to provide more robust support for an overall portfolio of systems that are secure, stable, and effective.
- Continuing district cybersecurity efforts to make sure that student, staff, and district data as well as district technology systems are safe and secure.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, REFERENCES AND RESOURCES**

[NCSD Covid-19 Updates and Resources](#)

[NCSD Business Office Webpage](#)

[NCSD Student Fees Webpage](#)

[NCSD Building & Grounds Web page](#)

[NCSD Nutrition Webpage](#)

[NCSD Transportation Webpage](#)

[NCSD Activities Webpage](#)

[NCSD Technology Page](#)

## **2.6 Employee Experience - Return to Work**

### **OVERVIEW**

The NCSD employee workforce is large and varied, delivering direct and indirect service to critical components of education. During planning and implementation of employee experience initiatives, attention will be given to two primary needs: 1.) delivering all services related to education and operations, and 2.) supporting our staff with their personal needs related to their work, safety and personal health. Each model of educational delivery - Return as Normal with Modifications, Return with Blended (Hybrid) Model, or Required Remote Learning, will pose challenges, and the Employee Experience-Return to Work plan and implementation will follow the structures below.

### **KEY POINTS**

#### **2.6.1 Educator Work Schedules**

The NCSD will provide flexibility for educators in balance with a.) their personal needs, and b.) the needs of delivering education to each of our students. This may look like a full-time schedule in the in-person/blended (hybrid) environment (in-person+remote/student rotational learning) or a full-time schedule in the remote-only environment. With school-level planning of schedules at the center, Human Resources will support the needs of the school and educator by creating categories of schedule styles including: blended (hybrid) (in-person/remote), full-remote, and others as needed. In addition, the district will be prepared, if necessary, to transition from a blended (hybrid) to a full-remote environment depending on public health conditions. Through all, the negotiated agreement, employee handbooks, and all laws will be followed to make certain educators understand the expectations of the new and fluid work environment. Educator schedules will be built primarily within the standard school day, but may be modified in collaboration with school administrators to meet the needs of students/families and the educator's needs.

Temporary transfer (across schools) and reassignment (across content or tasks) rules and processes will be designed and communicated as early as possible for full understanding by school administration and educators. In addition, the district will monitor any adjustments or waivers to content qualification requirements and apply any flexibility as appropriate to student learning environments.

In the event of a change in the school or district schedule, the necessary shift in schedules and locations will be made quickly and thoughtfully to cause the least disruption to the education of our students.

#### **2.6.2 Educator Staffing and Leaves**

The district will provide staffing-level considerations to meet the needs of students, specifically, we will develop protocols to temporarily place non-classroom licensed educators (educators and employees that hold a teaching license but are not currently in a classroom) into independent classroom teaching or classroom support positions. Properly qualified and able licensed/certificated staff may be used to deliver content in

order to keep teacher-to-student ratios safe and as optimal as possible in the blended (hybrid) and remote learning environments.

The district is investigating educator job shares when a pairing assists the personal and professional needs of the educators during the public health crisis and altered teaching environment.

As staffing plans develop in step with student attendance choices and educator personal needs (such as health conditions, isolation requirements), the district will develop staffing mechanisms to meet the needs of educators, when reasonably possible, with the intent of allowing educator work location preference (onsite versus offsite) to be honored in as many circumstances as possible.

All legally required leaves and leaves available through the negotiated agreements and employee handbooks will be available, communicated, and honored. The Director of Human Resources is available to support educators with questions regarding absences and leaves.

### **2.6.3 Operations and Administration Staffing Flexibility and Leaves**

Administrators will maintain flexibility in their own work to support staff, as needed, with the goal of building networks of support for staff and students. The district will consider use of non-school administrators to support schools and learning in different ways, as needed, based on critical timing of essential tasks.

Maintaining full employment for staff is an important value to the district. The district will make efforts to create functional “combination jobs” - that allow our full-time employees to continue full-time work during the modified learning and work periods. This means performing functions outside of a primary job - such as a bus driver assisting with on-campus activities such as meal delivery or minor maintenance, or, a paraprofessional assisting with food service or other necessary tasks. Staff will be asked to work only in tasks for which they are able and generally qualified to complete and will be compensated for any work in higher classifications.

