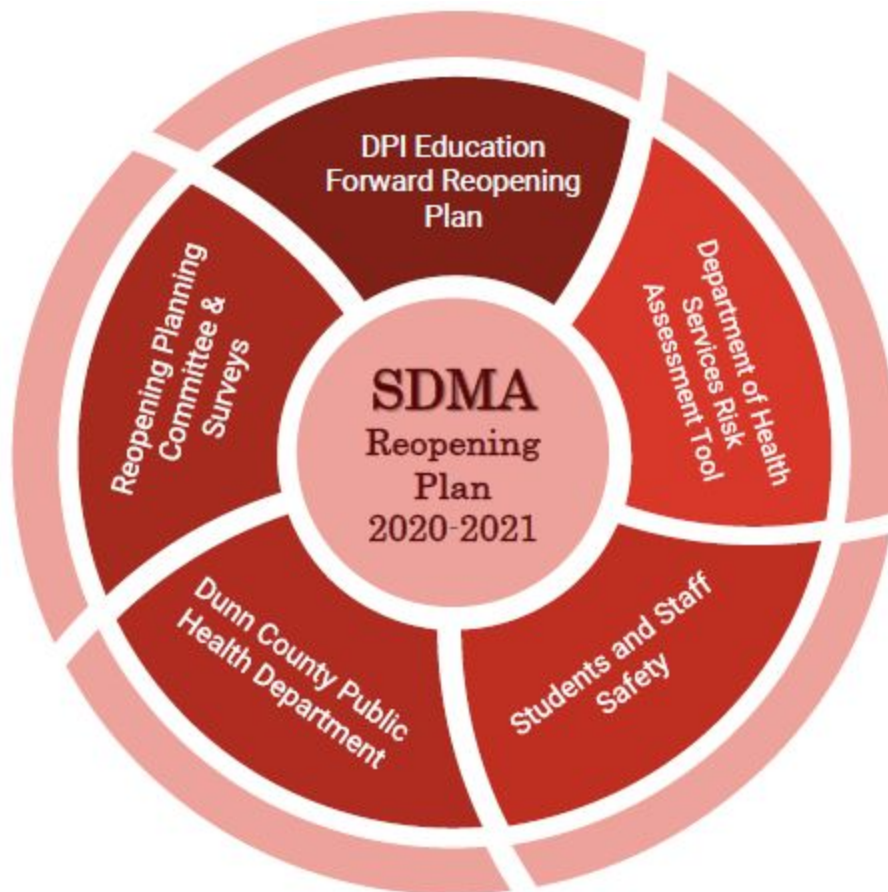


School District of the
Menomonie Area

Reopening Report to the Board of Education



August 10, 2020

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Introduction / Returning to the 2020-21 School Year

Following the Spring 2020 statewide school closure for the COVID-19 pandemic, the School District of the Menomonee Area (SDMA) established a Planning Team to prioritize and expedite information gathering while developing recommendations for the 2020-2021 reopening of schools.

This planning document was developed to provide a proactive set of district decisions and actions to reduce risk and exposure to COVID-19, while also allowing for the nimble ability to pivot and adjust as needed to open schools in a meaningful and impactful manner during this pandemic.

This plan was developed with input from the SDMA Planning Team, and informed by the results of thousands of surveys completed by families and staff in the SDMA. The intent of this plan is to create a PK-12 organizational structure that supports social, emotional, and academic learning of all students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you to the Department of Public Instruction, KT Gallagher and the Dunn County Department of Health, SDMA Medical Advisor Dr. Paul Horvath, and many other colleagues and resources from outside of the SDMA for providing valuable resources and insight reflected in various parts of this plan.

Planning Team

Membership. Planning Team membership reflects diverse perspectives to actively involve stakeholders in the planning process. The Planning Team included staff members representing the perspectives of teachers and hourly employees, as well as all building principals, department directors, and district administrators in the SDMA. The Planning Team was diverse in their gathering of information from local, regional, state, and federal sources, as well as from parents, students, and community members.

Process. Planning Team members and the full administrative team held independent and joint meetings. Building teams also met and included additional staff members who brought direct knowledge and skills for identifying specific issues and generating a plan to address each of the identified critical actions. Other school district leadership teams, Menomonee Transportation, the

Dunn County Health Department, and a number of other federal/state/county agencies were consulted or referred to in the development of this plan.

Throughout the information gathering process and the exploration of various reopening options, several challenges and related solutions were identified to include curriculum delivery and instructional approaches, facilities and school operations, food service, busing, technology, communication, human resources, and equity. All focus was viewed through the lens of doing that which is best for students' educational, social, emotional, and physical well being.

