



HOME OF THE DIGGERS

SUGAR-SALEM SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 322



Reopening Schools Plan

2020-2024

This plan has been developed collaboratively by members of the Sugar-Salem School District Board of Trustees and Administration.

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January 3, 2024

Sugar City Parents and Patrons:

As we are preparing for the upcoming school year, we have put a great deal of thought into how we can meet the needs of our students, parents, teachers and patrons and still provide a safe learning environment. We know that face-to-face instruction is the most effective method for instruction and student learning.

We still believe that we can meet the safety protocols for our students and teachers and provide a school experience that will operate very similar to what we familiar with. We have prepared a plan that is in accordance with the guidelines that we have been given from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Eastern Idaho Public Health (EIPH), and the State Board of Education (SBOC). This plan is outlined in the enclosed pages.

We are looking forward to the upcoming school year! We are committed to providing the best possible experience that we can for everyone involved. This pandemic continues to be fluid. As such, we will continue to be responsive and adapt to the existing circumstances, as the situation demands.

Sincerely,

Jared Jenks
Superintendent of Schools

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Rationale for Reopening Schools

We believe that it is in the best interest of the students of Sugar Salem Joint School District 322 to reopen schools and resume instruction and learning. At the same time, we recognize our fundamental responsibility to ensure the safety of our students and staff. To that end, this plan will provide key information on additional steps that we will take to provide for the health and safety of our staff and students as we reopen schools on August 19th. Based on the following information, we believe that we can open schools with additional precautions to protect the health and safety of staff and students.

1. Idaho has successfully entered Stage Four of the Governor’s Idaho Rebounds Plan, which permits unrestricted staffing of worksites with physical distancing, personal protections and sanitation for protection. Stage Three also permits public gatherings of more than 50 people with appropriate physical distancing.
2. The Center for Disease Control has issued guidelines for schools to reopen. The CDC states that the “implementation [of these guidelines] should be guided by what is feasible, practical, acceptable, and tailored to the needs of each community.”
3. The Eastern Idaho Public Health District has not issued any orders preventing schools from reopening.

Guiding Principles

1. **We will take reasonable and rational precautions to protect the health and safety of our staff and students.** Precautionary measures to protect students’ health must be balanced against the potential disruptive or obstructive impact on student learning.
2. **We will collaborate with our local public health officials** to make decisions in the face of a global pandemic with community transmission.
3. **We will use official health agency information to make decisions.** Guidance from the CDC and state public health will be reviewed in collaboration with our local health agency to identify appropriate steps and to evaluate the viability and necessity of recommended strategies. Information from non-official sources may provide additional insights; however, our decisions will be based on information from official public health agencies. All other sources of information will be carefully selected to ensure our decisions are based on research-based evidence.
4. **We believe that students learn best through direct instruction from highly effective teachers.** Developing a plan that will allow face-to-face instruction to happen safely is our top priority. If that ideal becomes impossible, then **we will make every effort to continue students’ learning through** online instruction at home.
5. **The expectation in all phases is that families will fully support their student’s educational needs during this pandemic.** We will strive to deliver a full curriculum during this time, and believe that many students will need additional support, especially in phases 2 and 3.

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CDC Guidance for Opening Schools

CDC Guidance

The CDC has issued guidance for opening schools based on the following four principles:

1. Promote behaviors that reduce spread
2. Maintain healthy environments
3. Maintain healthy operations
4. Prepare for students and staff getting sick

Key Information

- COVID-19 is mostly spread by respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze. It is thought that the virus may spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose or mouth, causing infection. Therefore, personal prevention practices (such as handwashing, staying home when sick) and environmental cleaning and disinfection are important principles that are covered in this document. Fortunately, there are a number of actions school administrators can take to help lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread during school sessions and activities.
- The more people a student or staff member interacts with, and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread.

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020d)

Phase 1: Schools Reopen for All Students with Additional Precautions

In Phase 1, students will return to school with additional precautions to protect the health and safety of students and staff. To the extent practical, recommendations from the CDC and Idaho public health agencies will be implemented. Phase 1 presents the highest risk of transmission, but also provides the most comprehensive education for students. We believe that implementing this plan that includes key strategies to minimize the risk of transmission is the right decision for student success. Other plans will only be implemented if public health agencies mandate more restrictive measures or if staff or student absences make it impractical to continue with Phase 1.

Family Responsibilities - Phase 1

- Monitoring symptoms.
Parents and guardians will be asked to monitor their children for symptoms each morning, including checking their children's temperatures each day before sending them to school.
- Self-quarantine.

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If any student has been in close contact with an individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, they will be asked to self-quarantine for 14 days in accordance with CDC guidelines.

