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Defiance City Schools
Safe Continuation of In-Person Instruction and
Continuity of Services Plan
Effective August 1, 2021

PREFACE

The recently passed American Rescue Plan (ARP) provides substantial federal resources to support states and local school districts. As a result, local school districts are required to develop a plan which details the safe return to in-person instruction and ensures the continuity of services. This plan is accessible to our stakeholders, and will be monitored and revised as necessary based on ongoing review through September 30, 2023.

MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Defiance City Schools successfully operated in-person throughout the pandemic during the 2020-2021 school year, and will return to pre-pandemic practices. Should health conditions arise or stakeholder feedback necessitate, the Districts will re-assemble their preparedness teams to review conditions and mitigation strategies and make necessary revisions. District preparedness teams include administrators, school nurses, and other staff/community members, and the teams work in close collaboration with the Defiance County Health Department (DCHD).

§ **Physical Distancing:** The District will return to pre-pandemic protocols. Physical distancing will be recommended in some settings, but not required.

§ **Handwashing/Respiratory Etiquette:** Handwashing and/or sanitizing will continue to be emphasized throughout the school day. Hand sanitizing stations have been placed throughout the building(s). Students will be encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands when they enter/exit classrooms, the cafeteria, and to/from recesses, on/off school busses. Cough/sneeze etiquette will continue to be taught and modeled.

§ **Facilities:** Cleaning protocols will return to pre-pandemic practices. Additional sanitizing may take place during times of increased illness among staff/students. Ventilation systems have been upgraded/maintained and have MERV filtration ratings of 13 or higher.

§ **Contact tracing:** Contact tracing will occur as required based upon guidance from the Defiance County Health Department for all infectious diseases. School nurses and other District staff have been trained and are adept at this process due to experience during the pandemic.

§ **Diagnostic/Screening Testing:** Defiance City Schools will continue to have COVID testing supplies available upon request. COVID test kits will be utilized wisely in an attempt to keep students safely in school as much as possible.

§ **Vaccinations:** Defiance City Schools has been host sites for staff/community vaccinations, and are willing to continue to serve in that capacity if requested by the DCHD. Vaccinations will continue to be encouraged by the Districts.

§ Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities with Respect to the Health and Safety Policies: Defiance City Schools will follow Defiance County Health Department and CDC guidance to ensure that children with disabilities have their health and safety needs met.

STUDENT ACADEMIC NEEDS

The vast majority of Defiance City Schools students/staff returned to full in-person instruction in August of 2020. Teachers formally and informally assessed students throughout the 2020-2021 school year in a variety of ways to identify and address any learning loss that occurred as a result of school closures from mid-March through May of 2020. Some of those assessment measures included but were not limited to the following: KRA for Kindergarten, K-3 Third Grade Reading Guarantee diagnostic, MAP in reading/math for grades K-5, ACT for Juniors, State assessments/End of Course Exams, CoGat, local measures from textbook series and/or teacher developed. Assessments began early in the 2020-2021 school year, and continued frequently. Teachers provided intervention for those students who showed any signs of learning loss/gaps. Those interventions included but were not limited to: Title I Reading services, 504 Plans, IEP services, Reading/Math intervention programs, Literacy intervention programs, after-school programming, PBIS tiered supports. Administrators, teaching staff and classroom aides will analyze data and continue to address the learning needs of all students as we carefully monitor the effects of the pandemic closure from the Spring of 2020. Increased attention, assessment and interventions will be provided to the small percentage of students who are transitioning from virtual instruction back to our buildings.

STUDENT/STAFF SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

Defiance City Schools will continue to closely monitor and assess the social/emotional/mental health needs of our students as we have throughout the 2020-21 school year during in-person instruction. Our Guidance Counselors, Nurses, School Resource Officers, Teaching, Administrative, and Classified employees will remain vigilant to the needs of all students. Additional programming, surveys, and/or outside services may be utilized to address any SEL issues. PBIS, Building Level and Intervention Assistance teams will continue to play a vital role in assessing and communicating the needs of students to the appropriate agency (ie. Job & Family Services) if necessary. After-school programming may also be offered to address certain groups of students who may have similar issues/needs (ie. 21st Century Grant Programs).

STUDENT HEALTH NEEDS

Defiance City Schools have invested in nursing services to ensure that LPN/RN's are on site daily (whenever school is in session) to tend to the health needs of our students/staff. Close collaboration and partnerships will also continue with our local emergency responders, law enforcement, and agencies who provide vital health/safety services to our families.

FACULTY/STAFF MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

Our faculty/staff were back in the buildings for fully in-person instruction in August of 2020 and continued to work with very little disruption throughout the 2020-21 school year. Staff were closely monitored for any signs of mental/emotional distress. Our District Wellness Programs continued with modifications during the pandemic and will return to pre-pandemic activities in the upcoming school year. Any staff who exhibit signs of needing mental health assistance and/or who approach school staff/leaders because they are struggling will be directed to the appropriate agencies, health care providers, clinics/therapists that may be of assistance to them. Our Northern Buckeye Health Plan consortium also provides free access to the many services at any of the four Everside Clinics. Staff who need to utilize any form of leave will be allowed/encouraged to do so in accordance with our negotiated agreements.

NUTRITIONAL NEEDS

Defiance City Schools will continue offering daily food service that meets all federal requirements. All students are eligible to eat free breakfast and lunch at school through June of 2022. Any families that are known to struggle with food insecurity will be confidentially directed to the plethora of local organizations/locations of food pantries and free meal services. Schools will continue to participate in local food drives and/or make donations to help keep our food pantries well-stocked for those in need.

Defiance City Schools Safe Continuation of In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan is subject to change through September 30, 2023. Input from our community stakeholders will be taken to inform any changes to this plan when it is reviewed. Continued collaboration and guidance will be sought from the Defiance County Health Department.

Respectfully submitted by:

Mr. Robert Morton, Superintendent Defiance City Schools District IRN 043869