In summary, input from the following was instrumental in developing the recommendations in this plan:

- Initial Brainstorming by Staff (individual questions, ideas, suggestions, and concerns)
- Student, staff, and parent virtual learning surveys
- School Board members setting a vision for the reopening of schools
- Parent and staff reopening surveys
- Discussions with the entire Administrative Team (and state/regional peers)
- Input sought by Principals from building leadership teams/staff and regional/state peers
- District Nurse (with regular communication with the health department and DPI)
- Director of Building and Grounds (following guidelines and consultation)
- Menomonie Transportation (who also consulted with state and national peers)
- Director of School Nutrition
- Town hall style Zoom meetings for families and staff
- Discussions with legal counsel and insurance carriers
- Numerous meetings with county, conference, regional (CESA11), and other school administrators across the state
- Regular communication with the Dunn County Health Department
- Review of guidelines from Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association, Centers for Disease Control, and the State and County Departments of Health Services (DHS)

Guiding Principles

1. Curricular, extracurricular, and co-curricular experiences are vitally important to the immediate and future well-being of our students. Not providing educational opportunities for students can be detrimental to the immediate and long-term well-being of students.

2. The health, safety, and overall well-being of SDMA students and staff is the district's top priority. Orders and guidance from the Dunn County Health department will be followed to balance the known risks associated with COVID-19 with the many important educational and support services provided to children in our schools.
3. It is the school district's responsibility to help mitigate risks associated with the spread of COVID-19 and take that responsibility seriously, but the school district cannot guarantee a COVID-19-free environment.
4. Families deserve to have choices for how their children will be served by the School District of the Menomonee Area. The number of choices needs to be limited to make options feasible and mobile to support continuity of instruction if learning environments need to change during the school year.
5. To educate the whole child, the social-emotional, academic, and physical and mental health needs of all students must be considered.
6. Input from families and staff is important and must be considered in the development of the plan.
7. It is critical that all families, students, and staff understand and follow the protocols and expectations outlined in this plan.

Goals of the Plan

Identify a variety of learning environments that may be needed during the 2020-2021 school year to provide families choice and support the continuity of instruction if learning environments need to change during the school year. This plan will define primary details related to instructional programming, health and safety, operations, and equity, as well as the criteria used to determine the learning environment most suitable for the changing circumstances in the local community.

Equity

All stakeholder groups will be provided opportunities to participate in the planning process to promote equity and to ensure that appropriate accommodations are made for all students. This plan will be reviewed by the Student Services Department to ensure that the implementation of this plan meets the needs of all students.

Learning Environment Options

Multiple learning environments may be utilized in the SDMA during the 2020-2021 school year, so planning must include procedures to promote a smooth transition between environments. The learning environment for students enrolled in the traditional school setting will be determined by the criteria identified in this plan. Students enrolled in the full-time virtual school environment will remain in that environment for the entire semester.

2020-2021 INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL

SDMA PLAN STEPS	PreK-4K	K-6	7-12	Students receiving special services (SpEd, EL, etc)
In-Person Learning				
Blended Learning			 	  Programming determined on an individual basis
Safer at Home Learning				
Online Virtual School				



Virtual Learning



Face-to-Face Learning



Wisconsin Virtual School

IN-PERSON LEARNING- Schools operate at full capacity with risk management strategies in place to address cleaning, student and staff hygiene, and infection control and mitigation.

BLENDED LEARNING- Students in grades 4K-6 continue to receive instruction and services in-school, while students in grades 7-12 participate in an alternating day schedule. This approach would reduce 7-12 daily enrollment by 50% and support more rigorous physical distancing expectations for all grade levels.

SAFER AT HOME (REMOTE) LEARNING- All students will receive a remote, at-home/distance learning experience similar to the end of the 2019-20 school year. Teachers will use a combination of digital, analog, synchronous, and asynchronous

instructional methods. NOTE: Safer at Home Learning means that all instruction and services will be provided remotely, similar (but improved) to how the school year ended 2019-2020 with improvements being made. Our local faculty and staff will provide instruction and services in a “virtual/remote” learning environment.

FULL-TIME VIRTUAL SCHOOL- For families who do NOT choose to have their child(ren) attend school for in-person learning. Students will be committed to a semester-long separate and independent online/virtual school option if they choose not to attend in-person learning for COVID-related concerns and/or medical reasons. *Due to the high demand for Wisconsin Virtual School services, the SDMA may need to utilize other virtual school programming options for some services.

