SIoux City Community School District

Return-to-Learn Plan

2020-2021
Sioux City Community School District’s Return-to-Learn Plan

The Sioux City Community School District (SCCSD) developed a Return-to-Learn Plan for the 2020-2021 school year as directed by the Iowa Department of Education. Within the District’s Return-to-Learn Plan are three different learning situations. The three different learning situations are explained within this document. We planned for three different learning situations and will move from one to another if conditions related to COVID-19 change within the state, community or school buildings. Staff, students and parents should prepare for all three learning situations for the 2020-2021 school year. Even though we have three learning situations developed, we continue to believe that the On-Site Learning situation is the optimal learning environment for students. We have a high quality staff in the Sioux City Community School District and believe students attending in brick-and-mortar buildings receiving instruction from teachers and support from staff is the ideal situation for learning.

Virtual Learning

Virtual learning occurs when a decision is made by the Iowa Department of Education, in consultation with the Iowa Department of Public Health, for an emergency closure of a building and/or buildings. If a single building closes due to a COVID-19 outbreak and there is a need for sanitization, the students and staff in that building will immediately transfer to virtual learning. If there is a wider outbreak of COVID-19 and multiple or all buildings close, the students and staff in all affected buildings will immediately transfer to virtual learning. Virtual learning may be utilized for single classrooms to mitigate COVID-19 exposure beyond the classroom. The decision to close a single classroom will be made by the superintendent in consultation with state and local public health departments. With proper notification, virtual learning may be implemented rather than canceling school due to inclement weather. The decision to move to virtual learning because of inclement weather will be made by the superintendent. Learning provided to students during virtual learning will be required with attendance taken by teachers, grades issued, and credit awarded. Virtual learning will also be an option for parents when the District is authorized to provide Hybrid Learning or On-Site Learning.

Focus group participants identified connectivity as a top priority for the District’s Return-to-Learn Plan. We will deliver all instruction and complete all learning virtually in the case of an emergency closure. Hotspot devices will be provided to families without internet access. In some cases, hard copies of learning materials may be provided.

The SCCSD provides laptops to all students in grades 6-12. The laptops are internet accessible and can be taken home by students. The SCCSD provides devices for students in TK-5 for their individual use. If virtual learning is implemented, all TK-12 students will take devices home.
To aid in virtual communication, upgrades and expansion of the Net Extender and related equipment (or other comparable solution) will occur. Net Extender allows access to work-place digital materials from home. Net Extender also allows staff to communicate with families without requiring the use of personal phones. The guidance counselors shared the need for enhanced communication capability through the focus group discussion.

Another priority identified by focus group participants was the need for a consistent method of content delivery, consistent processes, and consistent procedures during virtual learning. All TK-12 teachers use a common learning management system during virtual learning, such as Canvas or Seesaw. All TK-12 teachers use Microsoft Teams for virtual meetings and instruction. The Teams meetings will be created, and students will join the meetings through Outlook Calendar. Even though no one likes to be told how to do things, the consistency in processes benefit students and families during virtual learning.

Revised curriculum maps and pacing guides include resources for teachers to use during virtual learning implementation. The use of revised curriculum maps ensures that grade-level material with appropriate rigor is delivered consistently across all buildings during virtual learning implementation.

Professional development for teachers, training for students, and training for parents focusing on a virtual learning situation will be provided. The 2020-2021 school calendar will be revised, and the October 30 professional development day will be moved to August 24. Teachers will receive professional development focused on delivering online instruction on August 24. Students will start school on August 25, and the October 30 professional development day will be a regular school day. This adjustment to the calendar causes the least amount of disruption to summer plans and end of year plans. Of course, one day of professional development will not be enough to adequately prepare teachers to adjust to the change in instructional delivery. Teachers will be paid to attend two optional training days to learn navigation of online platforms during the summer of 2020. Additional professional development will occur during the school year. If students can return to school on August 25, they will receive training on school procedures, which will include accessing digital material through Canvas, accessing Outlook e-mail and calendar, and other essential technological functions. Communication will be prepared that will help with troubleshooting technology questions during virtual learning, and the communication will be available to students, teachers, and parents. A help desk will be available for technology questions for parents, students, and teachers to contact between 7:00 am and 9:30 pm.