Administrator and operations/support positions will be reviewed with the Director of Human Resources and department leaders to identify remote work possibilities, and the requirements inside any remote work arrangements. Balance and fairness are paramount in determining onsite versus offsite work arrangements, as is the health and safety of staff as a whole.

All legally required leaves and leaves available through the negotiated agreements and employee handbooks will be available, communicated, and honored. The Director of Human Resources is available to support staff with questions regarding absences and leaves.

### **2.6.4 Staff Safety, Choices, and Leave of Absence**

As noted in Educator Staffing and Leaves:

*“As staffing plans develop in step with student attendance choice and educator personal needs (such as health conditions, isolation preferences), the district will develop staffing mechanisms to meet the needs of educators, when reasonably possible, with the intent of allowing educator work location preference (onsite versus offsite) be honored in as many circumstances as possible.”*

This same flexibility will be considered within all groups of employees, and the district will make every reasonable effort to meet the requests and needs of staff through schedule flexibility, work location flexibility, or leave of absence.

### **2.6.5 Substitute Teachers**

The district anticipates a need for substitute teachers - long-term assignments and daily assignments. These will likely occur both in the blended (hybrid) and remote models.

Therefore, the district will prepare a substitute teacher training curriculum for remote model support, and target offerings in late July and early August, via webinar and other remote experiences. These trainings will include new responsibilities and approaches, technology, onsite safety, and other appropriate topics.

### 2.6.6 Staff Safety, Reporting, and Problem Solving

The district is dedicated to protecting the safety of our staff, and will respond to any requests or concerns made by staff regarding work conditions and safety.

Every layer of the management/leadership team shares this dedication. Requests to address issues of work conditions and safety should be made to direct supervisors. However, reports may be made to Human Resources with no concern for repercussions. In this reporting, partnered problem solving will be the first offered solution, followed by human resources intervention, then, if needed, investigation of work conditions or safety concerns.

- Staff may be expected to complete health and safety training as required.

### 2.6.7 Evaluations, Work Agreements to Complete Work, Check-Ins

All district staff are professionals, and actively accept the accountability to their assigned work and to the education of students and support of student learning.

The district will await information from the Iowa Department of Education regarding any adjustments to educator/teacher evaluation requirements during the 2020-21 school year. While no adjustments or waivers are currently anticipated, we will expect informal and formal observations completed in the school year (either in-person or remote) with a culminating summative evaluation during the 2020-2021 school year. In addition, teacher-specific goals will be created and completed in 2020-21. This will be monitored for flexibility, should waivers be allowed by the Iowa Department of Education.

The Director of Human Resources and other administrators will create best practice documents in professional practice measurement and development of school and individual goals, which can be modified as needed, and completed timely in the spring.

Evaluations for administrators and support staff will be completed by the end of the school/work year for 2020-2021.

Work agreement frameworks will be developed, to ensure staff are available while working in remote environments and completing required work, though these agreements will be applied only in situations that warrant additional direct supervision or accountability.

## REFERENCES & RESOURCES:

[Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace and the ADA](#)

[OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)

[Guidance for Implementing the Opening Up America Again Framework, CDC](#)

[Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employer Paid Leave Requirements, DOL](#)

[AEA Learning Online Module R2L: Health and Safety](#)

## 3. Health & Safety

### OVERVIEW

Whether in Return as Normal with Modifications, Return with Blended (Hybrid) Model, or Required Remote Learning, our primary goal is always to ensure the health and safety of teachers, staff, students, and families. NCSD nursing staff will continue to collaborate with building implementation teams, community resources, and families to help students to reach their optimal learning potential by addressing and modifying health related barriers to learning. A safe, inclusive, and supportive environment will be fostered for all students

through the practice of school nursing. The Norwalk Community School District (NCSD) will continue to collaborate with Warren County Health Services (WCHS) and the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) to ensure a safe and healthy learning environment for our students and staff. Regardless of the learning model, any person entering NCSD property will be required to follow all public health regulations. Below is an explanation of the health regulations we anticipate based upon current information:

## **KEY POINTS**

### **3.0 Stay At Home Requirements**

- All staff and students will be required to stay home when experiencing COVID-19 [symptoms](#).
- Students and staff who have had close contact with a person with COVID-19, have tested positive to COVID-19 or who are showing [symptoms of COVID-19](#) (i.e., fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, chills, muscle pain, and/or recent loss of taste or smell) will be required to stay at home.

