

August 10, 2020
Fall Opening Plan

Pittsville School District

Recommendation

The district has been planning with the intent of having our students and staff back in their learning spaces in ways which are as safe as possible. COVID-19 is in our communities and may spread regardless of the precautions we put in place. At this time, putting 100% of our students and staff on site everyday is not in the best interest of our students, staff, parents, and greater communities. It is recommended the Pittsville District adopt a Hybrid approach to open school in the fall.

4k - 5th grade: All students on site 5 days a week

6th - 12th grade: 2 day physical attendance cohorts, 3 day distance setting

Parents may choose 100% distance learning and Pittsville will provide curriculum and instruction.

Some Noticeable Changes in the Buildings

We will employ several safety related changes to reduce the number of people who may be exposed to COVID-19 while at our facilities.

- Change over to touchless fixtures in our bathrooms and classrooms
- Water bottle fillers in place of water fountains
- Portable hand sanitizer stations
- Plexiglass shielding in the food service serving areas
- Plexiglass shielding in the common office spaces
- Adjustment of custodial routines/hours to address changes to daily cleaning
- Classrooms configured to allow for maximum spacing between students
- Additional technology devices available for 1st - 12th grade students

Why 4K - 5th Grade on site?

Previous data implies lower transmission and infection rate in these age groups.

The base academic, socialization, and developmental learning needs are best addressed in person. (Acquisition and development of reading and comprehension skills, problem solving, and non-familial socialization.)

Because they are physically smaller, more space is available per student.

This age group cannot stay home without adult supervision.

Note: if a positive case, quarantine, or school closure situation arises, parents need to have child care plans in place for school age children with the expectation their children will be in a distance learning setting until we can transition them back to school.

What is the 6th-12th grade Cohort going to look like?

1. Students will be separated into an “A” and “B” group or cohort
2. Each cohort will meet face to face, 2 consecutive days per week
3. “A” cohort will be Monday/Tuesday, “B” cohort Thursday/Friday
4. Wednesday all 6th - 12th grade students will be in distance learning
5. 5 days of instruction in all 5 day school weeks
6. Wednesday will allow staff to address distance learning, added planning responsibilities, and deep cleaning the areas before the next cohort starts
7. We **will** be able to provide the recommended 6’ social distancing for students and staff with at most 50% of students on site
8. Structure to move from in person to distance is in place in the event school is closed due to COVID-19 infections
9. Meeting expectations may allow for a safer transition to 100% attendance

Face Coverings

- All employees and students are required to wear a face covering when not alone in a space. There may be exceptions for 4k and kindergarten. TBD
- Consideration of alternatives for a student with disabilities will be made.
- All visitors will be required to wear a face covering when they enter the buildings or are in contact with anyone on the school property.

Absent the state order, the district will require face coverings until such a time it is determined to be unnecessary to reduce exposure to COVID-19.

Times will be built in during the day for students to be without a face covering.

Face coverings include masks, gaiters, bandanas used properly are acceptable. We recommend students wear a fresh face covering each day of attendance. The district will have cloth masks available. Face masks are subject to the school's dress code requirements.

CDC statement about face coverings

Recommends wearing face coverings in public settings and when around people who do not live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Cloth face coverings may help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others and are most likely to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when they are widely used by people in public settings. Cloth face coverings should not be worn by children under the age of 2 or anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a mask without assistance.

Wood County Health Dept. Face Mask Statement

Wood County Health Department, in alignment with our local medical providers, recommends the wearing of face masks when physical distancing cannot be done. We know from dozens of studies that they are indeed effective and are one of the best preventative measures we have to slow the spread of the virus. This is true when there is a majority compliance in community settings, including school's and worksites. The health Department strongly recommends cohorting groups of children so that they are in contact with less children and staff. These actions are necessary to keep our school's and businesses open to assure our health systems do not become overwhelmed and children remain in school as long as possible.

Wood County Health Department COVID-19 Tool Kit for Schools

Currently on our web page and contains:

- School based COVID-19 positive case follow up
- Process if a student is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 at school
- Criteria to determine who is considered a close contact to a positive case
- Communication if more than one county is involved
- At home school screening questions for parents before sending children to school
- Frequently ask questions and responses
- COVID-19 area testing facilities
- Wood County contact information

The 3 W's

1. Wear a mask
2. Wash your hands
3. Watch your distance

Practices to help reduce the spread and transmission of illnesses

Stay home when you are sick

1. Physical distance whenever possible
2. Wash your hands with soap and water or sanitizer when soap and water is not available
3. Avoid touching your face
4. Wear a face covering when you are in public spaces around others outside of your household

All of the above above actions have proven to significantly reduce the rate of infection/illness from exposure to COVID-19.

Classrooms

- Staff will maximize the space in rooms to increase social distance
- Desks and tables will be configured so students all face the same direction
- Face shields have been ordered and may be used when everyone is seated
- Common touch points will be reduced and sharing of materials will be eliminated as possible
- Reduce materials which go from home to school and school to home
- No sharing of pens, pencils, crayons, etc
- Field trips will be done virtually, postponed, or cancelled
- Decrease physical contact in learning spaces
- Hand soap and/or sanitizer will available in every room

Music Dept.

Our music instructors will have safety procedures in place to decrease exposure to other people's “droplets”.

- Wearing a mask while signing
- One-on-one instruction and limited inside group instruction
- Social distancing

Both music department instructors understand the importance of having additional safety precautions in place and are committed to providing a safe learning environment while providing quality instruction.

Special Needs

Mr. Sherwood and his staff will set up schedules which best meet the IEP needs for our students.

