



Matagorda Independent School District

1717 Wightman St. P. O. Box 657
Matagorda, Texas 77457
(979) 863-7693

Barbara Marchbanks -Superintendent

Return to In-person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

Executive Summary

Matagorda Independent School District (MISD) continues to monitor health risks that arise in the community. This document details the District's plan to provide in-person instruction and continuity of services for the upcoming school year. This plan will continue to be reviewed at a minimum of every six months.

As a part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government made Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds available for school districts across the country. At least 20% of those funds must be used to address learning loss. TEA strongly encourages school systems to plan for how to use these one-time federal funds expeditiously over the entire covered period. ESSER III funds must be spent by September 2024.

MISD solicited feedback from all District and community stakeholders to help determine how the District should best utilize ESSER III funds. A public hearing was held before the MISD Board of Trustees board meeting on Thursday, June 10, 2021. The ESSER III survey was shared on the district website. The survey was opened on May 24, and closed on June 9. MISD utilized the results of the survey to assist in the drafting of the ESSER III grant application.

Continuity of Instruction

Introduction During the 2021-22 school year, Matagorda ISD will offer a face-to-face learning environment for all students. Instruction will support a student-centered learning environment that promotes academic excellence and addresses the needs of students due to learning loss caused by the pandemic. To support the implementation of the District's expectations of a rich learning environment for all students, MISD's Instructional Framework for learning will provide specific components that will be evidenced in instruction for students.

Objective: All MISD students are to be provided high-quality learning experiences, daily, delivered by highly qualified/well-trained teachers. Teachers must utilize a wide variety of instructional delivery strategies to develop effective methods of teaching at the highest level. These strategies will include in-person learning during the school day and in-person after school tutoring as needed.

One of the components of the Framework is progress monitoring and assessment. For the 2021-22 school year, MISD teachers will administer specific diagnostic assessments, universal screeners, district learning assessments, and classroom formative assessments to measure student learning and progress. This data is utilized to determine if targeted intervention supports are needed for students.

The District will utilize staff designated for academic intervention for identified students. Student performance data on STAAR indicates that overall, most students experienced learning loss during the 2020-21 school year. In response, funds have been allocated to provide additional academic support for learning loss.

Accelerated Instruction

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Supporting Special Populations

As the District plans for the return of students who have engaged in virtual learning for a significant duration of time (in some cases the entire 2020-21 school year), it is imperative that students receiving special education services have specific plans and supports in place to account for the potentially remarkable regression of skills (both academic and social) that may be present. The District will concentrate its focus on meeting the needs of all students in a successful transition back to face-to-face instruction by providing training to staff members. The District will also allocate resources to the academic needs of these unique learners to mediate the learning gaps that may have occurred due to a decrease in access to rich academic instruction.

In the event of a Closure

If a classroom/campus/district closure is deemed necessary, we will provide continuity of

instruction by using Google Classroom or Edgenuity if possible, and other standards-based instructional resources.

Levels of Instructional Continuity

MISD will continually extend our reach for equitable education for our students. Our district will pursue excellence in remaining ahead of the inevitable change to educational paradigms presented over the past year. MISD will strive to equip our educators with the strategies to provide blended learning experiences and student self-reliance training that will fortify our students' abilities to be successful in a virtual learning environment. Just as we provide drills for other unforeseen disasters we will provide our students and their families with skills, tools, and training to ensure that they are prepared for any disruptions in the normal learning infrastructure. MISD aims to provide our families with continuity of educational excellence regardless of the environment or circumstances at hand.

MISD has two levels of instructional continuity that will be put into place in the event that the normal daily operations and in-class instruction are not possible.

Level 1: In this level of instruction, the campus has significant absences in each grade level with over half of the students unable to attend the campus in person. In this event, teachers may provide instruction in a hybrid format consisting of in-person and/or via Google Classroom or Edgenuity.

Level 2: In this level of instruction, the district's campus is unable to hold normal face-to-face classes on the premises. In this event, both teachers and students will likely be functioning in a remote instruction format.

As the public health crisis continues, the district has been planning for the opening of the 2021-2022 school year with a focus on the health, safety, and well-being of our staff, students, and community. MISD is planning to open using the traditional in-person instructional environment. This plan is subject to change based on recommendations for school opening and operations provided by local health officials and the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

MISD will start our 2021-22 school year in accordance with guidelines from the state and will be contingent upon the rate of COVID-19 infections in Matagorda County and Texas. Ensuring the safety and health of our students and staff is our top priority and the creation of opportunities to have academic success and social-emotional well-being for our students is our driving force.

In the event of a Level 2 school closure due to COVID-19, weather, or any other reason, in-person learning will temporarily convert to remote instruction. If TEA requires the district to make up days due to closure, all students will be required to follow the MISD Instructional Calendar for 2021-2022 with indicated make-up days.

