



Dubuque
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

» 2021-2024

AMERICAN RECOVERY ACT
/ ESSER FUNDS

» ABOUT THE DISTRICT

MISSION

TO DEVELOP
WORLD-CLASS
LEARNERS
AND CITIZENS
OF CHARACTER
IN A SAFE AND
INCLUSIVE
LEARNING
COMMUNITY

VISION

Unfolding the potential of every student by empowering the teacher/student relationship through:

- promoting the roles and responsibilities we all have in the 21st-century learning process;
- removing barriers;
- creating an environment where character and citizenship count;
- leveraging content knowledge to become critical thinkers and problem solvers; and
- providing multiple pathways to unlocking student potential.

VALUES

The Board of Education values:

- Essential skills of digital-age literacy, inventive thinking, effective communication, and high productivity
- Innovative programming options
- Extra-curricular activities and character development
- Building leadership capacity for all employees
- Community engagement and multiple ways of communication
- Being transparent, ethical, equitable and using resources wisely

Want to see the MISSION, VISION and VALUES come to life?

Look no further than the district's strategic plan. Online now at www.dbqschools.org/strategicplan.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Dubuque Community School District will not discriminate in its educational activities on the basis of age, ancestry, color, creed, familial status, gender identity, marital status, national origin, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, political belief, political party preference, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

The Dubuque Community School District offers Career Technical Education (CTE) programs in the following service areas:

- Applied Sciences, Technology, Engineering, and Manufacturing
- Business, Finance, Marketing, and Management
- Health Sciences
- Human Services
- Information Solutions

To be admitted for CTE courses, students must meet the necessary course prerequisites. The district will not discriminate in determining CTE admission and participation. Lack of English language skills will also not be a barrier to admission and participation in the district's CTE programs.

For the full policies, see SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES #1001 AND #1005.

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DUBUQUE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
2021-2024 AMERICAN RECOVERY ACT / ESSER FUNDS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

»» ABOUT THE PLAN

4 Introduction

»» SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

- 5 LUMEN Social-Emotional Training for Staff
 - 5 Social-Emotional Curriculum and Screeners for Students
 - 6 Brain-Health Direct Services: Student Spaces that Provide Direct Support
 - 6 Brain-Health Direct Services: Summer and School Year Counselor and Life Coach Support for Students
 - 6 Community Resource Center to Provide Support for Families
 - 7 Support for School Social-Emotional Learning Implementation Building Teams, Including Risk Factor Identification and Suicide Prevention/Postvention
-

»» UNFINISHED LEARNING / ADDRESSING LEARNING LOSS

ELEMENTARY

- 8 Summer Academy: Direct Reading Support and District-Directed Afternoon Enrichment Opportunities
 - 8 Summer Library Hours
 - 9 Core-Plus Teachers (one per elementary)
 - 10 Professional Development Focused on Unfinished Learning, MTSS and Differentiation
 - 10 Virtual Education Program (grades 1-5)
-

SECONDARY

- 11 5th Block at the Alta Vista Campus
 - 11 High School Interventionists
 - 12 Summer Edgenuity Office Hours
 - 12 6th-Grade Band, Orchestra, Choir Camp
 - 13 Summer School: Algebra, Geometry
 - 13 Professional Development Focused on Unfinished Learning, MTSS and Differentiation
 - 13 After-School Academic Support and Tutoring
 - 14 Virtual Education Program (grades 6-12)
-

SPECIAL EDUCATION

- 15 Extended School Year (ESY) for Designated PK-12 Students who are Eligible for Special Education
 - 15 Return-to-Routine Program for Designated PK-12 Students who are Eligible for Special Education
-

»» ADDRESSING THE ACCESS GAP / STUDENT SERVICES

- 16 English Language Learner (ELL) Summer School Outreach
 - 16 English Language Learner (ELL) After-School Tutoring
 - 16 Support for Students with Transportation Barriers
 - 17 Systemic Attendance Improvement Efforts
-

»» COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- 18 Mobile Registration / Employment / Community Outreach
 - 18 Building-Level Student / Family Engagement Efforts Based on School Needs
 - 19 Reconnecting Community / Business Partners to Schools
 - 19 Reestablishing and Enhancing Student Mentoring Program
 - 19 Providing New, Fieldwork-Based Learning Opportunities for Students at All Levels
-

»» OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

- 20 Cleaning / Sanitation Supplies
 - 20 Technology / Connectivity Infrastructure
 - 20 Unspent Balance Relief
 - 21 Nutrition Fund Recovery
-

» ABOUT THE PLAN

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Dubuque Community School District has consistently worked to put students first - and these efforts will continue as we move through and recover from the impacts felt on our district and community.