At the beginning of the school year, all staff will access a document sharing the major content and skills that students did not receive instruction on during the 2019-2020 school year due to the closure of schools. This document provides teachers with insight regarding the gaps in learning that occurred during the closure.

Within the first month of the 2020-2021 school year, assessments will be administered, and data analysis conducted to determine the educational level and proficiency of students. The following assessments will be used to make programming and placement decisions: IGDIs for literacy and math for preschool students, FAST literacy assessment for students in grades TK-5, FAST math assessment for students in grades TK-5, District-developed BME math assessment
for students in grades 6-12, Rapid literacy assessment for students in grades 6-8, Open Response writing assessments in grades 9-12 and the District-developed pre-assessment in literacy for students in grades 2-12. Assessment results will be shared with parents at the fall parent-teacher conferences.

At the beginning of the year, students will be taught procedures that will include accessing Outlook e-mail, accessing Outlook calendar, joining Teams meetings, participating appropriately during instruction delivered through Teams, accessing the District "landing page" that holds the District supported and most commonly used programs/applications, accessing and navigating within Canvas, accessing the help desk for technical questions or problems, and proper hand-washing.

Special education students that qualify for extended school year services attend summer school delivered virtually.

Access to the building during virtual learning is limited. Teachers, custodians, support staff, paraeducators, and other essential staff will report to the building during a building closure. Teachers and staff who have children that attend District schools can send their child to the school of enrollment, even during a school closure. Paraeducators, support staff, and other essential staff assigned by the principal will support District staff’s children, who are enrolled in Sioux City Community School District schools, while learning virtually in the building. Parents can contact the building principal to retrieve essential materials for their child, such as learning devices, medications, and clothes. Outside agencies that use the building will not be permitted to access the building during a virtual learning situation.

Food security for students will be addressed during virtual learning through the school lunch program as allowed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Guidance counselors, teachers, outreach workers, liaisons, attendance specialists, school nurses, school resource officers and other support staff will have “office hours” that are dedicated to communication with students and parents. The office hours will be communicated via the District’s webpage, and parents and students will be encouraged to contact staff members during office hours. Teachers will hold office hours outside of the time instruction is being delivered.

Of course, staff and student’s health and safety were a top priority for focus group participants and others who provided feedback for the Return-to-Learn Plan. Sanitation of building or buildings occurs during virtual learning implementation.

Parents that choose the virtual learning options for the 2020-2021 school year, rather than attending during the Hybrid Learning or On-Site Learning, will be expected to support their child or children at home with their learning. It will be the family’s responsibility to acquire internet in their home. Parents will communicate their commitment to Virtual Learning by August 1. Parents will commit to virtual learning for an entire quarter. If parents choose to transition to Hybrid Learning or On-Site Learning later in the school year, the intention to transition must be communicated by December 1, 2020, for second semester staffing decisions.

Before the 2020-2021 school year starts, the attendance policy will be revised, guidelines for parents regarding when to keep sick children home will be revised, expectations for starting
A partnership with Siouxland Community Health Center allows staff to receive COVID tests at a reduced rate.

**Hybrid Learning**

Hybrid Learning occurs when a decision is made by the Governor or District Health Department that buildings can operate with half capacity and social distancing maintained. Hybrid Learning also occurs when a decision is made by the superintendent to operate with half capacity and social distancing maintained. During Hybrid Learning, the school calendar will be adjusted, and student and staff schedules will be adjusted.

During hybrid learning, students attend school on-site Monday and Thursday or Tuesday and Friday. Families with more than one child in school will be on the same schedule so that all children will attend either Monday and Thursday or Tuesday and Friday. This schedule reflects a request made by parents during focus group discussions. Students with last names beginning with A-M attend school Monday and Thursday. Students with last names beginning with N-Z attend school Tuesday and Friday. High school students have an eight-period day, rather than a block schedule of four periods a day. This change in the schedule for high school students provides contact with teachers and students more than once each week. When students are not attending school on-site, they will be completing coursework at home. There will be an expectation that coursework is completed, and it will be important for parents/guardians to support their child’s learning while at home during hybrid learning.

