

White Pine County School District



**Tentative Return to School Plan
2020-2021**

Overview

The WPCSD's vision is to "change the world by creating a world class learning environment where all participants work interdependently to achieve our mission of promoting, supporting, and ensuring high levels of learning." The unprecedented circumstances of March, April, and May of 2020 made creating this world class learning environment a distinct challenge. Students, families, teachers, support staff, and leaders all worked admirably during that time in order to put forth individual and collective efforts to change the world. And yet, we all recognize that despite those outstanding efforts, learning conditions were less than ideal during that time of emergency response. As we move forward in continued uncertainty, we must all commit to doing our very best while also allowing for grace as we work together to adapt.

The purpose of this plan is to outline the WPCSD's intentions, plans, and contingencies for school resuming on September 8. The district desires for *all students and educators* to have the opportunity to be on campus when the school year begins. In order for this to occur, families, students, and educators will need to sacrifice some individual comforts for the good of the whole. These restrictions will be described in this document.

However, the district also recognizes that there will be some families who are not comfortable being back in school full time. The district desires to provide *options for families who wish for their students to remain at home*.

District staff have examined survey results from parents and students, analyzed the potential risks of transmission of the virus against the academic and social-emotional harm of isolating students, and struggled through the logistics and difficulties associated with enforcing recommended health practices. The process has been deliberate, collaborative, and challenging.

Intentions

1. The WPCSD desires to invite all students back onto campus for In Person Learning.
2. The WPCSD desires to provide convenient and accessible learning activities including Zooming into lessons for students when they need to be absent for caution's sake.
3. The WPCSD intends to provide fully online learning through Edgenuity and Schools PLP for families who are uncomfortable returning to campus.

Guiding Principles

1. First and foremost, the plan is adaptable. That is to say, based on national, state, and local conditions, the plan is subject to change. While it is uncomfortable to have a plan that can change at a moment's notice, it is also the nature of adapting to a pandemic. As local conditions continue to fluctuate, the district will continue to adjust.
2. There is no way to "guarantee" safety. There is a risk in students and staff returning to school in the same way there is a risk in going to the grocery store or a public event.

The practices and procedures listed in this document are designed to reduce that risk to the extent possible. However, it will still exist.

3. The benefits of students attending a community school with caring, dedicated educators outweigh the risks of virus transmission *as long as* safety protocols are effective in eliminating or minimizing the spread of the virus.
4. *Individual and family responsibility are not negotiable.* This plan is presented as the way our schools can attempt to meet students' and the community's needs through in person learning. School staff will always work to monitor and encourage students to abide by guidelines. But guidelines are only useful if everyone agrees to follow them. We need families and students who want to be back at school to respect and support the guidelines and self-monitor compliance. If conditions at schools are such that teachers and staff are constantly fighting with students to adhere to the guidelines, then In Person Instruction will by necessity cease in order to protect community health. In other words, and to avoid mincing words, *everybody has to do their job.*
5. As educators, students, parents, and community members, we must exercise [empathy](#) and treat each other with kindness. We all have different struggles and needs. It may be impossible to understand each of those needs and perspectives. However, we must "seek first to understand" and do our best to come together and seek solutions, remembering that nobody who is dealing with these various difficulties caused the pandemic or asked for its resulting challenges. Using empathy and kindness does not mean that problems or difficulties should be ignored; rather, that as we strive to treat each other with humanity and understanding, our community and world class learning environment will thrive despite the difficulties.

Safety Pillars

1. Physical distancing is essential. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states "Evidence suggests that spacing as close as 3 feet may approach the benefits of 6 feet of space, particularly if students are wearing face coverings and are asymptomatic. Schools should weigh the benefits of strict adherence to a 6-foot spacing rule between students with the potential downside if remote learning is the only alternative." In our situation, it will be possible to adhere to 3 feet distancing guidelines and in many cases, it will be possible to approach 6 feet distancing guidelines. *However, we must have cooperation from families and students.* We need students to strive to adhere to these guidelines without having to be constantly nagged by teachers. Schools teams are developing procedures in order to comply with physical distancing guidelines. They include addressing the following.
 - a. Gathering areas for students before school, at lunch, and after school.
 - b. Traffic control during passing times.
 - c. Configuring classrooms with as much space between desks as possible.
 - d. Avoiding physical contact including hugs, shaking hands, etc.
 - e. Working to reduce to the extent practical potential cross contamination. As described under Guiding Principle 2, it is impossible to completely prevent cross

contamination unless everybody stays at home in a bubble. Our aim is to reduce the risk to the extent that it is practical to do so.