Through the development of this plan, the district has prioritized the use of federal COVID-19 relief funds (ESSER) to most effectively support student success.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

This plan was developed with a broad base of stakeholder feedback, including the following groups:

- District-School Improvement Leadership Team (school/community committee)
- School Board
- Leadership/Administrative Team
- Dubuque Education Association
- Parents/Guardians
- Teachers
- School and District Support Staff
- Stakeholder representing the interests of children with disabilities
- Stakeholder representing the interest of children experiencing homelessness
- Stakeholder representing the interests of children in foster care
- Stakeholder representing the interests of English learners
- Stakeholder representing the interests of migratory students
- Stakeholder representing the interests of children who are incarcerated
- Civil Rights and disability rights organization
- Students

FOCUS AREAS

Through focus groups and survey results, clear priorities emerged from the planning process that guide the path forward. This plan focuses the use of relief funds on research-based efforts in the following areas:

- Social-Emotional Learning/Brain Health
- Unfinished Learning/Addressing Learning Loss
- Addressing the Access Gap/Student Services
- Community and Family Engagement
- Operational Support

MOVING FORWARD

This document represents the current plan to utilize relief funds to support student success, but the needs of students are ever-changing and the impact of COVID-19 continues. This plan will be updated as needed to most-effectively leverage funds in the most important need areas.

» SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING/ BRAIN HEALTH

LUMEN SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL TRAINING FOR STAFF

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

Recognizing the importance of social-emotional learning for staff is critical in supporting staff in being at their best to serve students.

LUMEN Training, a research-based program developed by a team of district social-emotional learning experts, provides training in all five of Iowa's social-emotional learning competencies for adults.

According to Iowa Department of Education's Foundational Principles, social-emotional learning involves all adults, as both teachers and life-long learners.

Social-emotional learning hinges on caring adults, which makes social-emotional learning the first step as adults examine their own competencies, model competencies, and embrace self-care.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Actively teach students socially- and behaviorally-appropriate skills using strategies focused on both individual students and the whole classroom, which is effective as part of school-based universal instruction and intervention supports.

✦ Teach and reinforce new skills to increase appropriate behavior and preserve a positive classroom climate

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/behavior_pg_092308.pdf#page=35

✦ Iowa Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies

https://educateiowa.gov/pk-12/learner-supports/social-emotional-learning#SEL_Competencies_Learning_Targets_and_Developmental_Indicators

✦ What Does Evidence-Based Instruction in SEL Actually Look Like in Practice?

<https://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/PDF-25-CASEL-Brief-What-Does-SEL-Look-Like-in-Practice-11-1-15.pdf>

✦ Indicators of Schoolwide SEL

https://schoolguide.casel.org/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/Indicators-of-Schoolwide-SEL_2_o-1.pdf

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL CURRICULUM AND SCREENERS FOR STUDENTS

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

With social-emotional well-being and brain health as identified needs for students moving through the COVID-19 pandemic, the district is working to be prepared to address increased needs in this area.

A key tool in doing so will be the use of a social-emotional screener for students to assist identification of specific areas requiring attention for individual students.

This will be coupled with the use of a social-emotional curriculum for students that reinforces the five key areas of social-emotional learning: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Actively teach students socially- and behaviorally-appropriate skills using strategies focused on both individual students and the whole classroom, which is effective as part of school-based universal instruction and intervention supports.

✦ Teach and reinforce new skills to increase appropriate behavior and preserve a positive classroom climate

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/behavior_pg_092308.pdf#page=35

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✦ Indicators of Schoolwide SEL

https://schoolguide.casel.org/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/Indicators-of-Schoolwide-SEL_2_o-1.pdf

BRAIN-HEALTH DIRECT SERVICES: STUDENT SPACES THAT PROVIDE DIRECT SUPPORT

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

COVID-19 caused many students and families to isolate for prolonged periods of time. This forced isolation significantly impacted the academic achievement and brain/mental health of students. Establishing brain/mental health rooms in our high schools can alleviate these impacts by creating safe places for students who need to gain self-regulation, reduce anxiety or in general talk with a qualified person who can provide support and connect them to community resources when necessary.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Classroom-based interventions are useful to increase the mental health and resilience in children. Resilience describes the process that leads to a positive development despite adversities.