If directed to implement Hybrid Learning, Monday will not be a shortened day for students. Professional development for teachers will be moved to Wednesday. Teachers will be available to support students on Wednesday. Parents and students will be able to come to the school for additional support on Wednesday.

During focus group conversations, several schedules were discussed, such as a morning and afternoon session for students. In this model, students with last names beginning with A-M would attend school on-site during the morning and then complete coursework at home while students with last names beginning with N-Z attended school in the afternoon and completed coursework at home the next morning. The positive result of holding morning and afternoon sessions was that teachers would have the ability to make contact with students every day. The major concern with this model was that electives, exploratories, and “specials” such as music, art, and PE would not be held on-site. The SCCSD values all courses taught and knows that students value courses they take also. By designing a hybrid model that holds on-site instruction for students Monday and Thursday or Tuesday and Friday, we ensure all classes are provided to students.
Similar to virtual learning, a top requirement for hybrid learning to be most successful is providing connectivity to every student. We will be prepared to deliver instruction and support students virtually during hybrid learning. Hotspot devices will be provided to families without internet access. In some cases, hard copies of learning materials may be provided.

The SCCSD provides laptops to all students in grades 6-12. The laptops are internet accessible and can be used at school and home. The SCCSD provides devices for students in TK-5 for their individual use. If hybrid learning is utilized, all TK-12 students will take devices home.

To aid in virtual communication, upgrades and expansion of the Net Extender and related equipment (or other comparable solution) will occur. Net Extender allows access to work-place digital materials from home. Net Extender also allows staff to communicate with families without requiring the use of staff's personal phone. The guidance counselors shared the need for enhanced communication capability through the focus group discussion.

Another priority identified by focus group participants was the need for a consistent method of content delivery, consistent processes, and consistent procedures during hybrid learning. All TK-12 teachers use a common learning management system during hybrid learning, such as Canvas or Seesaw. All TK-12 teachers use Microsoft Teams for hybrid meetings and instruction. The Teams meetings will be created, and students will join the meetings through Teams Calendar. Even though no one likes to be told how to do things, the consistency in processes and procedures benefit students and families during hybrid learning.

Revised curriculum maps and pacing guides include resources for teachers to use during hybrid learning implementation. Materials and learning opportunities expected to be completed by the student at home are identified in the curriculum map. The use of revised curriculum maps ensures that grade-level material with appropriate rigor is delivered consistently across all buildings during hybrid learning implementation.

Professional development for teachers, training for students, and training for parents focusing on a hybrid learning situation will be prepared. The 2020-2021 school calendar will be revised, and the October 30 professional development day will be moved to August 24. Professional development for teachers on August 24 will focus on delivering online instruction. Students start school on August 25, and school is held on October 30. This adjustment to the calendar causes the least amount of disruption to summer plans and end-of-year plans. Of course, one day of professional development is not enough to adequately prepare teachers to adjust to the change in instructional delivery. Teachers will be paid to attend two optional training days to learn navigation of online platforms during the summer of 2020. Additional professional development occurs during the school year. When students return to school on August 25, they receive training on school procedures, which includes accessing digital material through Canvas, accessing Outlook e-mail and calendar, and other essential technological functions. Communication will be prepared that will help with troubleshooting technology questions during hybrid learning, and the communication will be available to students, teachers, and parents. A help desk will be available for technology questions for parents, students, and teachers to contact between 7:00 am and 9:30 pm.
At the beginning of the year, all staff will access a document sharing the major content and skills that students did not receive instruction on during the 2019-2020 school year due to the closure of schools. This document provides teachers with insight regarding the gaps in learning that occurred during the closure.