- f. Procedures for limiting gatherings of students in groups larger than allowed by current government mandates.
2. Face coverings, while uncomfortable, are necessary at this point in time. Please refer to the second guiding principle above. Nobody is “guaranteeing” that face coverings fully protect the wearer or those around the wearer. However, the AAP states “Cloth face coverings protect others if the wearer is infected with SARS CoV-2 and is not aware. Cloth masks may offer some level of protection for the wearer. Evidence continues to mount on the importance of universal face coverings in interrupting the spread of SARS-CoV-2.” As suggested, the practice of covering one’s face in combination with physical distancing greatly decreases the likelihood of virus transmission and community spread. Schools will work with their students--particularly the very young and those with special needs--to develop options, mask breaks, etc. However, students and staff should plan on wearing a mask as it is currently a requirement as directed by the governor’s office. The responsibility to purchase, maintain, clean, and replace masks lies with families.
3. Health screenings before entering buildings are required. This is an important part of the everyday practice in homes across White Pine. Parents and children already regularly communicate about their health and wellness. For the foreseeable future, it needs to become a formal part of the morning routine. Parents and students must review the questions on [this screening](#) before coming to school each day.
4. Individual hygiene is frequent and thorough. All students must shower or bathe daily. All individuals on the school campus are required to wash their hands for 20 seconds following bathroom usage. Additionally, all individuals on the school campus shall sanitize their hands at least twice in the morning hours and twice in the afternoon hours.
5. Environmental disinfection is ongoing. The practices described above are thought to be more effective in limiting the spread of the virus than environmental sterilization alone. Environmental disinfection without the measures described above is thought to be an *insufficient* measure to reduce the spread of the virus. The AAP’s recommendations and the WPCSD expectations are listed [here](#).

Considerations for Learning

1. The District Performance Plan has three overarching goals: improving core academic learning, providing college and career readiness opportunities, and creating a positive culture and climate for learning. For the last three years, our system has stretched in order to make significant progress on the first two goals. At this point in time, while these two goals remain incredibly important, we must recognize that creating a supportive, vibrant, rich, and loving affective environment for our students is absolutely critical. Society has experienced a shared trauma. Students have been without some of their most treasured activities: music, sports, social interaction, etc. As we work to physically reopen our schools, we must do so through the lense of social and emotional learning, building relationships, and trauma informed care.

2. Similarly, as a system, we must recognize that students experienced academic learning in different ways as they learned from home. Schools will work to formally assess students in order to determine needs and make appropriate accommodations. However, teachers should free themselves of the need to start with “required” academic content immediately. While we should always strive for rigor and meaningful content, at this unprecedented time we must first embrace the challenge of meeting students where they are. Grade level content should come but be balanced with social and emotional learning and differentiated academic learning.
3. Teachers should aim to warehouse their Tier 1 instructional outcomes, plans, activities, and assessments in a Learning Management System (LMS) that is accessible to families digitally. This is necessary for several reasons. First, as described above and experienced in 2019-2020, despite every effort and desire to have students physically on campus, it is possible that a classroom, school, or the entire district may have to resume learning from home for a period of time. Given that this is likely, we should prepare as if it will happen rather than being caught off guard. Similarly, students will likely be missing more school than in the past based upon the health screening guidelines outlined above. Dealing with makeup work is always a hassle. Warehousing Tier 1 instructional activities in a location accessible to students and families will allow for streamlining when students inevitably have to miss school due to illness. And last, teachers will likely be missing more school as well based on the self screening process. *There has never been a more critical time for learning plans to be prepared at the beginning of each week.* Daily and weekly plans must be available for students so that, on a moment’s notice, a classroom can continue functioning if a teacher must leave due to an emergency. Google Classroom is recommended.
4. While our current situation as a country, state, and community is still less than ideal, it can no longer be considered an unforeseen emergency. In 2019-2020, because of the urgent nature of school closures and the need to adapt on the fly, awarding grades at course completion was less important than other considerations. While all stakeholders are urged to continue providing as much grace as possible for other parties in the educational family, grades *will* be issued during 2020-2021. This means that rubrics will be followed, due dates expected, and compliance with classroom work required in order to demonstrate mastery of learning outcomes. Students are expected to complete assignments in a timely fashion. Teachers are expected to provide feedback on assignments in a timely fashion. Grades are to be entered and updated weekly.
5. As noted under Safety Pillar 3, it will most likely be necessary for students to miss more school this year as the health screening procedure requires. We encourage students who have appropriate technology to make arrangements to Zoom into important lessons and activities from home if they are well enough to do so. Teachers are strongly encouraged to provide this opportunity on a daily basis for students who may be experiencing a symptom that prevents them from coming to school but is not so severe that they can’t engage from home. Students who Zoom into classes will be counted as *present* for the corresponding period(s) or day(s).