📌 **Review: Universal Mental Health Interventions for Young Students in Adverse Environments—a Systematic Review of Evaluated Interventions**

<https://acamh.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/camh.12493>

BRAIN-HEALTH DIRECT SERVICES: SUMMER AND SCHOOL YEAR COUNSELOR AND LIFE COACH SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

Summer is a time when students who struggle with brain/mental health issues often flounder without the support of school counselors, life coaches and other school professionals who provide critical day to day support throughout the school year. Providing student support staff with summer hours to connect with these students who struggle keeps these youth connected to schools and community resources. This summer support is often the difference between a student dropping out of school and a student graduating from high school.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Interventions result in building students' interpersonal competencies such as pro-social behaviors, interpersonal communication and social problem-solving skills followed by intrapersonal competencies such as attention, emotional regulation and resilience. This positively impacts school climate and academic achievement.

📌 **Social and Emotional Learning Interventions Under the Every Student Succeeds Act: Evidence Review**

https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2133.html

COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

A community resource center can coordinate and integrate educational, developmental, family, health, and other comprehensive services for families. Programs may include family engagement and parent leadership and improve access to social service programs in the community. This center will be staffed by a person with a background in mental health issues and will closely coordinate services with community providers when appropriate.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Schools partner with a variety of community service organizations to provide academics, youth development, family support, mental and physical health resources, and social services for students and families. Services offered through schools vary; each location is designed to address local needs and priorities.

📌 **Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy: A Review of the Evidence**

https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Community_Schools_Effective_REPORT.pdf

SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION BUILDING TEAMS, INCLUDING RISK FACTOR IDENTIFICATION AND SUICIDE PREVENTION/POSTVENTION

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

Developing the whole student is the key to creating schools where students feel safe and supported. Social emotional learning supports provided by school counselors and life coaches during out of school times provide the support necessary for students to engage in meaningful self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness which leads to better relationship skills and decision-making processes.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Current research is emphasizing social emotional learning that align social and emotional development with academic learning. This effort has been backed by a growing body of evidence that shows effective implementation of social emotional learning results in more positive outcomes for young people.

➤ **Ready to Lead: A National Principal Survey on How Social and Emotional Learning Can Prepare Children and Transform Schools**

<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED579088>

» UNFINISHED LEARNING/ ADDRESSING LEARNING LOSS

ELEMENTARY

SUMMER ACADEMY: DIRECT READING SUPPORT AND DISTRICT-DIRECTED AFTERNOON ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

The Summer Academy program for summer of 2021 targeted all students who recently completed first-grade, recognizing these students missed the last portion of their kindergarten year and had interrupted learning during various portions of the first-grade year, all due to the pandemic. FAST assessment data indicated that this group of students was more significantly impacted during this important developmental time.

This program was offered free to all students and barriers to participation by providing transportation, meals, and locations in three separate areas of the city.

Three hours of the morning focused on literacy instruction and three hours of the afternoon focused on connected and meaningful enrichment activities. Literacy instruction included the writing process through interactive writing embedded with the reading instruction. Reading instruction focused on foundational skills to facilitate greater proficiency in decoding and the reading process. Both avenues involved explicit instruction.

Afternoon enrichment experiences were facilitated with community partners to bring forth experiences, conversation and positive relationships. Dubuque Community School District teachers, para-educators, administrators, bus drivers, secretaries, custodians and bus drivers as well as several community partners assisted in delivering this experience to 300 hundred students. Student attendance averaged 80%.

This program will continue in the future and be modified as needs indicate.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

- Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words, including understanding morphology from less to more complex words.
- Teach young children about print knowledge, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and oral language through interactions, conversations, experiences, and relationships with caring adults in their lives.
- Teach students to recognize and manipulate the segments of sounds in words and to link those sounds to letters in preparation to read words and comprehend text. This supports students in reading nearly 70% of regular monosyllabic words.
- Explicitly teach the writing process (plan, set goals, draft, evaluate, revise, and edit writing) and strategies for each part of the writing process. Plan for independence through gradual release.

📌 Best Practices Clearinghouse

<https://bestpracticesclearinghouse.ed.gov/>

SUMMER LIBRARY HOURS

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

Access to print has been noted by the US Department of Education as a strong link in strengthening students' reading abilities. NAEP reports that 15% of students with 0-10 books in their homes scored proficiently on reading tests, while 50% of students with 100 books in their home scored proficiently on reading tests. This direct link between access to books proves to be critical in the reading process. Having school libraries accessible during the summer months allowed for free access to literature and increase in print surroundings and immersion into literature.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

The U.S. Department of Education (Department) recognizes the importance of ensuring every child in the country has access to reading materials in their homes and communities.