Students' and Staff Social, Emotional, Mental Health Professional Development

Social and emotional learning (SEL) strategies have been embedded into the required professional learning for teachers and administrators for the school year. There is a focus on the importance of relationship-building and learner dispositions. During remote instruction, teachers established virtual ways to connect with students and will now need to work to re-establish relationships in a face-to-face classroom setting that some students have not seen in over a year.

With a focus on learner dispositions, teachers and students will define behaviors that support their learning and work to strengthen and improve them through a goal setting and feedback process. Students will be able to reflect on their behaviors from the past school year to determine those that helped their learning and how to refine and practice behaviors to help them be successful as they transition back into a Post-COVID school setting.

COVID-19 has impacted everyone in some way, some more severely than others. As we return to face-to-face instruction during the pandemic, MISD's goal is to work together to mitigate the risk of disease transmission and keep all school stakeholders informed of all health and safety protocols that will be in place. We want staff and students to know that their physical and mental/emotional health is our top priority.

Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction is a priority. To ensure a safe and healthy learning and working environment, we will promote proper hygiene by advocating for hand washing/sanitizing, social distance by three feet, continue established cleaning protocols, and review local health authority guidance. We have learned a lot about the virus in the last year by analyzing data and working with our local health authorities. MISD will continue to work with the local health authorities and adjust our health & safety protocols as the need arises.

Health Screening

Health screening is important in supporting safety and physical health when accessing district facilities. In support of this effort, MISD has provided staff and families information on how

to screen for COVID- 19 symptoms each day before reporting to work or face-to-face instruction.

Staff- Each day, every COCISD staff member is required to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before reporting to any district facility. If a staff member has COVID-19 symptoms, they must follow established procedures for reporting their absence and not report to work. If a staff member is symptomatic, to return to work one of the following criteria must be met in accordance with the local health department guidelines and submitted to the individual's supervisor:

1. Obtain a negative PCR Test, and 24 hours have passed since the start of symptoms;
OR,
2. Obtain a note from a physician indicating an alternative diagnosis, and 24 hours Have passed since the start of symptoms; OR,
3. At least 24 hours have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Staff members must self-report as communicated by the district if they have tested positive for COVID-19. In this case, the staff member must follow established procedures for reporting their absence and not report to work.

Students - Parents and/or guardians shall screen their child(ren) for COVID-19 symptoms before allowing them to report to campus each day. The self-screening includes checking for symptoms that could be COVID-19. Parents shall keep their child(ren) home if symptomatic. Staff will check all student's temperature upon entering the bus or before entering the building.

If a student is symptomatic, to return to work one of the following criteria must be met in accordance with the local health department guidelines and submitted to the individual's campus nurse before returning:

1. Obtain a negative PCR Test, and 24 hours have passed since the start of symptoms;
OR,
2. Obtain a note from a physician indicating an alternative diagnosis, and 24 hours Have passed since the start of symptoms; OR,
3. At least 24 hours have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; Symptoms have improved,

Families will only self-report as communicated by the district if their child(ren) tested positive For COVID- 19 or believe the child(ren) has been in close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19. The family will receive isolation/quarantine guidance along with the final clearance to return to school based on the unique situation of each student.

Visitors

Parents and visitors will have limited access to the campus until COVID numbers decrease. We value strong relationships and partnerships with our parents but we want to protect our staff and students.

Hygiene

Regular hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of germs to others. The District will expect staff, students, and visitors to frequently and consistently practice safety protocols by washing their hands as often as possible using the following handwashing protocol:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and rinse with clean water.
- If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Dry hands with a clean paper towel or use an air dryer.
- Hand washing and/or sanitizing is required before, during, and after group activities, before and after eating, nose-blowing, coughing, or touching any common items.

The campus will allow breaks for students to wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after eating, mid-morning, before and after recess, and mid-afternoon (when possible). Students will also be required to use hand sanitizer after common contacts and will receive Continuous reinforcement on hygiene ownership as part of the safe practices educational campaign.

Respiratory Etiquette

If you are wearing a mask:

- You can cough or sneeze into your mask. Put on a new, clean mask as soon as possible and wash your hands.

If you are not wearing a mask:

- Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.
- Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Face Coverings

Per Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's executive order, effective June 5, 2021, students, staff, parents, and visitors will no longer be required to wear masks in schools or District buildings.

However, any individual may wear a mask if they choose to do so. Personal choice about

mask-wearing is to be respected at all times by all staff, students, parents, and visitors. Face coverings protect not only the wearer but also significantly reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. Guidance from local and state health agencies, recommends that people who are unvaccinated wear facial coverings.

If you choose to wear a mask, the local health agency advises the following:

- Wear masks with two or more layers to stop the spread of COVID-19.
- Wear the mask over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin.
- Masks can be safely worn by people two years and older.