### **3.1 Group Gatherings and Social Distancing Requirements**

- Today there are state and local public health orders limiting the size of group gatherings and 6 feet social distancing expectations. We believe similar orders will exist when the fall semester begins.
- Consequently, NCSD will limit the use of large group gathering areas
  - An area is considered any room or wherever instruction takes place including outside space and includes large areas - gymnasiums, cafeterias, and hallways.
- Social Distancing Requirements
  - Encourage appropriate social distancing from other people, which is currently recommended as maintaining 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) of distance from other people.
  - If social distancing is not possible in classrooms, students will be seated in rows with as much space between seats as possible, facing the same direction, and will be assigned a location based on a seating chart.
  - Avoid mass gatherings in large groups such as assemblies and field trips
  - Encourage social distancing outside - includes recess. Playground equipment and sharing of playground equipment limitations will be considered.

### **3.2 Number of Students and Staff Requirements**

- Group gathering limitations and social distancing forces NCSD to afford enough space per person in our buildings. To meet these needs, we may need to reduce building capacity.
- To lower building capacity and preserve space for students and staff, non-essential visitors will be limited.

### **3.3 Building Traffic Guidelines and Symptom Screening**

- 3.3a Upon building entry, a symptom screening process will take place for visitors.
  - Visitors entering a NCSD building will be asked a series of symptom screening questions developed in partnership with IDPH.
  - Signage will be posted listing the symptoms that may prohibit entry into the building or require further screening before entering
- 3.3b Taking Temperatures
  - Due to the complications with taking temperatures of students, staff, and visitors (as temperatures alone do not always indicate illness), it is recommended that staff and visitors self-report based on symptoms.
  - Parents are encouraged to take their child's temperature and look for symptoms of illness each day, prior to sending their child to school.
  - More specific information will be coming out prior to the start of school.
  - Sending a child to school is a statement by a parent or guardian that the student is symptom

free.

- 3.3c Each NCSD building will attempt to create a one-way traffic flow with separate entry and exit doors.
  - Visual cues such as floor decals, colored tape, or signs to indicate to students and staff the flow and direction of one-way traffic. Additional cues may be used to indicate 6 feet intervals when standing in a line.
  - Furniture will be arranged to support social distancing practices.
  - Schools will control the flow of traffic into and out of the building to ensure that maximum capacity plans are adjusted and managed at each entry and exit point.

### 3.4 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Hygiene Measures

- Face coverings (nose and mouth) are required for students, if social distancing can't be maintained, and required for staff and visitors. Waivers of these requirements may be granted for religious and medical reasons as required by law.
  - Guidance and recommendations on face coverings can be found on the [CDC Cloth Face Covers webpage](#).
  - Warren County Health Services has informed this recommendation using guidance from the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#).
- Gloves are required for Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) workers at all times and other staff whenever cleaning or sanitizing an item or surface.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including face coverings (back-ups to personal face coverings), hand sanitizer, thermometers, and gloves will be provided to schools on a continual basis throughout the school year, beginning in August.
- Additional signage on how to stop the spread of COVID-19, properly wash hands, promote everyday protective measures including face coverings will be on display in buildings.
- Several opportunities throughout the day for [hand hygiene, promoting hand washing](#) will be provided.
- The district will have signage in each building identifying the requirements for face coverings.

### 3.5 Suspected/Confirmed COVID-19 Cases - School Decision Tree

- Symptomatic staff and students in the building will need to go to an established isolated space "isolation room" (not the health room, as this must be kept available) until they can safely leave the building.
- Coordination with Warren County Health Services (WCHS) regarding suspected and confirmed cases.
  - WCHS will direct the district on steps to determine a course of action on a case by case basis.

