



**Dubuque** COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

## RETURN TO

»»» stability

»»» meals

»»» friendship

»»» support

»»» engagement

»»» excitement

»»» safety

»»» instruction



# RETURN TO »»»» LEARN

# A COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE

The Dubuque Community School District, along with public schools across the state and nation, is proud to have served as one of our community's cornerstone institutions when COVID-19 emerged in the United States and forced the closure of schools in March 2020.

We have provided meals, internet connectivity, educational resources and learning opportunities, support in multiple languages, and countless other touchpoints of support.

Now, as we work toward a return to instruction for the 2021-2022 school year, we remain equally committed to ensuring that each and every student in our community is afforded an outstanding educational experience.

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Since March 2020, the COVID-19 situation has continued to develop and much has changed over that time. It also remains to be seen how the situation will continue to evolve as we approach the beginning of the school year.

Given this, the district Return-to-Learn Plan is based in a simple principle: **FLEXIBILITY**.

It is also grounded in the following principles:

- » Student and staff safety is at the forefront of our planning.
- » Students will return requiring both strong educational delivery and significant social-emotional-behavior support systems.
- » We will communicate transparently with families and staff as the situation evolves.
- » We will work to reduce barriers for students in traditionally underrepresented groups.

This plan is a fluid, guiding document that will continue to evolve and change as the situation around does. The district will communicate additional information about the return to learning in August as updates are available.

VIEW THE MOST RECENT  
UPDATES, SAFETY PROTOCOLS  
AND GUIDANCE AT:

[WWW.DBQSCHOOLS.ORG/  
RETURN-TO-LEARN](http://WWW.DBQSCHOOLS.ORG/RETURN-TO-LEARN)



## TWO LEARNING OPTIONS

Iowa law requires school districts to offer a fully in-person option to families. In addition to our regular in-person program, the district is also offering a fully virtual learning program during the 2021-2022 school year for families desiring that option.

> 1



**IN-PERSON** PROGRAM

> 2



**VIRTUAL** PROGRAM

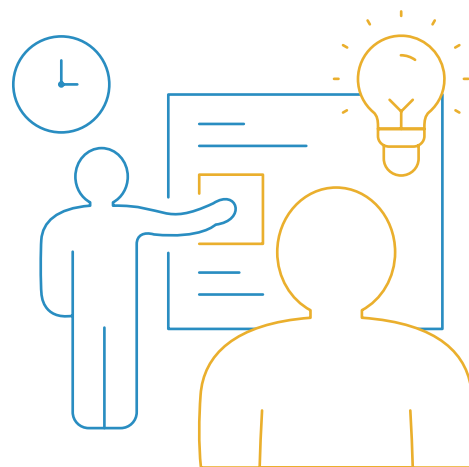
**UPDATED AUGUST 20, 2021**

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## OPTION 1 IN-PERSON LEARNING

The power of strong personal relationships is critical to providing an outstanding educational experience to be delivered to students. We know that we will never be able to replicate the educational experience delivered through in-person learning. That is why our first and foremost preference for educational delivery is with students and teachers together in classrooms.

The delivery of instruction and grading for in-person learning will be conducted as it has been in the past, with the addition of many safety and prevention measures in place to provide the safest possible learning experience for students and staff.



### HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Health and safety of students is at the forefront of our work, and the Dubuque Community School District continues to monitor the most up-to-date guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), and local health officials.

**Recommendations for safety protocols are expected to be continuously evolving and the protocols below will be modified as needed based on current guidance, research and best practices.**

#### PREVENTION PRACTICES

In alignment with guidelines from the CDC and the IDPH:

- » Students and staff who are ill or exhibiting any symptoms of illness should not come to school or work.
- » Staff and students who have been exposed to a person with confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 should follow current CDC recommendations to stay home and monitor their health. (Per CDC guidance, exposure is considered to be within six feet of the diagnosed individual for 15 minutes or greater).
- » Students and staff will be educated on and reminded of proper prevention techniques, including:
  - » handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence among students and staff. (If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used.)
  - » covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue, throwing used tissues in the trash and washing hands immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

- » Signage will be posted throughout schools that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs (such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a face covering).
- » Sharing of items will be minimized when possible.

#### SCHOOL SAFETY PRACTICES

- » During arrival and dismissal times, students will remain outside where risk has proven to be extremely low. Schools will use as many entry and exit points as possible to avoid large gatherings of students in one area as students enter.
- » Iowa law specifically prohibits school districts from requiring masks to be worn by students, staff and visitors to school. The district recommends wearing a face mask based on the current recommendation of the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Dubuque County Board of Health.
- » School health office protocols will create a separate space for the care of students who are ill, while having another space to serve the general

health and medication needs of students.