Social Distancing Measures

The District will implement and enforce social distancing protocols in all buildings and facilities. Every effort will be made to ensure that a minimum of three (3) feet of distance is kept between individuals who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces. Face-to-face interactions must adhere to social distancing guidelines and other infection-spreading mitigating measures where applicable including avoiding any physical contact.

At least three (3) feet of distance will be kept between students and/or adults:

- Between adults in the school building and between adults and students.
- Between all students in the school building.
- In common areas, such as hallways, school lobbies, and auditoriums.
- During activities when increased exhalation occurs
- In community settings outside of the classroom.

MISD will continuously review safety needs due to COVID as well as recommendations from the local health department and will continue to make changes to keep students and staff safe. Additionally, designated entrances will be used to control the traffic flow, limiting the number of persons in one space at one time, and provide for the appropriate social distancing. It is important to note, in certain situations, staff members will need to interact at a closer distance to support individual student needs.

Cleaning Protocols

Cleaning and disinfecting are part of a broad approach to preventing infectious diseases in schools. Following CDC, TEA, OSHA, and local health department guidelines, COCISD has established protocols to keep buildings safe and clean. When a situation warrants, the district will enact disinfection measures, notifying the occupants of that building in advance, as appropriate. MISD will align cleaning protocols with guidance from national, state, and

local health authorities to help ensure students and staff are provided safe and healthy learning and working environments.

MISD's approach to providing a safe learning environment for all students and staff involves frequent and ongoing cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting of campuses and District buildings. Cleaning and disinfecting are part of a broad approach to preventing the exposure and spread of infectious diseases in schools. The process of cleaning combined with disinfecting effectively works to minimize the spread of infection. MISD will adjust cleaning protocols as needed.

Common Areas

High Touch Surfaces

Custodial teams will maintain the cleaning of high-touch surfaces during the school day. Classrooms will be equipped with supplies such as cleaning sprays and wipes for cleaning between scheduled transitions and changing of student groups. Appropriate safety products will be provided near high-touch surfaces in offices and throughout buildings to ensure health and safety protocols are met.

Water Fountains

Water fountains will be open for drinking and filling of water bottles or jugs. Students and staff are encouraged to bring a refillable water bottle to fill at fountains. As well, we want to ensure students and staff remain hydrated and have access to water throughout the day.

Responsive Communication

Effective and responsive communication with parents and the communities served by MISD is essential to provide critical information and guidance.

Identifying Possible COVID Cases on Campus

- The campus will immediately separate anyone who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school until they can be picked up by a parent or guardian or get home safely. The person who is suspected of having symptoms will be provided with a mask.
- The school will clean the areas used by the individual who showed COVID symptoms while at school (student, teacher, or staff) as soon as is feasible.
- Persons who report feeling feverish should be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID.

Vaccinations

Per the recommendations of the CDC and state and local health officials, MISD encourages all employees and students aged 12 and older to get vaccinated for COVID-19.

Communication Methods

Efficient, ongoing communication and consultation with parents/guardians and the school community is critical to maintaining the trusting relationships that are vital to a healthy, productive learning environment.

As a District, it is our duty to reassure parents and staff of the safety in our schools and to coordinate safety efforts among various stakeholders. The system and process for alerting parents or employees of new COVID cases will follow standard District notification processes, including:

- Emails regarding situations related to safety on campuses or sites.
- Phone calls to students, families, and staff to share information as needed.

Transportation

MISD will continue to adhere to the local health department guidelines for social distancing on buses to the greatest extent possible, without violating the governor's order of not requiring masks to be worn. The Transportation Department will monitor and adjust bus seating protocols as COVID cases fluctuate in the community, as needed

The following safety protocols will be in place to prevent any outbreak while on the bus:

- All students will be required to follow the campus requirements and Expectations while aboard buses.
- Bus drivers and monitors may sanitize buses between groups of passengers to prevent cross-contamination, as needed.
- All district transportation buses/vehicles will be routinely sanitized to improve sanitation and germ removal.

Child Nutrition Staff

All Child Nutrition staff will wear required protective equipment for food handling established by local and state health departments while working in the kitchen area and when serving meals, which includes the use of gloves. Due to the established safety protocols and measures already in place, there is no need to install additional protective equipment

Food Services

The MISD Child Nutrition Department will:

- Continue to follow all local health protocols.
- Continue additional cleaning procedures
- Encourage MISD Child Nutrition staff to wear masks when serving food or ringing up.
- Encourage student social distancing in the lines.
- Cafeterias will be cleaned and disinfected daily in accordance with safety protocols outlined in this plan.

Return to Work/School Guidelines

MISD will follow local health department guidelines regarding when a staff member tests positive for COVID, has come in close contact with a lab-confirmed COVID case, or has symptoms that could be COVID-19, can return to work.

Staff members must complete and submit all required return to work documents required by the return-to-work requirements.