### 3.6 Transmission Mitigation and Cleaning Procedures

- Consider increasing the circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and/or doors as long as it does not pose a safety or health risk to other students.
- To the extent possible, students and staff should limit the sharing of all supplies, utensils, devices, toys, books, and learning aids.
- NCSD Buildings and Grounds cleaning practices will be focused on cleaning for health, which includes an emphasis on disinfecting surfaces where bacteria or viruses are most likely to be transmitted.
- The NCSD Buildings and Grounds Department will consult with the district nurses, WCHS, and the IDPH to ensure appropriate and timely measures are taken to preserve the health and safety of our students, staff, and community.

### 3.7 Contact Tracing

- Warren County Health Services (WCHS) will oversee contact tracing in the event of a positive COVID-19 case.

### 3.8 Masks and Face Shields

- Face coverings (nose and mouth) are required for students, if social distancing can't be maintained, and required for staff and visitors. Waivers of these requirements may be granted for religious and medical reasons as required by law.
  - Guidance and recommendations on face coverings can be found on the [CDC Cloth Face Covers webpage](#)
  - Warren County Health Services has informed this recommendation using guidance from the [American Academy of Pediatricians](#)
- Students in grades Pk-12 will be responsible for providing their own mask or face shield
- Students in grades Pk-12 will be responsible for daily cleaning of cloth masks and/or face shields
- Staff members are required to wear a mask or face shield, unless the staff member has a note from the superintendent or designee waiving this requirement
- Staff members will be responsible for daily cleaning of cloth masks and/or face shields
- Please note that local medical professionals have informed the district that face masks are helpful in preventing the spread of COVID-19 while face shields are helpful in preventing being infected by COVID-19

### 3.9 Travel Quarantines

- The district will follow Warren County Health Services, Iowa Department of Public Health and CDC COVID-19 Travel guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

### 3.10 Nursing Services

#### 3.10.1 Health planning/health support

- Students exhibiting [symptoms](#) consistent with COVID-19 while at school will be sent to the school nurse's office for further evaluation.
- Normal nurse's office procedures and treatments will continue daily. COVID-19 symptomatic staff and students will utilize a different isolated space "isolation room" in the school building. Refer to [section 3.5](#).
- The number of students in the nurse's office will be regulated at all times, following social distancing guidelines.

#### 3.10.2 Immunizations - See [Board Policy 607.2 Student Health Services](#)

- State and local immunization rules/expectations remain in place.

### REFERENCES & RESOURCES:

[CDC Guidance for Schools](#)

[School Nurse Web Page](#)

[Iowa Department of Public Health website](#)

[Warren County Health Services website](#)

[NCSD Board Policy 403.3 Communicable Diseases - Employees](#)

[NCSD Board Policy 507.3 Communicable Diseases - Students](#)

[Iowa Association of School Boards - Face Coverings/Masks: Comparison of Various Guidance](#)

## 4. Iowa Academic Standards/Instruction

### OVERVIEW

The NCSD has embraced an educational model focused on High Reliability Schools and the Marzano Instructional Framework. We believe this model best facilitates students' mastery of Iowa Academic Standards and Portrait of a Learner Competencies. No matter what limitations may be imposed on our instruction by public health guidelines, this model will remain in place for teaching and learning during the 2020-21 school year. School staff will be expected to support in-person learning to the greatest extent possible and support remote learning when necessary.

By offering in-person and remote learning for our students, The NCSD continues to focus on strong relationships and instruction for our students—our primary roles in the community. Blended (Hybrid) learning, a combination of in-person and remote learning, will not re-create the traditional classroom experience and will likely look quite different. Therefore, tools and systems will be in place to support teachers and staff across the district to meet the needs of all students.

Remote learning can occur asynchronously and synchronously. Asynchronous learning is when instruction and learning do not happen at the same time for all learners. The teacher provides learning resources and tasks in Google Classroom, Canvas, and/or Seesaw. Students access learning at a time that works for them and their family. Synchronous learning is an approach where teachers and students are engaged online in learning at the same time. The teacher provides learning resources and tasks through video-conferencing enabled through Google Classroom, Canvas, and/or Seesaw during a specific time.

During blended (hybrid) learning, the in-person learning opportunities will look and be different. When students come to school, they will receive instruction that is most effectively delivered in an in-person environment while still accessing online resources through Google Classroom, Canvas, and/or Seesaw. In-person time with students will include focused instruction that is directly connected to student needs and the expertise of professional educators. Some examples include: small group instruction (literacy, math, language development), hands on application of learning (Career and Technical Education experiences), and teacher-led assessments.