Criteria for Determining the Learning Environment

Thresholds have been developed in conjunction with the Dunn County Health Department to determine the aggressiveness of additional safety measures that may be needed, as well as if/when schools may need to move to a blended or fully remote option. [The Dunn County Dashboard](#) provides some important measurements for tracking these thresholds. If the COVID-19 BURDEN in Dunn County reaches the HIGH level AND the TREND indicator is an upward arrow (^), OR if hospital capabilities in our region reach surge capacity, mitigation measures will be taken. These mitigation measures may include moving instruction to the Blended Learning or Safer at Home learning environments. Please understand that plans and thresholds may change during the year as more becomes known about COVID-19.

Transitions Between Environments

Student schedules. Schedules have been changed at the high school level to a modified quarterly block schedule that will reduce the number of courses that students and staff are responsible for each quarter. At the junior high age level (grades 7-8), an alternating schedule has been built and is ready to be implemented if needed.

Learning management systems. The school district has adopted and purchased learning management systems to provide greater consistency if blended or remote learning is needed. Students and teachers in grades 4K-2 will utilize SeeSaw, while grades 3-12 will use GoogleClassroom.

Video conferencing software. The school district has adopted GoogleMeet for video conferencing to provide a more consistent platform for students and staff.

Instructional Programming

Teaching and Learning/Staff Development. Instruction within the SDMA will be designed to be delivered via in-person, blended, and virtual (at home) learning environments based on the instructional delivery model in place. Staff within the SDMA will have access to instructional resources and tools designed to facilitate transitions between instructional delivery models. Professional development and training opportunities have been made available for instructional staff to develop their skills with these tools. To support the continuity of instruction for students, as schools in the SDMA reopen for the 2020-2021 school year, it is important for staff, students, and families to be prepared and equipped to transition between in-person, blended, and virtual (at home) learning environments with students. In preparation for these possible scenarios, an [Instructional Expectations](#) document for instructional staff has been established.

Full-Time Virtual School. Families within the School District of the Menomonee Area may choose to enroll their Kindergarten -12th Grade child(ren) in full-time virtual education programming provided by the SDMA. For more information, please visit the virtual school [Information and Resources](#) page on the SDMA website.

Special Education. The school district recognizes that some specially designed instruction, related services, and supplementary aides and services could not be provided or effectively provided during the school closure. IEP teams are expected to meet as soon as possible, and no later than six (6) months from the start of the 2020-2021 school year, to review the student's IEP and determine if any additional services are needed.

English Learners. The school district recognizes that some specially designed instruction, related services, and supplementary aides and services could not be provided or effectively provided during the school closure. Teams are expected to meet as soon as possible, and no later than six (6) months from the start of the 2020-2021 school year, to review the student's English Language Development Plan and determine if any additional services are needed.

4 Year Old Kindergarten. The SDMA will continue to offer 4K programming in a community based approach as buildings reopen. This approach provides families the option to request placements at 4K sites located within SDMA elementary schools (River Heights, and Wakanda), at the University of WI-Stout Child and Family Studies Center, Menomonee Head Start,

participating child care centers (Bouncin' Babies & Kool Kids, Little Sprouts Academy, Milestones Education Community), and one parochial partner (St. Joseph's School). All 4K sites will offer in person learning opportunities for families unless directed to transition to Safer at Home (Remote) Learning by the SDMA or local health department. Additional 4K specific information can be accessed through the [4K Site Reopening Protocols](#) document.

Health and Safety

COVID-19 mitigation efforts will be designed and adopted across the school district to keep learning environments as safe as possible by making strategic and ethical decisions to comply with requirements and guidelines from state and county agencies, including but not limited to:

Hygiene and related educational campaigns. Strategies and protocols for reducing the potential spread of the virus (eg. proper hand washing, physical distancing, and mask use) will be taught to SDMA students and staff.

Physical distancing. Physical distancing will be considered when placing desks in classrooms, arranging seating for meals, and when students are lined up for transitions. It is anticipated that classrooms will be set up with at least 4 feet of physical distancing for the full enrollment instructional plan, and 6 feet of spacing anticipated in most classrooms. If stricter physical distancing requirements become necessary as determined by the Dunn County Health Department, the school district may implement the Blending Learning plan to emphasize at least 6 feet of physical distancing throughout the school district.

Student and staff masks and PPE. The use of cloth face coverings and personal protective equipment (PPE) by staff and students in the SDMA will be aligned with recommendations from the Department of Public Health, the [Department of Public Instruction](#), and any statewide order. Currently, the use of cloth face coverings is required while indoors, and the use of face coverings is required outside when physical distancing of at least 6 feet cannot be achieved. Special accommodations related to the use of cloth face coverings and PPE will be made on an individual basis in accordance with any applicable laws or orders.