- Personal protective equipment.

In keeping with the Eastern Idaho Public Health (EIPH) COVID-19 Regional Response Plan, students are allowed to wear masks to help prevent the transmission of disease, especially during times that physical distancing will not be possible. Students who ride school buses may choose to wear face masks. Teachers may encourage students to wear masks in their classrooms when it is appropriate.

- Personal hygiene

Families are asked to teach their children good hygiene practices, specifically frequent handwashing. Students are encouraged to bring their own refillable water bottle to school.

Staff Responsibilities - Phase 1

- Monitoring symptoms

Staff will be encouraged to monitor themselves for symptoms each morning, including checking their temperatures each day before they come to school.

- Self-reporting

Staff should self-report to their school's direct supervisor and/or principal if they have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days in accordance with health information sharing regulations for COVID-19. This information will be kept confidential as part of their personnel health file and will only be disclosed to appropriate personnel within the Human Resources Department and Superintendent/designee as necessary.

- Self-quarantine. If any staff member has been in close contact with an individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, and subsequently develops symptoms, they may be asked to self-quarantine for two weeks in accordance with CDC guidelines.
- Personal protective equipment.

Staff will be provided with masks to minimize the risk of transmission of disease, especially in situations where they will be within close proximity to students or other staff members (less than 6 feet). Professional judgment should be used to determine whether masks will substantially interfere with instruction and other essential job functions, especially if the mask may create additional safety risks for the employee or others.

Classroom Instruction and Learning - Phase 1

In Phase 1, all schools will be open for in-person instruction with the following modifications:

- Monitoring symptoms

Non-touch thermometers will be available in the office to scan students as needed. Students with temperatures above 100°F or other unexplained symptoms will be sent to the school's quarantine room to wait for parents to pick them up.

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- Online Learning and Instruction

Students who are isolated due to illness or quarantined by order of a public health agency or medical physician will be provided the opportunity to continue their learning. Students who continue their learning while quarantined at home will not be counted absent from school.

- Personal protective equipment

In keeping with the Eastern Idaho Public Health (EIPH) COVID-19 Regional Response Plan, students are allowed to wear masks to help prevent the transmission of disease, especially during times that physical distancing will not be possible. Students who ride school buses will be allowed to wear face masks. Teachers may encourage students to wear masks in their classrooms when it is appropriate.

- Sanitization and cleaning

Regular handwashing and hand sanitization will be expected. Hand sanitizer will be provided in each classroom for student use. Desks and other common surfaces will be disinfected each school day.

School Transportation - Phase 1

- Physical distancing

It will not be possible to maintain recommended physical distancing between students on the school bus on typical school bus routes. Where possible, students will be assigned seats to maximize physical distancing. Students will be assigned seats in order of pick up from back to front to minimize interactions among large groups of students. When disembarking, students may be dismissed individually to ensure physical distancing between students.

- Sanitization and cleaning

Seat surfaces and handrails will be wiped down with approved disinfectant after each bus run. Deep cleaning of floor, seats and touch surfaces at the end of each day. Use of approved cleaning solutions, equipment and methods as outlined by "School Bus Fleet Online"

- Staffing

All transportation staff will be screened daily for "fit for duty" criteria before engaging in their transportation duties. Protective masks will be provided for use by bus drivers during loading and unloading of passengers. Masks will not be worn while driving. Some special education students will require close physical proximity by an aide to facilitate embarkment and disembarkment. Aides will be provided with face masks and disposable non-latex gloves as personal protective equipment to use during these interactions.

Cafeterias and School Lunches - Phase 1

- Meal options for students

Regular hot menu items will be provided for both breakfast and lunch.

- Physical distancing

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Where possible, the entire cafeteria should be used for feeding students to increase physical distancing during meal times. Lunch time will be staggered at the schools

- Sanitization and cleaning

Hand sanitizer will be made available to students at the start of each serving line. Cafeteria tables will be disinfected between groups of students.

Nonessential School Activities - Phase 1

- High School and middle school extracurricular activities

Activities that are organized under the Idaho High School Activities Association and associated activities at the middle school level will continue under the guidance of the IHSAA. These activities are completely voluntary and families who choose to participate in these activities should assume there will be inherent additional risk from participating in activities which will often require close personal contact with others. A separate plan for these activities will be developed and provided to participating families.

Clubs and other-non IHSAA activities must develop a plan to ensure appropriate precautions are taken to protect the health and safety of members and advisors. Precautions should include sanitization of areas, wearing face masks and physical distancing among participants. Plans must be submitted to the designated building administrator and approved by the Superintendent.