**Key Point 4.1** - The district and schools will partner with our students and families to support students' blended (hybrid) (in-person and remote) learning when returning to school in the fall.

- The NCSD will provide a roadmap for the district curriculum with monthly learning topics so students and families can better understand academic expectations and ways to support student success.
- Ongoing communication will be provided to support families in the learning process including additional instructional resources to help make blended (hybrid) learning successful for students at home.
- Technology tips and troubleshooting guides will be available to help students and parents navigate online instructional tools, such as Google Classroom, Canvas, and Seesaw.
- We will provide models of consistent learning experiences across classrooms and schools, such as the time spent in teacher instruction and independent student work time.

**Key Point 4.2** - We will support educators' fall planning and instructional needs with professional learning, resources and supports to:

- Develop plans to help students start the school year with strong relationships, routines, and expectations necessary for success in blended (hybrid) learning environments and sustain those relationships and learning throughout the school year.
- Create flexible learning expectations and timelines to utilize multiple ways for students to share their learning through assignments, tasks, and projects.
- Gain a deeper understanding of the grade level curriculum and resources with a focus on prioritized

2020 Iowa Academic Standards to ensure critical learning happens.

- Review and provide meaningful feedback on student work to adjust instruction and set learning goals with students.
- Meet individual student needs through differentiated learning focused on prioritized Iowa Academic Standards and Portrait of a Learner Competencies.
- Adapt an instructional approach to balanced assessment practices that facilitate blended (hybrid) learning and provide data to inform next steps in learning.
- Support delivery of academic content, assessment, and student reflection as part of the High Reliability Schools and the Marzano Instructional Framework through the appropriate and flexible use of a variety of instructional digital tools, such as online apps, to support student learning.
- Identify anticipated student learning gaps and strategies to close them through ongoing staff training and resources.
- Prioritize foundational literacy and math skills to catch-up struggling readers, and the best developmental instructional practices in a blended (hybrid) learning environment for elementary grades pre-kindergarten through 5th grade.
- Support student learning interests and needs to ensure career and college readiness for middle and high school levels aligned to NCSD graduation requirements.
- More detailed information specific to elementary, middle, and high school blended (hybrid) planning forthcoming.

**Key Point 4.3** - We will support our educators to meet student needs in a blended (hybrid) (in-person and remote) learning environment. Professional learning opportunities will provide time and resources for educators to build relationships, plan, and teach in a blended (hybrid) environment. In this setting, educators will be offered:

- Ongoing professional learning on tools to meet the needs of students in a blended (hybrid) environment.
- Support for remote team meetings where teachers collaborate to make sure students are meeting academic standards and adjusting plans to meet student needs.
- Specific examples of high quality instruction to engage students in blended (hybrid) learning.
- Additional support for our newest educators to ensure they meet the needs of students.
- Individualized support for educators.

## **REFERENCES & RESOURCES:**

[Accelerate Learning](#)

[Equitable Learning Recovery Toolkit](#)

[Seven Steps to Sending Students Back to School and Parents Back to Work](#)

[DE Return to Learn Website](#)

[Return to Learn Supporting Document](#)

[Return to Learn Guidance](#)

## **5. Social-Emotional-Behavioral Health (SEBH)**

### **OVERVIEW**

A primary objective of NCSD is to ensure and enhance supportive relationships with staff, students, and their families -- especially during times of crisis. There are also numerous resources available for students and families who are struggling. Students in the NCSD have access to [school counselors and school-based therapists](#) to help with their social, emotional and behavioral concerns. Regardless of the learning environment we are in next school year, these services will continue and our resources will be made available.

## KEY POINTS

### 5.1 Culture and Climate

- School culture and climate will look different in a remote learning or hybrid learning environment. The same expectations that exist for students at school (e.g. respectful, responsible, ready to learn) will be expected in a virtual setting as well.
- All students need support, but there may be a need to provide more support to students who have experienced, or are experiencing trauma, based on certain life circumstances.