📌 Access to Reading Materials

<https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/bookaccess/index.html>

CORE-PLUS TEACHERS (ONE PER ELEMENTARY)

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

In order to address unfinished learning or learning loss brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the district has added Core-plus teachers. These certified teachers focus their work on diagnostically and systematically instructing small groups of students that have not met the Iowa Core Standards.

Using student data as their guide, these teachers meet with flexible groupings of students and provide a high level of instruction focused on specific skills in English/language arts and math. This allows for “just-in-time” instruction connected essential standards

Each elementary school in the district has this Core-plus teacher to instruct and teach unmet Iowa Core Standards to close gaps.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

- Addition and subtraction – concepts, skills, and problem-solving; place value and required fluencies for addition and subtraction.
- Multiplication and division of whole numbers and fractions – concepts, skills, problem-solving, and required fluencies.
- Teach clear and concise mathematical language and support students’ use of the language to communicate their understanding of mathematics concepts.
- Explicitly teaching strategies and cognitive routines readers use to enhance understanding and difficulties in comprehension and compensate for imperfect knowledge about the text. Plan for independence through gradual release.
- Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words, including understanding morphology from less to more complex words.
- Teach students to recognize and manipulate the segments of sounds in words and to link those sounds to letters in preparation to read words and comprehend text. This supports students in reading nearly 70% of regular monosyllabic words
- Explicitly teach the writing process (plan, set goals, draft, evaluate, revise, and edit writing) and strategies for each part of the writing process. Plan for independence through gradual release.

📌 Differentiated Learning

<https://www.nctm.org/conferences-and-Professional-Development/Tips-for-Teachers/Differentiated-Learning/>

📌 Best Practices Clearinghouse

<https://bestpracticesclearinghouse.ed.gov/>

📌 An equitable approach to teaching.

<https://educateiowa.gov/article/2020/06/19/equitable-approach-teaching-check-out-webinar>

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOCUSED ON UNFINISHED LEARNING, MTSS AND DIFFERENTIATION

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

The State of Iowa has its state differentiated accountability model that our district references to systematically create a comprehensive school improvement plan. Within this accountability framework, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) facilitates the process to closely examine our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) by completion of the Self-Assessment MTSS Implementation (SAMI).

The SAMI indicated the need to provide clear support and training for differentiation in all tiers of instruction for students; thus, providing teachers greater depth of knowledge and ability to effectively differentiate instruction to meet students needs within all tiers. Additionally, the State of Iowa 21 Day phase-in plan requires the purposeful planning of small, flexible groups of students to receive differentiated instruction and assignments

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Differentiated learning at the state level is a research-based process that includes data analysis and incorporation of ongoing best-practice data to develop strong instruction for student success.

➤ Improving district performance: A collaboration that really works

<https://educateiowa.gov/article/2018/08/01/improving-district-performance-collaboration-really-works>

➤ Supports for Learning and Performance

<https://educateiowa.gov/pk-12/learner-supports/supports-learning-and-performance>

➤ Differentiated Learning

<https://www.nctm.org/conferences-and-Professional-Development/Tips-for-Teachers/Differentiated-Learning/>

VIRTUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (GRADES 1-5)

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

As part of the community-wide recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Dubuque Community School District will offer a virtual learning option during the 2021-2022 school year for students at all grade levels.

This program will be evaluated and may also be offered in the future.

The program is open to any student currently living in the district at the time of enrollment. At all levels, students admitted to the virtual program who are eligible for special education and/or English Language Learner (ELL) services will work with the special education team or ELL team to develop a plan to meet the student's needs in the virtual program.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The elementary school virtual learning program will include a combination of scheduled, REQUIRED daily live learning with a certified district teacher and on-demand learning that happens at times that work best for the student. Instruction with teachers will be delivered via Microsoft Teams. Daily attendance will be recorded during the live classes.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

The district's virtual program, like the traditional in-person program, uses research-based curriculum materials and teaching strategics.

➤ State of Iowa Virtual/Online Education Guidance

https://educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/2021-1-13_Online_Education_Guidance.pdf

SECONDARY

5TH BLOCK AT THE ALTA VISTA CAMPUS

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

Staff teaching in the Alternative Learning Center Program, located on the Alta Vista Campus, will offer a 5th Block program throughout the spring for a total of 24 sessions during the spring semester.

The instructional plan for this program is learning recovery for previously attempted credits that students earned 40% or above but failed to earn credit. Independent courses will be offered for first attempt at a course or for courses students failed to earn at least 40% on in previous attempts. Teachers at the Alta Vista Campus have already had experience in these teaching approaches and are well-positioned to offer this style of credit recovery.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Preventing Dropouts: Monitor the progress of all students, and proactively intervene when students show early signs of attendance, behavior, or academic problems.

