District Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

The American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, Public Law 117-2, enacted on March 11, 2021, provides a total of nearly $122 billion to states and school districts to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the nation's students.

Background: On July 27, 2020 the Paola USD 368 Board of Education (BOE) adopted the *Together We Can* Reopening Schools Plan. Included in this plan were the mitigation protocols needed to successfully have in-person learning for the 2020-2021 school year. This plan was revised based on new information learned concerning COVID-19 and discussed and/or approved by the BOE on August 10, September 14, 2020 and on January 11, 2021. At the May 10, 2021 BOE meeting, the Board approved to move to masks optional for summer 2021 activities and to evaluate recommendations for the 2021-2022 school year at the July 12, 2021 meeting. At the July 12, 2021 meeting the Board approved the Safe Return to Schools plan stating that masks would remain optional.

Due to changes in the COVID-19 Delta variant, at the August 9, 2021 BOE meeting, an updated Safe Return to School plan was presented to the Board of Education for approval including an addendum that outlines the operational plan regarding potential quarantines. At the October 11, 2021 meeting, the Board of Education revised the plan addendum and going from three phases to two phases. The addendum was revised again on November 8 to reflect the metric approved to move to phase 2 and on November 22, 2021 due to changes in notifying exposures to a positive case. On January 18, 2022 due to community spread of the Omicron variant being so rampant, notifications of possible exposures were temporarily suspended at the approval of KDHE and KSDE to allow nursing staff to more effectively help families and students know when they can safely return to school and to test students with symptoms. All students should assume they have been exposed due to community exposure levels and self-monitor for symptoms. For the 2022-2023 school year, with COVID reaching an endemic status, schools returned to normal, but followed recommended guidelines for students and staff who had contracted COVID-19 and included increased disinfecting measures.

The current plan below is in response to covid reaching endemic status.

PART I.

Describe how the district will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC:

(A) Universal and correct wearing of masks.
- Masks will be optional for the 2023-2024 school year.

(B) Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (*e.g.,* use of cohorts/podding).
- In returning school to normal, social distancing will only be accommodated should a covid outbreak occur. Social distancing is not guaranteed in spaces, especially during lunch.
- Utilize outdoor spaces as appropriate.

(C) Handwashing and respiratory etiquette.
- Individuals are encouraged to wash hands or use hand sanitizer frequently. Hands should be washed or sanitized before and after using shared supplies. Covering coughs and sneezes is always recommended.
- Hand sanitizer will be readily accessible in each of the buildings and classrooms for student and adult use.

(D) Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation.
- In spaces that are regularly occupied, enhanced cleaning and maintenance protocols will continue to be used.
- Increased outdoor air will continue to be used as a mitigation strategy. The activities taking place in each space in a building will help determine the amount of fresh outside air utilized.

(E) Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments.
- USD 368 will work in cooperation with KDHE and MCHD as required.

(F) Diagnostic and screening testing.
- USD 368 has the ability to perform, with parent permission, rapid antigen tests for students who may have been exposed to an infected person with covid or who is exhibiting covid like symptoms. This testing is also available to staff of USD 368.
- The district also works with the Miami County Health Department and local medical providers should students or staff need testing not available at the respective schools.

(G) Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities.
- All staff have been given the opportunity to be vaccinated. Should the need arise that a booster vaccine is necessary, the district will work with the local health department to obtain the necessary booster vaccines for staff.
- The district will work with the local health department to provide locations and promote any community vaccine clinics that students and community members may qualify for.

(H) Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies.
- Specific student health needs are addressed through a student health and/or individual educational plan.

(I) Coordination with State and local health officials.
- USD 368 has a strong working relationship with the Miami County Health Department. Regular and ongoing coordination and communication occurs on an as needed basis.
- Miami County Health Department coordinates and regularly communicates with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. MCHD shares information received from KDHE on a regular basis and serves as a liaison between USD 368 and KDHE. Should the need arise for USD 368 to communicate with KDHE, such communication has and will continue to occur.

Part II.

Describe how the district will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to:

(A) services to address students' academic needs

- We understand and respect that the comfort level of families having students return to school ranges from very comfortable to not comfortable at all. Given these comfort levels, the following learning options and necessary supports, in accordance with the KSDE, MCHD, and the USD 368 will be available to USD 368 families.

  Onsite Learning
  Onsite learning will be provided to all USD 368 students and families. Students will attend school in person at USD 368 school buildings with the necessary safety precautions as outlined in this document to best keep staff and students safe.

  Virtual School Program (Grades K-12)

  USD 368 has a virtual program for students in grades k-12. This program is a self-paced program that allows students the ability to work on their courses seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. To participate in the USD 368 Virtual Program, students:

  - Must be eligible to enroll as a USD 368 student based on current policy and regulation.
  - Must be in grades K - 12.
  - Must enroll and provide a written commitment to attend via the Virtual School Program by the necessary deadline.
  - Must have available internet access for online learning and communication, including viewing videos and zoom classrooms.
  - Must attend and engage in regular contact with online teachers, as required.
  - Must complete assigned tasks.
  - Must remain in the program throughout the 2023-2024 school year.

(B) students' and staff social, emotional, mental health
- All students and staff have access to counseling and social workers employed by USD 368.
- Elementary students have access to Elizabeth Layton mental health workers during the school day.
- Staff have access to an employee assistance program that includes mental health services.
- USD 368 teaches social emotional curriculum to all students in the district as part of the regular school day according to the State Department of Education SEL curricular guidelines.

(C) other needs, which may include student health and food services.
- All students and staff have access to health professionals in each of the districts school buildings.

8/14/2023