



**Aviston Elementary School District #21  
Return to School Plan**

## **Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in major upheaval to all aspects of life, including nation-wide school closures in the spring and fall of 2020. To open schools for in-person instruction required strict health and safety protocols which created barriers and limitations to teaching and learning. Aviston Elementary School was fortunate to have students learning in-person for the entire school year, with a brief period of hybrid instruction for our junior high students. The support of our staff and community in providing a safe learning environment made our objective to educate our children in-person possible!

Recognizing that students across remote and in-person settings faced significant academic, social, emotional, and mental health challenges as a result of the interrupted education and the trauma caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Congress made emergency funds available to local school districts to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. Most recently, funds available through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act require that school districts develop a *Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services*. As such, this plan has been developed in accordance with the ARP Act and the Illinois State Superintendent of Education declaration of July 9, 2021; is aligned with guidance provided by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and addresses adjustments needed in response to evolving COVID-19 pandemic circumstances.

This plan will be made publicly available on the district's website. School strategies in this plan may be removed based upon local conditions and consultation with local public health officials to determine the prevention strategies needed. School officials will communicate any changes in plans to staff members, students, and parents through the district's regular communication platforms.

## **Maintaining the Health and Safety of Students, Educators, and Other Staff**

In accordance with the Illinois State Superintendent of Schools July 9, 2021 declaration, Aviston District #21 will be open fully for in-person learning for all student attendance days for the 2021-22 school year.

Remote instruction will only be made available for non-vaccinated or vaccine ineligible students who are under quarantine as directed by the local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health. Remote instructional methods and delivery are at the discretion of the school district and will follow a format similar to extended absences.

Absent an order from the Illinois State Board of Education and/or the Illinois Governor's Office, Aviston District #21 will be in operation in accordance with the CDC's updated (July 9, 2021) *Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Kindergarten (K)-12 Schools*, also adopted by the IDPH on July 9, 2021. These guidelines include the following:

### **1. Mask Use Updated 2/17/2022**

- Mask use is recommended, but not required while indoors for students, staff and visitors regardless of vaccination status. Mask use is recommended, but not required, while outdoors during activities (e.g., participating in outdoor play, recess, physical education, sports, extra curriculars).

- Per CDC federal guidelines, all individuals must wear a mask while on a school bus.

## **2. Physical Distancing**

- To the extent possible within school and classroom structures so that it does not exclude students from full day in-person learning, school staff are to help students commit to physical distancing as much as possible.
- Physical distancing measures are to be done in an equitable manner that does not perpetuate academic, racial, or other tracking (e.g., separating people into fully vaccinated and non-fully vaccinated cohorts).

## **3. Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette**

- School staff will monitor and reinforce frequent handwashing and respiratory etiquette by
  - continuing to teach handwashing with soap and water;
  - assisting young children with handwashing;
  - reminding everyone in the facility to wash hands frequently;
  - using hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol (for teachers, staff, and older students who can safely use hand sanitizer) when handwashing is not possible;
  - continuing to teach respiratory etiquette (e.g., covering coughs and sneezes); and
  - providing adequate handwashing and hand sanitizer supplies that are safely stored (up, away, and out of sight of young children and used only with adult supervision for children under 6 years of age).

## **4. Facility and Transportation Cleaning, Disinfection and Ventilation**

- School custodial staff and transportation staff will continue to clean surfaces daily. To further reduce the risk of spreading infection, these staff will also use disinfectants on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency COVID-19 “List N” to disinfect spaces occupied by someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours.
- Maintenance staff will continue to regularly replace school ventilation system filters by using high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters.
- When possible, staff will open doors and windows, use child-safe fans, and have activities, classes, or lunches outdoors when circumstances allow.
- When it does not pose a safety risk, transportation staff will keep vehicle windows open at least a few inches to improve air circulation.

## **5. Contact Tracing in Combination with Isolation and Quarantine**

- Students and staff who feel ill should stay home and contact their healthcare provider as needed.
- Should a student or staff become exposed to a positive COVID individual, the Clinton County Health Department will be notified and advise next steps.
- Student absences related to a COVID-19 isolation or quarantine will be recorded as excused. To ensure continuity of services, school work missed during such an absence can be requested and made up in accordance with the school’s absence policy.

## **6. Disabilities or Other Health Care Needs**

- Parents of students who need accommodations, modifications, or assistance related to COVID-19 safety protocols, disabilities, underlying medical conditions, or weakened immune systems should contact their student's case manager to discuss the need(s).
- Staff members who need accommodations, modifications, or assistance related to COVID-19 safety protocols, disabilities, underlying medical conditions, weakened immune systems, or a sincerely held religious belief or practice (covered by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) should contact their school's principal to discuss the need(s). Staff members with weakened immune systems are advised to contact their healthcare professional about the need for continued personal protective measures after vaccination.

## **7. Collaboration with Public Health Officials**

- District officials will continue to collaborate and consult with Clinton County Health Department officials throughout a pandemic on various logistics and decision-making including, but not limited to, quarantines, school health and safety protocols, screening testing, contact tracing, vaccine clinics, and emergency school closings.
- Local data will be used in conjunction with Clinton County Health Department consultation to determine if various layers of safety need to be considered throughout the school year. It is possible that increased social distancing and universal mask usage is implemented if there is a spike in local COVID-positive cases.

## **8. Plan Review**

- Through September 30, 2023, this plan will be reviewed no less frequently than every six months and revised as appropriate after seeking and considering public input. Revisions will address the most recently updated safety recommendations by the CDC, provided in an alternative format accessible to parents who are individuals with a disability as defined by the ADA, and made publicly available on the district's website.
  - Plan reviewed February 16, 2022 during the regular Board of Education meeting.
  - Plan reviewed July 20, 2022 during the regular Board of Education meeting.
- Public input can be made at the following link: [Return to School Plan Public Input](#)
- The ESSER III funding plan can be accessed at the following link: [ESSER III Funding Plan](#)