### 5.2 Support for Students

- Our main goal is ensuring every student has at least one caring adult at the school who checks in regularly with them and whom they can reach out to.
- Collaboration between school staff and parents is always important, but during crises and disruptions in normal routines, this is even more vital. School staff will be working with parents to identify when students are struggling and need additional support. Student and parent surveys will likely be used to help identify when such supports may be needed (especially in a remote learning environment).
- A multi-tier system of support (MTSS) is a framework that the district uses to help determine the level of support needed in academic and social/emotional situations. There are numerous ways that the district may utilize resources to support a child who is struggling. Again, most students' needs will be met through regular connections with school staff, but other students may need more support.

### 5.3 Counseling Services

- School counselors will continue to work with students, parents, staff, teams and administrators to determine who may need additional social/emotional support and whether those supports will be provided in-person or remotely.
- School-based therapists (SBTs) are also available and accessible to students. A parent may work with the school counselor to connect with the SBT or contact the SBT directly. Our SBTs typically provide more intensive, focused support individually or in small groups, based on the needs of the student.
- More information can be found on the district's [Counseling and School -Based Therapy webpage](#).

### 5.4 Support for Families

- In order to best support families, the district will communicate regularly as well as occasionally provide informal surveys to best determine the needs that exist, such as loss of income, stress, shelter assistance, emotional needs, food insecurity, etc.
- The district will continue to work with community agencies and faith-based organizations to provide resources and support.
- Family resources can be found on the [Community Resources webpage](#) as well as at [211 Iowa](#).

## REFERENCES & RESOURCES:

[Norwalk School Counseling and School-Based Therapy](#)

[EFR student assistance program for Norwalk students \(individual and family counseling\)](#)

[Social Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#)

[Your Life Iowa - mental health, suicide prevention, alcohol/drug abuse](#)

[211 Iowa](#)

## 6. Equity

## OVERVIEW

The needs of our students differ and vary extensively. One of the major issues with moving to a remote learning environment or a hybrid model is to maintain equitable services that meet the needs of all of our students equitably, based on needs. Our goal is to ensure all students have access to a free and appropriate public education including students with individual education plans, English learners, students at-risk (broadly defined), and gifted and talented. NCSD is committed to doing this in collaboration and with the cooperation of our parents and guardians.

## **KEY POINTS**

### **6.1 Appropriate Services**

Administration and staff will work diligently to provide appropriate services and support for all our students in all educational environments--especially for our most vulnerable students. We recognize the distinct differences, and in some cases, the diminished effectiveness of services in the remote environment. Consequently, we are dedicated to reviewing and improving our approach and strategies to support students with the resources we have accessible to us.

#### **6.1.1 504 Plans**

- 504 Plans would be reviewed by each building 504 Plan contact person. Communication would occur with parents and staff to ensure that the necessary accommodations would be provided in either a hybrid or remote learning environment. If changes to the 504 Plan would need to be made, the 504 team would have such discussions.
- If specific health concerns exist that make it unsafe, unrealistic, or not possible for the student to attend in person instruction, the necessary determinations would need to occur between parents and school administration. In such cases, an individualized plan would need to be established.

### **6.2 At-Risk**

Students determined to be at-risk of not graduating will receive ongoing instructional, social/emotional, and behavioral support in a hybrid or remote learning environment. School counselors, at-risk teachers, and student advocates who frequently support these students will continue to reach out to them and their families to support academic engagement and maintain positive relationships. For any student who is identified as needing additional support, referrals to outside agencies, counselors, or therapists may be made.

### **6.3 English Learners (EL)**

Students in the English Language Program will continue to receive english instruction from the EL teacher. The instructional time allocated will depend on their unique needs and criteria in accordance with the Lau Plan. Parents and students with limited English will receive communication in a manner best understood to them, whether that is in a hybrid or a remote learning model.

### **6.5 Gifted and Talented**

## **OVERVIEW**

The Gifted and Talented (GT) Department will continue to support schools, gifted learners, and their families in either a blended (hybrid) or remote environment. Each school's Gifted and Talented Resource Specialist will be available to support families, staff and students, in both blended (hybrid) and remote environments. NCSD's Gifted Education Department will coordinate with all relevant stakeholders to ensure the needs of gifted learners and their families are met.

## **KEY POINTS**

To maximize students' face to face time with teachers, GT Services will continue to be provided remotely to the greatest extent possible in either a blended (hybrid) or required remote environment.