Assemblies, school dances, and other large-group activities that bring large numbers of students into close contact with each other for more than 15 minutes should not be planned until further notice. We will continually evaluate the possibility for scheduling these activities.

- School field trips

Field trips and other nonessential student travel, except for IHSAA associated activities, will not be permitted until further notice. We will continually evaluate the possibility of allowing field trips to resume as soon as possible.

- Elementary PE and music

PE and music programs will continue to be provided to students in elementary schools. Instructors will plan to provide physical distancing during PE and music activities.

- High School and middle school music programs.

High school and middle school music programs will continue. However increased protections must be planned following guidance of state or national music associations.

Phase 2: Schools Reopen with Alternating Day Schedule

Certain circumstances may make it impossible or impractical to continue with Phase 1. These circumstances include:

- Eastern Idaho Public Health designates Madison and Fremont Counties as “Moderate Risk” according to the EIPH COVID-19 Regional Response Plan.

- Excessive teacher or staff absenteeism that negatively impacts our ability to continue normal operations,
- Other unforeseen circumstances.

Phase 2 is based on creating an alternating day schedule to reduce the number of students in schools and on buses by 50%. Phase 2 presents moderate risk of transmission, with significant impacts to students' education. For this reason, this strategy will only be implemented if a public health agency mandates physical distancing requirements that would otherwise be impossible to follow.

Organization and Scheduling

Students will be organized alphabetically into two groups to attend school. Families with children with different last names may submit a request for all of their children to attend school on the same day, but the day will be assigned by District administration.

- Group A: (Last names A-J) will attend school on Mondays and Wednesdays
- Group B: (Last names K-Z) will attend school on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Fridays will be scheduled for regular hours to support student needs, individual help and teacher collaboration.
- Fridays were selected as the non-instructional day because of the high number of Friday's that have scheduled extra-curricular activities.

Family Responsibilities - Phase 2

- Monitoring symptoms

Parents will be asked to monitor their children for symptoms each morning, including checking their children's temperatures each day before sending them to school.

- Self-quarantine.

If any student or member of their family has been in close contact with an individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, they will be asked to self-quarantine for two weeks in accordance with CDC guidelines.

- Personal protective equipment.

In keeping with the Eastern Idaho Public Health (EIPH) COVID-19 Regional Response Plan, students are allowed to wear masks to help prevent the transmission of disease, especially during times that physical distancing will not be possible. Students who ride school buses will be allowed to wear face masks. Teachers may encourage students to wear masks in their classrooms when it is appropriate. Families who cannot provide masks for their children may request schools to provide a set of reusable masks for their children to wear at school.

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Classroom Instruction and Learning - Phase 2

- Monitoring symptoms

Non-touch thermometers will be available at the office of every building to monitor student symptoms as needed. Students with temperatures above 100°F or other unexplained symptoms will be sent to the school's quarantine room to wait for parent pick up. Students who are isolated due to illness or quarantined by order of a public health agency or medical physician will be provided the opportunity to continue their learning. Students who continue their learning while quarantined at home will not be counted absent from school.

Classrooms will be arranged to maximize 6 feet of physical distancing between students during instruction. All unnecessary furnishings and other large items will be removed from classrooms.

- Personal protective equipment

Students will be strongly encouraged to wear masks to minimize the risk of transmission of disease. Teachers and other staff members are also encouraged to wear face masks or shields when physical distancing cannot be maintained and when they do not substantially interfere with instruction.

- Sanitization and cleaning

Regular handwashing and hand sanitization will be expected. Hand sanitizer will be provided in each classroom for student use. Desks and other common surfaces will be disinfected at the end of each school day.

School Transportation - Phase 2

- Physical distancing

Limited physical distancing will be created by limiting seating to one child per seat as much as possible. Students will be assigned seats in order of pick up from back to front to minimize interactions among large groups of students. When disembarking, students will be dismissed individually to ensure physical distancing between students.

- Sanitization and cleaning

Seat surfaces and handrails will be wiped down with approved disinfectant after each bus run. Deep cleaning of floor, seats and touch surfaces at the end of each day. Use of approved cleaning solutions, equipment and methods as outlined by "School Bus Fleet Online."

- Staffing

All transportation staff will be screened daily for "fit for duty" criteria before engaging in their transportation duties. Protective masks will be provided for use by bus drivers during loading and unloading of passengers. Masks will not be worn while driving. Some special education students will require close physical proximity by an aide to facilitate embarkment and disembarkment. Aides will be provided with face masks and disposable non-latex gloves as personal protective equipment to use during these interactions.