During the first month of the 2020-2021 school year, assessments will be administered, and data analysis conducted to determine the educational level and proficiency of students. The following assessments will be used to make programming and placement decisions: IGDIs for literacy and math for preschool students, FAST literacy assessment for students in grades TK-5, FAST math assessment for students in grades TK-5, District-developed BME math assessment for students in grades 6-12, Rapid literacy assessment for students in grades 6-8, Open Response writing assessments in grades 9-12 and the District-developed pre-assessment in literacy for students in grades 2-12. Assessment results will be shared with parents at the fall parent-teacher conferences.

At the beginning of the year, students are taught procedures including accessing Outlook e-mail, accessing Outlook calendar, joining Teams meetings, participating appropriately during instruction delivered through Teams, accessing the District “landing page” that holds the District supported and most commonly used programs/applications, accessing and navigating within Canvas, accessing the help desk for technical questions or problems and proper hand-washing.

Access to the building during hybrid learning is limited to half capacity. Social distancing will be practiced within the classrooms. Desks and learning stations will be spaced to allow students to maintain a 6’ distance from one another. During movement outside of the classroom, such as walking in the hallway to different classes, students and staff, will be expected to wear a mask or shield. Students are encouraged to bring their own mask or shield to school. Volunteers within the community will make masks or shields that will be provided to students who do not bring their own mask or shield to school. Students will clean their desks or learning station before and after use. Cleaning supplies will be available. Hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom and office. We will monitor CDC guidance and make adjustments to procedures when needed.

During focus group conversations, discussions regarding the requirement of masks or shields to be worn occurred. Valid points brought up by focus group participants regarding the complications associated with the requirement that masks or shields be worn include: some students are sensory sensitive, and masks affect them negatively; masks are not appropriate for very young children to wear nor appropriate for some students with illnesses to wear; facial expressions are important for students to see as they learn to read, speak and socialize. A survey question asked staff and parents about their willingness to wear a mask at work or their willingness to send their child to school wearing a mask. There were 82% of staff who said they would wear a mask at work. There were 76% of the parents who said they would be willing to send their child to school wearing a mask. There are educational reasons why shields are better to use than masks. We will rely on CDC recommendations to finalize the decision.

All parents are expected to take their child/children’s temperature before they leave home when going to school or activities. (Guidance regarding steps for parents to take when their child is sick will be shared during a later communication.) If a child becomes sick at school, there are
two different steps to take. If a child is coughing and appears to have a fever (possible COVID symptoms), the child should be sent from the classroom with a mask to the “caring room”. The child should not be sent to the office where there is high traffic. The “caring room” will be equipped with supplies and equipment to determine if the child should be sent home. A staff member will be designated to attend to the “caring room” and will be provided PPE materials. If it is determined that the child should be sent home, a parent will be contacted and expected to come to school to take their sick child home and to help prevent further spread of possible COVID in the building. Students that are sick with other non-COVID symptoms will be sent to the office when sick.

Access to the building during hybrid learning is limited. Parents and volunteers will not be able to visit classrooms as a health and safety precaution. Parents can accompany their child to school on Wednesdays, during designated times, while the student receives support from a teacher. Access of outside agencies will be determined on a case-by-case basis during hybrid learning situations. Decisions regarding extra-curricular activities will follow guidance from respective high school associations.

Food security for students will be addressed during hybrid learning through the school lunch program as allowed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Students attending school on-site will be provided breakfast and lunch on days scheduled to attend, and students learning at-home on days not attending on-site will be provided the option of picking up a grab-n-go lunch and breakfast outside of the school.

Guidance counselors, teachers, outreach workers, liaisons, attendance specialists, school nurses, school resource officers and other support staff will have “office hours” that are dedicated to communication with students and parents. The office hours will be communicated via the District’s webpage, and parents and students will be encouraged to contact staff members during office hours. Teachers will hold office hours outside of the time instruction is being delivered.

All staff will report to a building on Wednesday weekly. The staff will either be engaged in professional development on Wednesday, supporting students and parents, or cleaning the building. Professional development may be provided virtually.

Of course, a top priority of the focus group participants and others who provided feedback was the health and safety of students and staff. High-touch areas in the buildings and classrooms will be cleaned more frequently during the day and thorough cleaning will not be restricted until after the building is vacated. Night custodial staff will come to work in the afternoon to clean while students are in the building. Buildings will be sanitized thoroughly on Wednesday each week.