- Parents are encouraged to communicate with their child's case manager and Mr. Sherwood with concerns and questions.
- IEP meetings will continue to be held in a virtual setting when possible. This change created by the school closure last spring did alleviate many of the meeting scheduling delays related to in person meetings. Due to the high participation, communication was better between all parties.

Custodial

- All bathroom and classroom fixtures have been changed to touchless
- Equipment and supplies have been purchased to properly disinfect small and large spaces; including protective procedures for staff and students in rooms
- Water fountains have been replaced with bottle filling stations and students will use a personal water bottle or disposable cups at each station
- Increased daytime cleaning of the most common touch points in all areas
- Plan for short term school closure to complete deep cleaning due to positive COVID-19 infections on site
- Reassignment of staff to account for added cleaning during student hours
- Social distancing between coworkers even during break times

Food Service

- Will continue to follow all state and federal mandates related to food preparation and service current and future
- Cafeteria seating for meal time may only be used by the youngest students and will be socially distanced during meals
- 1st - 12th grade will eat in classrooms or other designated spaces
- Meals will be available for students in the A/B cohorts TBD
- Increase staffing by 1 part time, 29 hour a week position
- Increase sub pool and rotate subs through the kitchen weekly
- Contingency planning in the event of temporary or long term school closure due to COVID-19

Internet access and availability off sight

Many district households were able to add or increase their access to internet and bandwidth through local carriers last spring. Some were not.

- The district has a limited supply of portable hotspots which use two different carriers to increase the opportunity to connect. They use Verizon and Cellcom platforms.
- Please contact your building office if you need a hotspot in your home for your child/children
- Mr. Nepper has information about a DPI program which may assist some families in securing access. More information to come in the near future.
- Efforts are being made in several rural municipalities to increase access and bandwidth through various state programs. At this time, nothing has been completed.

Attendance

1. Stay home when you are sick.
2. Attendance policies will be flexible
3. For distance learning, we will work to improve our attendance structure used last spring. There are obvious advantages to students remaining engaged whether it is in synchronous or asynchronous setting. We are providing some flexibility to teaching staff and building leadership to evolve our system to engage all learners on and off site.
4. Two-way parent communication has been and will continue to be very important to ensure student needs are being met.
5. The DPI is providing flexibility in attendance reporting which will be available to districts soon.

Transportation

- Parents who can transport their children are encouraged to do so to reduce the number of students riding on the bus
- All students riding the bus will have assigned seats, this will assist with contact tracing if needed
- Students and drivers will be required to wear a face covering on the bus
- No eating on the bus
- Students will be limited to one bus route to reduce exposure to greater numbers of students
- Buses will be cleaned after each day or between different groups of riders

Extra- Curricular

- School clubs and organizations will make adjustments to how they meet and events they “attend”
- Some fundraising activities will be reconfigured to reduce contact
- Due to the nature of some clubs, they may need to postpone operations until it is safe to resume or a safer alternative is created

Information about specific clubs and student groups will be shared at the building level.

Athletics

The WIAA has offered several options to allow for participation in the traditional sports and events which have been traditionally offered in the past. Pittsville will plan to follow the requirements and guidelines for our student athletes to be eligible to participate in WIAA athletic programming. Already passed for the CWC:

- Delayed start for fall sports
- Play conference opponents during regular season
- Districts are debating what to do about fans at events
- If school is closed due to COVID-19, all practices and competitions will also be canceled and facilities will be unavailable for use

If a child shows symptoms of COVID-19 in school

Symptoms include: Fever (>100.4), cough, congestion/runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, headache, myalgia, poor feeding or poor appetite. These symptoms should be outside of the child's baseline.

- There will be a sick room in each building which will allow space and separation for the child until the parent arrives.
- Area medical providers are being asked to provide access to testing for school age children and educators to determine if they have COVID-19 or not. Test results from an area provider have been available within 2 days of testing.
- A flow chart is available on our district website in the COVID-19 Toolkit for School's link.

Visitors

- Adult visitors to the buildings will be reduced or eliminated when possible.
- Parents who drop off and pick up their students are being asked to stay in their vehicles and let their child come to them.
- Parents dropping things off for their children will do this through the office or designated drop point most likely outside of the building.
- Meetings will be done as Google Meet or virtual format whenever possible.
- When access to the school building is needed, all adults will be required to wear a face covering and follow all procedures while on site.

Adaptability and flexibility to meet evolving needs

The district will reevaluate our model every 4 weeks and adjust as needed.

DHS is about to release a new Decision Framework designed as a tool to be utilized by Public Health Officials and Superintendents to help inform and shape plans for school operational decisions. The reality of the changing landscape of the pandemic both now and into the weeks ahead may well cause shifts in plans and delivery models. This framework is designed to provide access to data/metrics that can shape decisions.

DHS plans to release Outbreak Guidance. This will address recommendations related to either staff or students contracting the virus when in-person instructional delivery is in place. This may be next week or later.

Reality of Our Situation

We want everyone to realize this decision is much more complicated than just saying kids need to be in school. Almost every aspect of school operations is impacted, especially our most important one, providing a safe learning environment for our students. Our best chance to teach our children in person is by limiting their potential exposure to COVID-19. Providing reconfigured spaces for our youngest students and starting in a cohort model for our older students gives us the safest opportunity to make in person instruction work.

The reality is, we will have staff and students who get COVID-19.

The practices we can successfully put in place to limit exposure, may be the difference between life and death of a student, staff member, parent, or grandparent.

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Parents may choose 100% distance learning and Pittsville will provide curriculum and instruction.

Future State and county guidance may be issued which could alter our plans. We will continue to work with the Wood County Health Department and area medical advisors. We will continue to reflect and refine the details of our opening to best serve those in our care.