Provide intensive, individualized support to students who have fallen off track and face significant challenges to success.

For schools with many at-risk students, create small, personalized communities to facilitate monitoring and support.

🔗 What Works Clearinghouse

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

🔗 RTI at Work

<https://www.solutiontree.com/rti-at-work>

HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTIONISTS

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

Through the addition of high school interventionists, schools will have access to additional teachers focused on providing tier 2 and tier 3 support for students in math and English/language arts.

At the high school level, this provides consistent, viable option for Tier 2 and 3 student academic support. Indications are that with the unfinished learning from the pandemic, more students needing additional support for unfinished learning.

Current efforts include hiring two additional teachers to serve as math interventionist and two teachers to serve as English/language arts interventionists.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Preventing Dropouts: Monitor the progress of all students, and proactively intervene when students show early signs of attendance, behavior, or academic problems.

Provide intensive, individualized support to students who have fallen off track and face significant challenges to success.

For schools with many at-risk students, create small, personalized communities to facilitate monitoring and support.

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SUMMER EDGENUITY OFFICE HOURS

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

With secondary students engaging in online coursework through the Edgenuity platform, summer office hour support provided a staff resource to maintain contact with students and parents, provide transportation, answer phones, run Edgenuity lab, assist with summer school registration, and trouble shoot technology issues for students.

Staffing included office paraprofessionals, teachers, life coaches and guidance counselors.

In addition to this staff, Edgenuity teachers provided office hours multiple times each week to help students with questions and teach them concepts they struggle to learn on their own. These office hours offer a place for students to work away from home without distractions.

Staff also work to maintain contact with students on their rosters, make calls and updates home multiple times each week, and issue reminder e-mails and messages as well. Transportation barriers to the 5th Block Program and ways to alleviate them will be explored in the future.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Preventing Dropouts: Monitor the progress of all students, and proactively intervene when students show early signs of attendance, behavior, or academic problems.

Provide intensive, individualized support to students who have fallen off track and face significant challenges to success.

For schools with many at-risk students, create small, personalized communities to facilitate monitoring and support.

➤ What Works Clearinghouse

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➤ RTI at Work

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6TH-GRADE BAND, ORCHESTRA, CHOIR CAMP

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

In 2021, 126 fifth-grade students that lost the opportunity to try out for band, orchestra, and choir. In order to recoup this learning, students were able to participate in a summer band, orchestra and choir camp.

This program has 113 students consistently attending each day. It will be evaluated and possibly offered in the future.

In the program, 12 staff gave lessons over a four-week period for two hours a day.

Instrumental students learned five notes and rehearsed 10 songs as a group. Choir students learned how to sing in two-part harmony. The last day of camp, parents were invited for a performance.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Students can become disengaged from school if they feel like they're not able to be academically successful. By offering an after school academic support program that also incorporates enrichment and career ready opportunities can help to support struggling students. Additionally, these opportunities will help to create a better connection to school for students which helps to improve overall success.

➤ What Works Clearinghouse

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

SUMMER SCHOOL: ALGEBRA, GEOMETRY

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

Summer school offerings at the secondary level allowed teachers to focus on coursework most needed by students. Students were able to obtain credits in Algebra and Geometry.

Teachers issued for work to support learning recovery in classes that were close to passing, maintained communication with parents and students and graded work. Feedback on this program was positive and allowed students to obtain credits while not being required to attend for the entire summer – a feature liked by both students and parents.

Staffing consisted of an in-person math teachers and/or paraprofessionals for three weeks.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Preventing Dropouts: Monitor the progress of all students, and proactively intervene when students show early signs of attendance, behavior, or academic problems.

Provide intensive, individualized support to students who have fallen off track and face significant challenges to success.

For schools with many at-risk students, create small, personalized communities to facilitate monitoring and support.

📌 What Works Clearinghouse

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

📌 RTI at Work

<https://www.solutiontree.com/rti-at-work>

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOCUSED ON UNFINISHED LEARNING, MTSS AND DIFFERENTIATION

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

The State of Iowa has its state differentiated accountability model that our district references to systematically create a comprehensive school improvement plan. Within this accountability framework, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) facilitates the process to closely examine our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) by completion of the Self-Assessment MTSS Implementation (SAMI).

At the secondary level, the district uses Solution Tree to lead professional learning sessions at each high school and middle school.

The professional learning is focused on their RTI (Response to Intervention) at Work and PLC (Professional Learning Communities) at Work conferences.

This learning supports tier 1, 2 and 3 interventions to support unfinished learning in students with a particular focus on tier 1 (in-class) supports.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Monitor the progress of all students, and proactively intervene when students show early signs of attendance, behavior, or academic problems.