Cohorting. Students will be grouped as much as feasible to reduce the risk of transmission and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of any needed contact tracing. Cohorting also reduces the number of students that might need to quarantine in the event that there is a positive case of COVID-19 in school.

Illness monitoring. Screening and response protocols will be followed to identify, separate, and support students and staff with COVID-symptoms. NOTE: individual students, staff members, or other visitors are prohibited from entering school facilities or participating in any in-person school activity during a time at which ANY of the following conditions are present:

- The individual has contracted COVID-19 and has not been released from isolation as determined by their local County Health Department.
- The individual has been notified of potential COVID-19 exposure (close contact, etc.) and has not been released from isolation as determined by their local County Health Department.
- The individual is exhibiting any one (1) of the following primary COVID-19 symptoms:
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fever (Temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher)
 - Sore throat
- The student or staff member is exhibiting two (2) or more secondary symptoms such as:
 - Headache
 - Fatigue
 - Cough
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
- Anyone who has been prohibited from entering school facilities, or participating in any in-person school activity due to illness or illness symptoms, will be required to follow the [DPI's Returning to School After COVID-19](#) criteria before being allowed to return.

Operations

Cleaning and disinfecting. Guidelines and practices for expanded cleaning and disinfecting expectations are being developed to reduce the potential for virus spread. ([full plan is linked here](#))

Air filtration and exchange. HVAC settings in all school district buildings will be changed to increase the amount of air exchange. The quality of air filters and the schedule for replacing filters in the school district will be evaluated. ([full plan is linked here](#))

Food service. Breakfast and lunch will be offered to all students, while still promoting physical distancing between students and cohort grouping as much as practical. ([an initial draft of the food service plan is linked here](#))

Transportation. Transportation will be offered to students, while still promoting mitigation strategies like hand sanitation, the use of cloth face coverings, physical distancing between students and cohort groupings when feasible. Families will be encouraged to transport children on their own if/when possible. ([here is the full operational plan](#) submitted by Menomonie Transportation)

Technology. Purchases have been made and plans are being developed to ensure students and staff have more reliable access to the tools and connectivity needed to support in-person or virtual learning. ([the technology plan is linked here](#))

Staffing. Staffing will be adjusted as needed to meet the goals outlined for all potential learning environments. ([the staffing plan is linked here](#))

Staff Development. Training and support for educators to adapt to new operational responsibilities such as symptom screening, enforcing mitigation measures, maintaining physical distancing, and using PPE safely. ([The staff development plan is linked here](#))

Communication. The sharing of information related to COVID-19 will adhere to all laws and regulations associated with student and employee privacy. A multifaceted plan to communicate decisions, plans, learning environment transitions, and other important information related to COVID-19 to students, families, staff, and the community will be developed and followed.

School visitors. Building-level plans and procedures will be modified to further restrict school access for visitors. Safety protocols will be developed for necessary school visits and access to the schools by parents for both planned visits and emergencies.

Field trips. Field trips off of school grounds are prohibited and will not be considered until guidelines for physical distancing and cohorting are lifted.

Food and drinks from home. Food and drinks brought from home will be allowed for individual use in accordance with existing policies and school rules. Food and drinks are not to be shared, stored overnight or in any kinds of shared cooler or refrigerator. Classroom treats (eg. birthday treats) will not be allowed during the 2020-2021 school year or until further notice.

Facility Use Requests. Facility use requests by outside groups may be considered, but an approved COVID-19 plan must accompany all requests and be strictly adhered to during the use of any school facility.

Community Education. Community Education programming may be considered, but an approved COVID-19 plan must accompany all requests and be strictly adhered to during the use of any school facility. When possible, virtual programming for community education offerings will be encouraged.

Athletics and Co-Curricular Activities

The school district recognizes that athletics and co-curricular activities are a vital part of the school experience for students. Activities will be evaluated by the school district in conjunction with the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA), the Dunn County Health Department, the Big Rivers Conference, and any other relevant organizations to determine on an individual basis the amount of risk involved with the activity and the number of mitigation strategies available to reduce the potential harm.

Resources / Guidelines Considered in Developing this Plan

- Centers for Disease Control (CDC) School Guidance: [LINK](#)
- State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services (State DHS): [LINK](#)
- DHS School Guidance: [LINK](#)
- State DHS Reopening School Risk Assessment Tool: [LINK](#)
- Department of Public Instruction (DPI) School Guidance (6/21/20): [LINK](#)
- WIAA Guidance on Infectious Disease: [LINK](#)
- The Dunn County Health Department Dashboard: [LINK](#)