6. School had been officially scheduled to begin August 31. Based on the most recent feedback from the Return to School Committee, August 31, September 1, 2, and 3 will become additional professional development days with no students attending school. Students will report on September 8. The following items will be addressed during professional development, in addition to other topics identified through the WPCSD staff survey.
 - a. Training on the procedures outlined in this plan.
 - b. Professional development around digital learning, including using Google Classroom and Zoom effectively.
 - c. Digital resources available for utilization in classroom instruction, including MyOn Discovery Education, the Nevada Digital Learning Collaborative, Edgenuity, and Schools PLP.
 - d. Professional development around social and emotional learning and trauma informed care (in addition to the Hacking School Discipline training already scheduled).
 - e. The Hacking School Discipline training scheduled for August 24 and 25 will continue. Teachers will enjoy the equivalent of two full work days through August 26, 27, 31 and September 1. Students will return on September 2.
7. Schools will strive to provide connectivity and hardware to families who have the need. Additional Chromebooks and hotspots have already been ordered. The next wave of laptop replacements for teachers have also been ordered.

Considerations for Families

1. Each parent of elementary students and each student in middle school and high school is expected to perform the [self screening](#) before attending school each day.
2. As noted under Safety Pillar 3, students who are ill or suspected to have been in contact with infected persons need to stay home. It is anticipated that there will be more student absences this year as a result of this need. As noted under Considerations for Learning 5, students are strongly encouraged to Zoom into classes when they are home. Teachers will be working to warehouse instructional activities on Google Classroom and other Learning Management Systems *for all students*--even those attending school each and every day. So accessing assignments and assessments will be more convenient and less dependent upon seeking the teacher out directly to ask for the work. This will greatly reduce the lag in makeup work that is anticipated due to an increase in overall absenteeism. WPCSD policy [7200](#), dealing with student attendance, will be temporarily adjusted to allow for the additional flexibility as the pandemic continues.
3. *The WPCSD recognizes that some families may wish to keep their students in the home environment until national, state, and community conditions stabilize. We pledge to honor and support this desire. We take very seriously our obligation to provide options for all families during this challenging time. During the last week of July, the WPCSD will publish a survey seeking a (close to) final decision from families. The available options are to physically attend as frequently as possible while abiding by the necessary restrictions or to access learning online. Based on the data from this survey, the district*

will provide online learning platforms like Edgenuity and Schools PLP to students who wish to learn from home. Students choosing this option will remain enrolled at the WPCSD and will be provided with support from their principal, counselor, and social worker as well as academic assistance. Depending upon the number of students at each school who choose the fully online option, it is possible that teachers may be reassigned from in person learning duties to duties associated with monitoring students who are learning from home. Changes from one mode of learning to another (online to in person or vice versa) will be permitted but handled on a case by case basis.