Provide intensive, individualized support to students who have fallen off track and face significant challenges to success.

📌 What Works Clearinghouse

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

📌 RTI at Work

<https://www.solutiontree.com/rti-at-work>

AFTER-SCHOOL ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND TUTORING

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

The lack of academic success is one of the reasons why students either experience a setback in their education or drop out of school altogether. The district will provide various levels of support for struggling learners including academic support outside the school day to intervene and assist those students who are struggling in the classroom during the school year.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Students can become disengaged from school if they feel like they're not able to be academically successful. By offering an after school academic support program that also incorporates enrichment and career ready opportunities can help to support struggling students. Additionally, these opportunities will help to create a better connection to school for students which helps to improve overall success.

📌 What Works Clearinghouse

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

VIRTUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (GRADES 6-12)

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

As part of the community-wide recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Dubuque Community School District will offer a virtual learning option during the 2021-2022 school year for students at all grade levels.

This program will be evaluated and may also be offered in the future.

The program is open to any student currently living in the district at the time of enrollment. At all levels, students admitted to the virtual program who are eligible for special education and/or English Language Learner (ELL) services will work with the special education team or ELL team to develop a plan to meet the student's needs in the virtual program.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

The middle and high school virtual learning program will include core courses primarily delivered via the Edgenuity learning platform. Students will have access to a certified district teacher to support their Edgenuity work for help sessions, discussions and intervention classes. A select number of advanced placement, world language and some career/technical education courses will be offered virtually by certified district teachers.

The district-led support sessions, and the select district-offered courses, will use the Microsoft Teams platform, which is similar to Zoom. Students wishing to take a course that is not available through Edgenuity may do so in-person. Daily attendance will be recorded via Infinite Campus.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

The district's virtual program, like the traditional in-person program, uses research-based curriculum materials and teaching strategies.

➤ State of Iowa Virtual/Online Education Guidance

https://educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/2021-1-13_Online_Education_Guidance.pdf

➤ Edgenuity, online provider approved by the Iowa Department of Education

<https://www.edgenuity.com/>

SPECIAL EDUCATION

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR (ESY) FOR DESIGNATED PK-12 STUDENTS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

Students eligible for special education who have a goal area of concern and require extended school year services will receive intensive instruction as determined by each student's Individualized Education Program team.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the need for students eligible to receive special education services to receive support to continue learning, meet learning targets and regain unfinished learning.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Various programs are utilized to provide specially designed instruction to students. Evidence and research on some of the programs can be found with the following links:

- **Really Great Reading**
<https://www.reallygreatreading.com/white-paper> https://www.reallygreatreading.com/research_successes
- **Reading Mastery**
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/InterventionReport/416>
- **Corrective Reading**
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/InterventionReport/121>
- **Saxon Mathematics**
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/InterventionReport/673>
- **Bridges Intervention**
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/InterventionReport/56>
- **Reading Milestones**
<http://www.proedinc.com/downloads/M10950ReadingMilestonesResearch.pdf>
- **Zones of Regulation**
<https://zonesofregulation.com/research--evidence-base.html>
- **STAR**
<https://starautismsupport.com/curriculum/research>

RETURN-TO-ROUTINE PROGRAM FOR DESIGNATED PK-12 STUDENTS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

For many students eligible for special education services, a break from routine can impact a student's performance and provide additional learning challenges.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this need as it has caused for further disruption in routines.

Through the Return-to-Routine Program, students have the opportunity to come to school in advance of the school year beginning to become familiar with school expectations, supports and routines.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Various programs are utilized to provide specially designed instruction to students. Evidence and research on some of the programs can be found with the following links:

- **Bridges Intervention**
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/InterventionReport/56>
- **Really Great Reading**
<https://www.reallygreatreading.com/white-paper> https://www.reallygreatreading.com/research_successes
- **Zones of Regulation**
<https://zonesofregulation.com/research--evidence-base.html>
- **STAR**
<https://starautismsupport.com/curriculum/research>

» ADDRESSING THE ACCESS GAP/ STUDENT SERVICES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL) SUMMER SCHOOL OUTREACH

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

The summer slide in learning for ELL students is real. Students need to stay connected to their schools and need to be around others who speak English. In addition, they need to continue practicing their English skills and fill knowledge gaps caused by interruptions in their formal education. Hiring ELL teachers and life coaches in the summer to work with ELL students helps reduce the summer learning loss.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

During summer vacation, many students lose knowledge and skills. By the end of summer, students perform, on average, one month behind where they left off in the spring. Participation in summer learning programs should mitigate learning loss and could even produce achievement gains.