Before the 2020-2021 school year starts, the attendance policy will be revised; guidelines for parents regarding when to keep sick children home will be revised; expectations for starting school will be developed and communicated; promotion, grading, and open campus policies may be reviewed; acceptable use policy will be reviewed, schedules for students and staff will be developed; and communication with parents regarding technology will be developed and shared. Communication for families will be accessible in the language of the family.
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**On-Site Learning**

On-Site Learning occurs when a decision is made that buildings can operate, and students can return to school. The adopted calendar and assigned (normal) schedule for students will be followed. To help remediate some of the learning lost during school closure in 2020, summer school will be provided to students that are level 1 or 2 in the English as a Second Language program and to students entering 1st grade, 2nd grade, and 8th grade. Summer school will also be provided to high school students that were enrolled in Principles of Algebra and Geometry or Algebra I during the 2019-2020 school year. Summer school starts August 3 and ends August 14. With approximately 1/3 of the students in each building during summer school, our routines and processes can be practiced and refined to ensure a safe return-to-learn for the full student body. Also, the grades and classes that were identified to attend summer school were selected for a reason. The skills and concepts that are taught at the end of the year can be critical for success in the following year. The “missed” skills and concepts for reading and math were identified for each grade level and class. Students entering 1st grade missed critical reading and math skills that are necessary to be successful in 1st grade, so that’s why students entering 1st grade were selected to attend summer school. The same is true for the other grades and classes selected. Summer school focuses on reading for 2nd grade students. Summer school focuses on math for 8th grade students, Principles of Algebra and Geometry and Algebra I. Of course, every student in every grade and class missed skills and concepts. We would like to, but are unable to offer a two-week summer school or extend the school year by two weeks. The SCCSD budgeted for a 180-day school year. To extend the school year beyond 180 days would surpass the budget. We have been provided ESSER funds that we will use for summer school. If we changed our plan and held summer school for all students and all courses, we would only be able to hold two days of summer school with the ESSER funds.

The SCCSD provides laptops to all students in grades 6-12. The laptops are internet accessible and can be used at school and home. The SCCSD provides devices for students in TK-5 for their individual use. There will not be a need to share devices.

Professional development for teachers, training for students, and training for parents to prepare for a hybrid learning or virtual learning situation properly will be provided. The 2020-2021 school calendar will be revised, and the October 30 professional development day will be moved to August 24. Professional development for teachers will focus on delivering online instruction on August 24. Students start school on August 25, and school is held on October 30. This adjustment to the calendar causes the least amount of disruption to summer plans and end-of-year plans. Of course, one day of professional development is not enough to adequately prepare teachers to adjust to the change in instructional delivery. Teachers will be paid to attend two optional training days to learn navigation of online platforms during the summer of 2020.
Additional professional development occurs during the school year. When students return to school on August 25, they receive training on school procedures, which includes accessing digital material through Canvas, accessing Outlook e-mail and calendar, and other essential technological functions. Communication will be prepared that will help with troubleshooting technology questions during hybrid learning or virtual learning, and the communication will be available to students, teachers, and parents.

At the beginning of the year, all staff will access a document that shares the major content and skills that students did not receive instruction on during the 2019-2020 school year due to the closure of schools. This document provides teachers with insight regarding the gaps in learning that occurred during the closure.

During the first month of the 2020-2021 school year, assessments will be administered, and data analysis conducted to determine the educational level and proficiency of students. The following assessments will be used to make programming and placement decisions: IGDIs for literacy and math for preschool students, FAST literacy assessment for students in grades TK-5, FAST math assessment for students in grades TK-5, District-developed BME math assessment for students in grades 6-12, Rapid literacy assessment for students in grades 6-8, Open Response writing assessments in grades 9-12 and the District-developed pre-assessment in literacy for students in grades 2-12. Assessment results will be shared with parents at the fall parent-teacher conferences.