### **6.5.1 Gifted Identification**

We will continue to identify gifted and talented students and will review them as per [NCSd guidelines](#), though we may not be able to make determinations until we have a complete body of evidence. The gathering of this body of evidence may be delayed if we are in a blended (hybrid) or remote learning environment. Universal Screening of students and other testing scenarios may be delayed until further guidance is provided by the Iowa Department of Education and alternative testing options are evaluated.

### **6.5.2 Gifted Programming**

GT will outline best practices for all schools to meet the needs of and foster growth for gifted and advanced students. We will continue to facilitate acceleration and other differentiated instructional strategies, though additional testing and gathering of a body of evidence may be delayed as noted above. We will support all schools in meeting the academic and affective programming needs of gifted learners throughout the district. Gifted and Talented Development Specialists will continue to share accelerated/enrichment learning opportunities via Google Classroom.

### **6.5.4 Social-Emotional Support**

The NCSd will continue to offer resources and support best practices to meet the social-emotional needs of gifted learners. Gifted and Talented Resource Specialists will continue to work together to provide appropriate support to students' academic and social-emotional needs through on-going conversations on how to best support their individual needs.

### **6.5.5 Parent/Family Support**

Gifted and Talented Development Specialists are available to address specific family needs at their schools.

## **6.6. Special Education**

### **OVERVIEW**

The goal of special education in the NCSd is to provide free and appropriate educational opportunities to all students who have been identified as having a disability to the greatest extent possible in alignment with public health guidelines. Collaboration with families has always been an integral part of the special education process and continues to be essential during this time. To address the unique needs of students with disabilities, special education providers will continue the work with families to collaboratively identify the most essential services for each student that can be provided both directly and indirectly in remote and in-person learning environments. IEPs will be adjusted as needed for the circumstances of the learning environment.

### **KEY POINTS**

#### **6.6.1 Community Involvement and Support**

The NCSd believes student success is enhanced when schools, families, and the community work together to support learning. For this reason, the Special Education SIAC Sub-committee and other parents with students with IEPs will be asked to provide comments and recommendations pertaining to blended (hybrid) and remote learning.

#### **6.6.2 Child Find and Evaluation**

The NCSd will continue to collaborate with staff from Heartland AEA to identify, locate, and evaluate students suspected of having a disability and needing special education and related services. At the same time, the NCSd will be mindful that students have been displaced from their typical learning environment when initiating the referral process. Some evaluation procedures may be completed in remote learning situations. Some evaluations require in-person contact with students or observations of students in school settings. The

NCSD will conduct evaluations remotely and in-person while adhering to public health guidelines for the safety of students and staff.

### **6.6.3 Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meetings**

The NCSD is committed to providing families an opportunity to have meaningful participation in the special education process. Whether in-person or an alternative format, such as videoconferencing or by phone, district and AEA staff will partner with families to determine the most practical format to conduct IEP meetings.

### **6.6.4 Delivery of Special Education and Related Services**

The district will partner with parents to consider the needs of each student with an IEP on an individualized basis when determining how to appropriately provide IEP services. The district, AEA staff, and parents will determine what is appropriate for the child based on his or her needs -- whether it is in person or virtual -- taking into account the educational needs and the health concerns that may exist. Likewise, these services will be within the reasonable resource parameters that the district is capable of providing. If necessary IEP services extend beyond that, then the appropriate IEP team will need to convene to work out those details.

### **6.6.5 Progress Monitoring and Reporting**

Special education teacher teams will have in place consistent data collection and procedures for use across blended (hybrid) and remote learning environments. Family collaboration will be vital to the success of monitoring the child's progress remotely. Collecting data and tracking the provision of services will assist educators and families in determining the effectiveness of instruction provided, student performance on IEP goals/objectives, and assist IEP teams in making any necessary adjustments to instruction. Periodic reports on the progress the child is making toward meeting the annual goals will continue to be provided.

### **6.6.6 Accommodations and Modifications**

Accommodations and modifications can be provided regardless of the educational setting, but may be adjusted according to the educational setting. General and special education teachers will continue to collaborate in determining the appropriateness and success of a student's unique accommodations and modifications. The IEP team, (general education teachers, special education, related services providers, and families), will work collaboratively to identify alternative solutions if it believes an accommodation or modification is not appropriate or successful in a particular setting.