➤ **Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning**

<https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1120.html>

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL) AFTER-SCHOOL TUTORING

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

ELL students must not only learn English but they also need to keep the same pace as their classmates. Additional time to process and understand the content of their lessons in their non-native language often leads to academic success and on time graduation. Hiring teachers to work after school to tutor students is an effective strategy to support the learning of these students.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Expanded learning time, a schoolwide strategy that entails redesigning and lengthening the school day and/or year to help support teaching and learning for all students, can be particularly beneficial for ELLs. This additional time can be pivotal in closing both the academic and language gap for ELLs.

➤ **A Race Against the Clock: The Value of Expanded Learning Time for English Language Learners**

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2008/12/16/5345/a-race-against-the-clock/>

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

Students often miss school because the family does not have reliable transportation or must rely on public transportation or walk. Public transportation is not always convenient, and it may be raining or too hot or cold to walk. Providing vans for the Title 1 schools to pick up and drop off students will help overcome the transportation barrier. In addition, adding additional school bus loops around the Title 1 school neighborhoods will alleviate student transportation issues.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

A lack of reliable transportation is a primary factor in chronic absenteeism for students, as communities have become more dependent on the family vehicle to transport children to school. This can be a particular barrier for low-income students, with long-term repercussions for academic achievement and career success.

➤ **Report: Transportation Effects Chronic Absenteeism**

<https://stnonline.com/news/new-report-examines-role-of-transportation-in-chronic-absenteeism/>

SYSTEMIC ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

COVID-19 impacted student attendance. Many students experienced illness or were quarantined. Families were reluctant to send students to in-person classes for fear of contracting COVID. Many of our schools experienced higher rates of chronic absenteeism.

Schools need to examine their data and understand why students are chronically absent. An attendance database will be developed at the district level and school administrators and others will be trained in using the real time data tool for their school. In addition, a toolkit of attendance resources aligned to the Multi-tiered System of Supports will be developed for school teams to use. These tools will help school teams gain a deeper understanding of what is and could be happening to improve student attendance. Training on the toolkit will be offered to school teams.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Schools need to understand and address which students are missing school and understand the barriers students and family face that cause chronic absenteeism. Interventions need to address the barriers unique to the attendance issues at each school.

➤ **Absent From School: Addressing and Understanding Student Absenteeism**

<https://www.hepg.org/hep-home/books/absent-from-school>

» COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

MOBILE REGISTRATION/EMPLOYMENT/COMMUNITY OUTREACH

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, engagement with parents/guardians, families and community members was limited due to safety measures in place to prevent the spread of illness.

The district is now focused on re-engaging these critical stakeholder groups by increasing community engagement efforts and bringing the district to the areas in which this individuals live.

Through this initiative, the district will retrofit a school bus being retired from the fleet to serve as a community outreach vehicle. It will serve as both a visual representation of the district at community events while offering mobile services such as student registration, employment fairs/interviews, book and internet access, and student field trip support. Outreach efforts will be accompanied by support staff to serve as district liaisons.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Parent, family, and community involvement in education results in higher academic performance and school improvement for elementary and secondary levels regardless of race, family education, income, or background.

📌 Parent, Family, Community Involvement in Education

<https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.204.7661&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

📌 Top Benefits of Family and Community Engagement

<https://www.hanoverresearch.com/insights-blog/top-benefits-of-family-and-community-engagement/>

BUILDING-LEVEL STUDENT/FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS BASED ON SCHOOL NEEDS

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

Reconnecting students and families to schools has been essential for positive partnerships and relationships to best reach students. Opening our elementary buildings at various hours of the day and evenings has allowed for this to occur. School outreach has also encompassed the following: home visits, picnic/park gatherings, orientation meetings.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

- Parent, family, and community involvement in education results in higher academic performance and school improvement for elementary and secondary levels regardless of race, family education, income, or background.
- Extensive correlational research points to relationships as a key to wellbeing, resilience, progress in school, and staying in school. Programs that nurture developmental.

📌 Building Relationships as a Foundation of Trauma-Informed Practices in Schools

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/building-relationships-as-a-foundation-of-trauma-informed-practices-in-schools>

RECONNECTING COMMUNITY/BUSINESS PARTNERS TO SCHOOLS

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

Community/business partners offer a vital link to student success and give new insight into future opportunities for students. These partnerships were hampered by the COVID-19 and efforts are in place to rebuild and enhance them.