At the beginning of the year, in addition to the traditional routines that are taught, students will be taught additional procedures. Additional procedures include: accessing Outlook e-mail, accessing Outlook calendar, joining Teams meetings, participating appropriately during instruction delivered through Teams, accessing the District “landing page” that holds the District supported and most commonly used programs/applications, accessing and navigating within Canvas or Seesaw, accessing the help desk for technical questions or problems and proper hand-washing.

As an extra safety measure, students and staff will be expected to bring a mask or shield to school daily. During movement outside of the classroom, such as walking in the hallway to different classes, students and staff will be expected to wear a mask or shield. Students are encouraged to bring their own mask or shield to school. Volunteers within the community will make masks or shields that will be provided to students that do not bring their own mask or shield to school. Students will clean their desks or learning station before and after use. Cleaning supplies will be available. Hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom and office. We will monitor CDC guidance and make adjustments to procedures when needed.

During focus group conversations, discussions regarding the requirement of masks or shields to be worn occurred. Valid points brought up by focus group participants regarding the complications associated with the requirement that masks or shields be worn included: some students are sensory sensitive, and masks affect them negatively; masks are not appropriate for very young children to wear nor appropriate for some students with illnesses to wear; facial expressions are important for students to see as they learn to read, speak and socialize. A survey question asked staff and parents about their willingness to wear a mask at work or their willingness to send their child to school wearing a mask. There were 82% of staff who said they
would wear a mask at work. There were 76% of the parents who said they would be willing to send their child to school wearing a mask. There are educational reasons why shields are better to use than masks. We will rely on CDC recommendations to finalize our decision.

All parents are expected to take their child/children’s temperature before they leave home when going to school or activities. (Guidance regarding steps for parents to take when their child is sick will be shared during a later communication.) If a child becomes sick at school, there are two different steps to take. If a child is coughing and appears to have a fever (possible COVID symptoms), the child should be sent from the classroom with a mask to the “caring room”. The child should not be sent to the office where there is high traffic. The “caring room” will be equipped with supplies and equipment to determine if the child should be sent home. A staff member will be designated to attend to the “caring room” and will be provided PPE materials. If it is determined that the child should be sent home, a parent will be contacted and expected to come to school to take their sick child home and to help prevent further spread of possible COVID in the building. Students that are sick with other non-COVID symptoms will be sent to the office when sick.

Of course, a top priority of the focus group participants and others who provided feedback was the health and safety of students and staff. High-touch areas in the buildings and classrooms will be cleaned more frequently during the day and thorough cleaning will not be restricted until after the building is vacated. Night custodial staff will come to work in the afternoon to clean while students are in the building.

Another safety precaution for the beginning of the year is limiting access to the buildings. Parents and volunteers will not be able to visit classrooms as a health and safety precaution. Access of outside agencies will be determined on a case-by-case basis during on-site learning.

Before the 2020-2021 school year starts, the attendance policy will be revised; guidelines for parents regarding when to keep sick children home will be revised; expectations for starting school will be developed and communicated; promotion, grading, and open campus policies may be reviewed; acceptable use policy will be reviewed, schedules for students and staff will be developed; and communication with parents regarding technology will be developed and shared. Communication for families will be accessible in the language of the family.

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NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Sioux City Community School District offers career and technical programs in the following areas: Business & Marketing, Family & Consumer Science, Health Science, and Industrial Arts, Technology, & PLTW.

The Sioux City Community School District is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information (for employment), national origin, religion, age (for employment), disability, socioeconomic status (for programs), marital status (for programs), or veteran status (for employment) in its educational programs and its employment practices. The District is required by Title IX and 34 CFR Part 106 not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its programs, activities, or employment.

Inquiries or grievances under Section 504 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act may be directed to Jen Gomez, Director of Student Services & Equity Education/Title IX Coordinator at 627 4th Street, Sioux City, IA 51101, (712) 279-6075, gomezj2@live.siouxcityschools.com. Inquiries about the application of Title IX and its regulations to the District may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator, the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, or both. Please see District Board policies 103 and 504.4 for additional information on available grievance procedures.