

RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION & CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN JUNE 2021

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III Fund is to help safely reopen & sustain the safe operation of schools & address the impacts of COVID-19 on the nation's students by addressing academic, social, emotional, & mental health needs.

This plan is designed to address how Barnes County North School District #007 will ensure that we have continuity of services for students while maintaining health & mitigation strategies to keep students & staff safe. For any questions about this plan, please contact Superintendent Michael A. Severson @ (701)646-6202 or michael.severson@k12.nd.us.

In the Summer of 2020, the State of North Dakota required school districts to create a Re-Opening Plan for the start of the new school year that would include a Health & Safety Plan & a Distance Learning Plan. The COVID-19 Leadership Team from BCN worked on these plans over the Summer, receiving input from City County Health, staff members, & school board members. Input from parents was gathered through surveys, as well as being offered the opportunity to attend board meetings to provide public comments.

The Barnes County North School Board approved the Re-Opening plan during a Special Meeting on August 3, 2020. The plan can be accessed on our website @ www.barnescountynorth.k12.nd.us

We returned to in-person instruction on August 26, 2020 & only utilized the on-line learning option for Grades 5-12 from Monday November 23, 2020 through Friday December 4, 2020 due to the high rate of close contact quarantines and positive COVID-19 cases affecting BCN. We utilized this time to get everyone healthy so that we would be able to finish the First Semester in-person. Our Re-opening plan was consistently followed during the 2020-2021 school year & with all the mitigation strategies that we implemented, we experienced a major decline in cases in the Spring of 2021. Armed with this information, the school board voted @ their regular meeting on April 21, 2021 to move the mask mandate from required to optional. We have gained so much knowledge this past year & based on student & staff needs, we will continue several strategies as outlined below.

HEALTH & SAFETY STRATEGIES

Throughout the pandemic, Barnes County North School has prioritized the health & safety of our students & staff as we moved to the return to in-person learning, Below are strategies that we employed to keep everyone safe & remain in session. A description of the safety strategies we utilized follows, as well as the current state of implementation.

Universal & correct wearing of masks

All students, staff, & visitors were required to wear masks up until the April 21, 2021 school board meeting. The board voted to make the mask requirements optional & that will continue throughout the system.

Physical Distancing

All of our classrooms were refigured during the Summer of 2020 to create physical distancing in classrooms. Elementary students remained in their individual classrooms & did not comingle with other classrooms. Breakfast was served in brown paper bags & students ate in their classrooms, while lunch was divided so that groups would remain intact. As we move into the 2021-2022 school year, BCN will continually monitor the need for physical distancing.

Handwashing & respiratory etiquette

Hand sanitizing stations were made available throughout the building & teachers had hand sanitizer in their classroom. The principals & the Main Office had disposable masks on hand to accommodate any individual who did not have a face covering. We encouraged everyone to cough or sneeze into a tissue or a sleeve, we stressed proper handwashing techniques, & made it a point to address the proper disposal of used items. Any signage we have in the building will remain & we will continue to encourage proper hygiene.

Cleaning & maintaining healthy facilities

We installed 34 iWaves on the geo heat pumps & 4 iWaves on our commercial air handlers to increase the efficiency & effectiveness of our heating & cooling system. Daily sanitizing & disinfecting was a priority in our building & on school buses, & those practices will continue.

Contact tracing

Contact tracing was handled by the administrators in conjunction with City County Health & will continue should there be a need going forward.

Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators , other staff, students, & the general public

City County Health provided numerous clinics in Valley City for anyone who wanted to receive the vaccine. We scheduled two separate clinics @ the BCN School for staff, students, & the general public, & there were a number of people who took advantage of this opportunity.

Appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities

We had a number of students with disabilities & we made the appropriate accommodations to ensure their safety. We will continue to make accommodations for any student or staff member who needs them.

CONTINUITY OF SERVICES

Barnes County North School District #007 has taken & will continue to take actions to ensure there is a continuity of services. These services include, but are not limited to, addressing students' academic needs, students' & staff social, emotional, & mental health needs, and other needs that may arise.

Academic Needs

We returned to in-person learning in August 2020, knowing full well that student achievement had declined due the drastic change in our educational setting for the final 12 weeks of the 2019-2020 school year when students were at home learning through technology. The 2020-2021 school year began with 2 Staff In-Service days, followed by 3 days of small group assessments to determine where our students were currently at. This led to our principals implementing intervention strategies to deal with the findings & setting up schedules to accommodate individual student needs.

Social, Emotional, & Mental Health Needs

Student & staff mental health has also been at the forefront of our planning during this incredible stressful time. We offered our counseling services to everyone throughout the system & made sure anyone in need had access. We did formal & informal surveys to gather information which was presented to our staff members & school board. Any areas that we felt needed to be addressed were discussed @ staff meetings.

Other Services

Meal services were offered from March to the end of May 2020 through our kitchen. Meals were prepped for a week at a time & delivered by a paraprofessional & our head cook. Meals resumed & were served daily with COVID-19 protocols during the 2020-2021 school year with no cost to our families. Our transportation service was restricted to one bus route per family & masks were required at all times while on the bus. Extra-Curricular & athletic activities resumed with full competition & were governed by our Smart Restart plan that was approved by the school board. The restrictions have been lifted for the serving of meals & masks are no longer required. We continue to address our transportation policies & will update as we go forward. Extra-Curricular activities will resume this Fall with no restrictions.

Opportunity for Public Comment

In developing the return to learning plans, our COVID-19 Leadership team consulted with City County Health, worked with our BCN Leadership Team, & secured input from board members during the Summer of 2020. Input from patrons was gathered through surveys and our public comment section of the monthly board agendas. We will continue to seek input from all of our stakeholders & will utilize numerous methods to ensure that we have the information necessary to move forward in a positive manner.