4. Schools will continue to publish weekly updates regarding how things are going, adjustments that need to be made, and special requests. It is extremely important that we have accurate contact information for families in order to make communication a more efficient endeavor. Families are also encouraged to follow each school's and the district's social media accounts, as many public announcements are pushed out through that arena. In addition, families and students are urged to listen to, watch, and/or read *all* messages that schools send home. We recognize that there are many of these. But they contain critical information. Please take the time to digest this information.
5. Many supports for students--and families--exist within the WPCSD. We urge families to proactively communicate with your principal, counselor, social worker, and teacher when assistance is needed. It can be difficult for us to know who needs help and who wants to be left alone unless you share with us. If something is not going right, or if you have questions or concerns, please do not wait until there's a full blown crisis to communicate your needs. We may not be able to respond immediately, and we may not be able to provide every last wish. But we will work very hard within the parameters we have.

Considerations for Employees

1. Being an educator has never required so much courage, creativity, and grit. WPCSD team members at every level of the organization did a wonderful job adapting to the unpredictability that was March, April, and May. It appears as if there will continue to be ambiguity as 2020-2021 begins. The commitment that employees have to changing the world is admired and valued. Thank you for your service and your thoughtful approach to serving students and the community. At the same time, we as WPCSD employees should continue to be humble and grateful that our organization is in a place where positions and benefits do not have to be cut based on the state's economic circumstances. Our jobs were extremely difficult last spring. And many others in our community experienced circumstances as difficult or more so than ours. As we move forward, we as leaders can explicitly choose to embrace Guiding Principle 5 by seeking to understand the challenges of those around us. We can exercise empathy towards those in different situations than ours. We can express gratitude towards those who work behind the scenes. We can show grace to ourselves when we fall short of our expectations. If we do this, we have the opportunity to continue to reinforce to our community the essential and life changing nature of public education as an institution.
2. All staff members are required to [self screen](#) each day prior to reporting to work. In the event of illness, follow the procedures on the self screening document. Teachers must

ensure learning plans and instructional activities are posted to the LMS in advance (see Considerations for Learning 3) so that learning can continue in the least disruptive way possible.

3. The WPCSD will follow current policies, procedures, and protocols for staff members who have a compromised immune system or other health factors causing them to be at higher risk for Covid19.
 - a. Immunocompromised employees may request an unpaid leave of absence as specified in article 9.5 of the [WPCSSO Negotiated Agreement](#) and 9.6 of the [WPACT Negotiated Agreement](#).
 - b. Immunocompromised employees who choose to return to work can engage the district in the accommodation process through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to come up with reasonable accommodations to help them access their job.
 - c. Immunocompromised employees who choose to return to work have access to their accrued sick leave, the sick leave bank (if they're members of it), and the Covid19 leave allocated by the federal government under the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) if they have a qualifying situation.

Procedures for an Illness at School

1. Students and staff shall utilize the [self screening](#) tool each day prior to attending school.
2. Staff who become ill at school shall notify the principal immediately and arrange to leave school as soon as possible. If symptoms are consistent with Covid19, they shall seek the care of a physician. Utilize the guidelines on the self screening tool if Covid19 is ruled out. See Procedures for a Positive Case if diagnosed with Covid19.
3. Students who become ill at school shall report to the office immediately. The office will have a designated, separated area for students who are ill. The administrative assistant will utilize the [screening](#) tool, administer a temperature check, and notify the Chief District Nurse who will consult with public health officials if necessary. The Chief District Nurse will advise as to next steps. Students experiencing symptoms consistent with Covid19 will be sent home immediately and parents will be contacted. Students being sent home shall seek the care of a physician. Families shall utilize the guidelines on the self [screening](#) tool if Covid19 is ruled out. See Procedures for a Positive Case if diagnosed with Covid19.

Procedures for a Positive Case

1. Individual Responsibilities.
 - a. If you have tested positive or are confirmed to have Covid19 or are living in a home with someone who has tested positive, adhere to the following.
 - i. Do not attend school or enter any school or district facilities.
 - ii. Notify the principal or your supervisor immediately.
 - iii. Individuals who have tested positive for Covid19 or who have not been tested but were directed to stay home from school may return to school

under the following conditions according to Centers for Disease Control (CDC) [guidelines](#).