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Cafeterias and School Lunches - Phase 2

- Meal options for students

Regular hot menu items will be provided for both breakfast and lunch. Meals may be pre-plated behind the serving lines.

Breakfast and lunch meals will be served to student's curbside outside of the school building. According to current guidance from the USDA (dated July 8, 2020) students will be charged for meals based on their current eligibility price for meals: free, reduced or paid. A pre-order form would be available for parents.

Meals will still be available for the off day students. An online order form will be required the day before for orders.

- Physical distancing

Student seating will be designated to create alternating seats between students to maximize physical distancing. The entire cafeteria will be used for feeding students to increase physical distancing during meal times. Lunch times will be staggered.

- Sanitization and cleaning

Hand sanitizer will be made available to students at the start of each serving line. Cafeteria tables will be disinfected in between groups of students.

Nonessential School Activities - Phase 2

- High School and middle school extracurricular activities

Activities that are organized under the Idaho High School Activities Association and associated activities at the middle school level will continue under the guidance of the IHSAA. These activities are completely voluntary and families who choose to participate in these activities should assume there will be inherent additional risk from participating in activities which will often require close personal contact with others. A separate plan for these activities will be developed and provided to participating families.

Clubs and other-non IHSAA activities must develop a plan to ensure appropriate precautions are taken to protect the health and safety of members and advisors. Precautions should include sanitization of areas, wearing face masks and physical distancing among participants. Plans must be submitted to the designated building administrator and approved by the Superintendent.

- Assemblies, School Dances, and other nonessential activities

School assemblies, dances, and other nonessential activities that bring large numbers of students into close contact with each other for more than 15 minutes should not be planned. We will continually evaluate the possibility for allowing future assemblies, dances and other nonessential large-group activities.

- School field trips

Field trips and other nonessential student travel, except for IHSAA associated activities, will not be permitted. We will continually evaluate the possibility of allowing field trips as soon as possible.

- Elementary PE and music program

PE and music will continue to be provided to students in elementary schools. Instructors will plan to provide physical distancing during PE and music activities

- High School and middle school music programs.

High school and middle school music programs will continue. However increased protections must be planned following guidance of state or national music associations.

Phase 3: Soft Closure with Online Learning for All Students

During Phase 3 the district will enact a soft closure of schools and transition to online learning at home. Phase 3 presents the lowest risk of transmission, but has the most impact to students' education and presents significant challenges and barriers to equity and access to learning. For this reason, this strategy will only be implemented if a public health agency orders the closure of District 322 schools. Circumstances that may make it impossible or impractical to continue with either Phase 1 or Phase 2 include:

- Eastern Idaho Public Health designates Madison and Fremont Counties as "Critical Risk" according to the EIPH COVID-19 Regional Response Plan.
- Excessive teacher or staff absenteeism that negatively impacts our ability to continue normal operations,
- Other unforeseen circumstances.

Organization and Scheduling – Phase 3

Teachers will provide instruction to students using distance learning platforms. Every effort should be made to use the district adopted Learning Management System (LMS) of Canvas to provide content and learning activities for students in grades 6-12. Elementary Teachers may also use other supported platforms as approved by administration. Elementary will provide instruction in ELA and math daily. Secondary will provide direct instruction in each class period daily. Teachers will be expected to hold virtual office hours to provide additional instruction and support to students for at least 30 minutes daily.

Cafeterias and School Lunches - Phase 3

- Meal Delivery

Breakfast and lunch meals will be served to student's curbside outside of the school building. According to current guidance from the USDA (dated July 8, 2020) students will be charged for meals based on their current eligibility price for meals: free, reduced or paid. A pre-order form would be available for parents.

- A meal delivery option to central locations could be available for students in this phase. Details will follow if needed.

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- Staff Personal Protective Equipment

Necessary protective equipment will be provided to Child Nutrition staff and other staff members who are assigned to help provide meals to students during an extended school closure.

Nonessential School Activities - Phase 3

- High School and middle school extracurricular activities

All activities, including those that are organized under the Idaho High School Activities Association and associated activities at the middle school level will continue under the guidance of the IHSAA, but will be suspended while schools are in soft closure.

- Assemblies, School Dances, and other nonessential activities

School assemblies, dances, and other nonessential activities that bring large numbers of students into close contact with each other will be cancelled while schools are in soft closure.

- School field trips

All field trips and student travel including IHSAA associated activities will be suspended while schools are in soft closure.

- Elementary PE and music program

An “at home version” of PE and music will be provided to students in elementary schools while schools are in soft closure.

- High School and middle school music programs.

High school and middle school music programs will transition to online instruction while schools are in soft closure. Performances will be suspended while schools are in soft closure.