### **6.6.7 Confidentiality and Student Privacy**

Maintaining confidentiality is a priority when providing online education. There may be instances when families will be asked to provide consent for students to participate in the virtual learning opportunities, including group video conferencing sessions with other students, offered by the district. As with an in-person observation in a classroom, educators may set ground rules regarding non-students' presence during virtual instruction to maintain student privacy.

## **REFERENCES & RESOURCES:**

[Norwalk Special Education webpage](#)

[Everybody Wins Iowa webpage](#)

## **7. Data Considerations**

### **OVERVIEW**

The NCSD will continue to monitor various sources of data that will enable the district to make informed

data-based decisions throughout the development and implementation of the RTL Plan. District staff members will take steps to make certain that confidential information is protected as required by federal law, state law, and board policies.

## **KEY POINTS**

### **6.1 Data that will be monitored:**

- Student academic benchmark data
- Building improvement plans data
- Attendance data for staff and students
- COVID-19 related surveys data
- How many students attending virtually and their level of engagement
- Concerns and complaints regarding health & safety concerns and district response
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) data
- Social-Emotional-Behavioral Health (SEBH) data
  - At-risk
  - Behavior
  - Academic
- Financial data
  - What has COVID-19 cost the district?
  - Unpaid fees, changes in fee waivers
- Transportation data
- Contact tracing

## **REFERENCES & RESOURCES:**

[IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GUIDANCE May 8, 2020 Return-to-Learn Support Document](#)

## 8. BUILDING IMPLEMENTATION PLANS:

- [Oviatt Elementary](#)
- [Orchard Hills Elementary](#)
- [Lakewood Elementary](#)
- [Norwalk Middle School](#)
- [Eastview 8/9 School](#)
- [Norwalk High School](#)

## 9. ADDITIONAL REFERENCES & RESOURCES:

- [OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR OF IOWA KIM REYNOLDS](#)
  - [Governor Reynolds' proclamation continuing the Public Health Disaster Emergency and Iowa's Return to Learn strategy requirements](#)
- [Senate File 2310 - ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAM AND COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS](#)
- [IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GUIDANCE](#)
  - [Senate File 2310: Guidance for Schools - 7/17/2020](#)
  - [Senate File 2310 and Governor's Proclamation Frequently Asked Questions - 7/20/2020](#)
  - [2019 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS RESOURCES FOR LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH PARTNERS](#)
  - [Iowa Return to Learn Support Website](#)
  - [6/25/2020 Reopening Guidance for Schools](#)
  - [6/30/2020 Reopening Guidance for Schools: Frequently Asked Questions](#)
  - [Health and Safety District Leadership Team Module- Full Slides](#)
  - [Health and Safety Tool \(B\) for District Leadership Teams](#)
  - [5/28/2020 Summer Transportation COVID-19 Guidance](#)
  - [5/20/2020 COVID-19 Reopening Guidance: Summer Learning and Activities](#)
  - [5/20/2020 COVID-19 Reopening Guidance: Use of School Facilities](#)
  - [5/20/2020 COVID-19 Reopening Guidance: Summer Sports](#)
  - [5/8/2020 Return-to-Learn Guidance](#)
  - [5/8/2020 Return-to-Learn Support Document](#)
  - [Template for Continuous Learning](#)
- **OTHER REFERENCES AND RESOURCES**
  - [Warren County COVID-19 FAQ for Schools grade K-12](#)
  - [CDC Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
  - [CDC Framework for Adapting Guidelines for Unique Settings](#)
  - [CDC Symptoms of Coronavirus](#)
  - [American Academy of Pediatrics - COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry](#)
  - [Return to School Roadmap AN OPPORTUNITY LABS INITIATIVE](#)
  - [The Socially Distanced School Day](#)
  - [AEA Learning Online Module R2L: Health and Safety](#)
  - [Polk County Health Department School Reopening Plan](#)
  - [Physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis](#)
  - [Universal Masking is Urgent in the COVID-19 Pandemic: SEIR and Agent Based Models, Empirical Validation, Policy Recommendations](#)



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