These partnerships benefit students at all levels, and in particular through the district's VERTEX Initiative, a career and college readiness program that serves to intentional engage students in career exploration in hands-on settings.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Courses/programs that connect school with career/work increase student engagement, attendance, academic outcomes, relationships, and sense of belonging in school.

Parent, family, and community involvement in education results in higher academic performance and school improvement for elementary and secondary levels regardless of race, family education, income, or background.

📌 Parent, Family, Community Involvement in Education

<https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.204.7661&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

📌 Top Benefits of Family and Community Engagement

<https://www.hanoverresearch.com/insights-blog/top-benefits-of-family-and-community-engagement/>

📌 Iowa Clearinghouse for Work-Based Learning

<https://clearinghouse.futurereadyiowa.gov/>

REESTABLISHING AND ENHANCING STUDENT MENTORING PROGRAM

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

Students often struggle in school with social emotional and academic issues. Wrapping a trained volunteer mentor around a struggling student provides another caring adult for the child or young adult. A district wide study team will be assembled to review current practices in student mentoring and make recommendations for program improvement and curriculum to be used. Implementation of the study committee recommendations will follow.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Mentoring in education involves pairing students with adults who can act as a positive role model. This relationship helps the student build confidence, develop resilience, and feel more connected to school.

📌 Effects of Mentoring on School Engagement, Social Relationship, and Resilience

PROVIDING NEW, FIELDWORK-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS AT ALL LEVELS

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the district to greatly reduce learning experiences that happen outside the classroom. Field trips and field experiences are key learning opportunities that give students the ability to gain key content area knowledge while also seeing its immediate applicability to real-world settings.

From career experiences at the high school level to immersive learning experiences at the elementary and middle school level, field-based learning will be enhanced in the future through new and expanded student programming.

RESEARCH SUPPORTING INITIATIVE:

Field trips increase student knowledge and serve as motivation for continued learning of the subject. The impact of the learning from the field trip is closely tied to the preparation and reflection activities the teacher implements with the students.

📌 A Review of Research on School Field Trips and Their Value in Education

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287563429_A_Review_of_Research_on_School_Field_Trips_and_Their_Value_in_Education

» OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

CLEANING/SANITATION EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

The health and safety impact of COVID-19 required the significant purchase of additional cleaning and sanitation equipment and supplies to ensure the safety possible learning environment.

From personal protective equipment to hospital-grade disinfectants and sanitizing misters, the district used and will continue to use these products to maintain increased cleaning protocols that support the health and safety of students and staff.

TECHNOLOGY/CONNECTIVITY INFRASTRUCTURE

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

Realizing that adequate technology resources are needed to effectively provide required remote learning, the district is procuring the technology necessary to ensure that each student has access to a high-quality digital device that meets the needs of today's learners.

At the high school level, over 3,300 student computers were already in the hands of students at Dubuque Senior High School, Hempstead High School and the Alta Vista Campus through our ongoing Anytime, Anywhere Learning Initiative. This means that every student at these schools has a district-issued laptop.

At the middle school level, the district moved into a one:one model similar to the high schools, which provides each middle school student with a laptop computer.

At the elementary school level, the district purchased 1,900 additional devices due to the pandemic to ensure the district could transition to deploying one device for each elementary student to take home as needed.

Access to the internet is also critical to students – and yet many in our community are without adequate access needed in today's world. While this equity issue cannot be addressed by the district alone, we have taken significant steps to reduce this barrier for students and families:

The district currently has approximately 350 internet hotspots, purchased during the initial school closure in the spring 2020, that are available for check out to families who do not have internet access.

The district has also purchased and installed outdoor wireless access points at all 19 school buildings in the district. These access points provide community members with free internet access from Wi-Fi zones located in school parking lots between 6:30 a.m.-9 p.m. daily. Those utilizing a Wi-Fi zone are able to do so from their vehicle in order to reinforce appropriate physical distancing efforts.

UNSPENT BALANCE RELIEF

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

COVID-19 forced the district to make a variety of additional expenditures to support student programming, including equipment, additional payroll expenditures and outside services needed to ensure ongoing operations and maintain safety. As such, funds may be used to supplant unplanned expenditures made to support COVID operations.

NUTRITION FUND RECOVERY

DESCRIPTION/RATIONALE FOR FOCUS AREA:

When the COVID-19 pandemic required a school closure and then a hybrid learning environment, the lower number of students on campuses each day reduced the usage of the district's paid food and nutrition services.

The changes in this delivery model put pressures on the food and nutrition fund as fixed costs remained stable, but paid usage of the system greatly reduced. As such, funds may be used to supplant revenues lost due in food and nutrition due to the pandemic.