1. At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications *and*
 2. Improvement in respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) *and*
 3. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
2. Principal or Supervisor Responsibilities.
 - a. Notify the Chief District Nurse that you have an individual who has tested positive for Covid19.
 - b. Assist the Chief District Nurse and public health officials in contact tracing and investigation to determine if the individual contracted Covid19 at school and/or who else might have had close contact with the individual while at school.
 - c. In conjunction with the superintendent, notify school community members of their possible exposure to Covid19. Maintain confidentiality as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 3. District Responsibilities.
 - a. The Chief District Nurse will contact the superintendent.
 - b. The Chief District Nurse will coordinate with public health officials to conduct contact tracing and investigation as necessary.
 - c. Based on collaboration with public health officials, the principal and superintendent will determine if specific individuals, classrooms, school(s), or the entire district need to return to Mandatory Learn from Home mode.
 - d. In collaboration with the principal/supervisor, other appropriate personnel, and the public health office, the superintendent will implement the [Pandemic Response Plan](#).

Procedures for Reconvening Mandatory Learn from Home

1. If it becomes necessary to close a school or schools, the superintendent will notify staff, students, and community members.
2. As teachers are already expected to warehouse instructional activities on their LMS, learning activities will already be available for students. Learning should continue uninterrupted.
3. If Learn from Home is necessary for an entire school or the district, it is anticipated that it will be for a short period of time. However, the length of time is dependent upon the severity of circumstances and the recommendations of public health officials. The superintendent will confer with public health officials on a daily basis and provide weekly communication to families and staff members as to the expected duration of the closure.
4. Completion of learning tasks during a short term closure is expected. Students need to complete assignments in a timely fashion as they will be factored into grades.

Procedures for Transportation

1. Students are expected to wear masks while they ride the bus.
2. A maximum of one student per seat is allowed.
3. Students will be assigned seats.
4. As students exit the bus, they will do so from front to back. Students shall not stand up to exit the bus until it is their turn to exit. This is in order to avoid the close proximity that exists as students line up.
5. Students who live within a one mile radius from the school will not be provided transportation unless a demonstrable need exists. Families with demonstrable need should contact Kurt Lee, transportation director.
6. A survey determining transportation need will be administered during the week of July 27. Transportation and school personnel will contact each family in the district who does not respond to the survey in order to ascertain exact transportation needs. Bus routes will be built based upon this need and the ability of the district to accommodate the needs while adhering to physical distancing restrictions.

Procedures for Nutrition

1. Breakfast and lunch services will be provided for students each day.
2. Meals will be prepared in the “grab and go” style as opposed to the buffet style.
3. Students must observe physical distancing guidelines while in line to receive food.
4. After receiving food, students must report to the designated eating areas in their school. Masks should be put back on once eating is complete. Physical distancing protocols must be maintained while eating.

Procedures for Athletics

1. The WPCSD will adhere to the NIAA’s [phased reopening plan](#). Based on the NIAA’s recent announcement, interscholastic athletics competitions will not resume until January. However, practices and team activities should continue as long as the required restrictions are followed.

Next Steps

1. The Board of Trustees will review the draft plan on July 21.
2. A survey for staff members will be administered on July 23.
3. An additional survey for families will be administered on July 23, including requesting specific information on transportation, additional contact information, plans for each student’s full return or online return, etc. Families who do not respond by July 28 will be contacted by district personnel.
4. The Board of Trustees will review the revisions to the plan on August 4.
5. School teams will meet to determine logistical considerations (where students can gather, how to arrange classrooms, how to take mask breaks, etc.). This will be an ongoing process.
6. The final plan (which will still need to be adaptable) will be submitted to the NDE by August 5.

7. A request to convert August 31, September 1, September 2, and September 3 into professional development (non student days) will be submitted to the NDE. This means students' new start date will be September 8. These days will be used for professional development and work associated with strengthening educators' and the system's capacity for more effective and efficient online learning, preparing for the potential need to move back into Mandatory Learn from Home. Teachers and staff will still report back to work on August 24.