- » Depending on student attendance rates, classroom setup will be modified to the extent possible to create as much physical distancing among students and staff as possible.
- » Alternate indoor spaces and outdoor areas will be used to the extent possible in order to enhance physical distancing.
- » Visitor and volunteer protocols will be reviewed and visitors will be limited when conditions warrant doing so.
- » While many steps will be taken to provide physical distancing, there is no way to guarantee it in all instances.

#### FACILITY CLEANING

- » Custodians will conduct a deep cleaning of each school nightly using hospital-grade disinfectant that can have a residual effect of up to a 24 hours.
- » Custodians will increase the frequency of daytime cleaning of common touch surfaces including handrails, door handles, etc., using hospital-grade disinfectant.

- » Custodians will increase the frequency of restroom checks to ensure hand soap and paper towels remain available.
- » Buildings and grounds staff will work to maintain adequate inventory of building cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment.
- » Regular inspections of ventilation and air handling systems will be conducted to ensure normal operation.

## TRANSPORTATION

- » All buses will be deep cleaned each evening with hospital-grade disinfectant that carries an up to 24-hour residual effect.
- » Hand sanitizer will be available at the door to each school bus.
- » According to federal law, and reinforced by guidance from the Iowa Department of Public Health, masks will be required on school buses.

## FOOD SERVICE

- » All food service staff members will continue to meet personal protective and food safety guidelines required for food service operations.

## STAFF TRAINING

- » District staff will continue to stay up-to-date and trained based on their job responsibilities on appropriate safety protocols.

# TOGETHER.

WE inspire.

WE teach.

WE engage.

WE learn.

WE challenge.

WE empower.

WE live.

WE rise.

WE succeed.

Together, we shape a future of success.

FOR **ALL.**

OUR MISSION IS TO DEVELOP

**world-class learners**

AND **citizens of character**

IN A **safe and inclusive**

LEARNING COMMUNITY

The Dubuque Community School District will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination.

Please direct inquiries about this statement to: Amy Hawkins, Dubuque Community Schools, 2300 Chaney Road, Dubuque, Iowa 52001-3095, [ahawkins@dbqschools.org](mailto:ahawkins@dbqschools.org), 563/552-3000.



# YOU ALWAYS HAVE OPTIONS

We recognize that some students may be unable to attend school in-person due to either pre-existing medical conditions or out of personal family choice. We understand these decisions are difficult ones and families must make educational decisions that are best for their families.

**If families are not comfortable sending their student to school, the district is offering a virtual learning program for students to continue their education.**

At the elementary school level, online education for families not wishing to attend in person will be delivered by district teachers following a model similar to the remote education model outlined later in this plan.

At the middle and high school level, online education for families not wishing to attend in person will be delivered via the Edgenuity online learning platform and supported by a district teacher.

Elementary and middle school student are asked to commit to the virtual program on a trimester basis. High school students will be asked to commit to remaining in online learning on a semester basis.

At all levels, the district will have an option for students choosing the online learning option to pick up meals provided by the district.

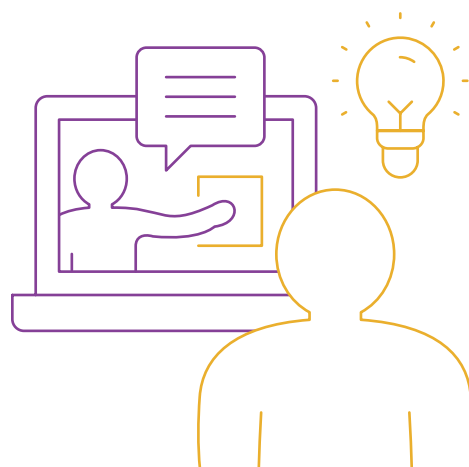
## OPTION 2 VIRTUAL LEARNING

For families who prefer a fully virtual learning option in order to meet the needs of their student, the district is offering a fully virtual learnign program for the 2020-2021 school year. The district has developed a high-quality plan for delivering this virtual learning.

If a student enrolls in the virtual program, they maintain enrollment at their home school, but may attend class with students from across the district. For virtual students:

- » The program is **required learning** just like in-person school
- » **Attendance** will be taken by teachers
- » Coursework will be **graded and credits will be granted**

Online learning will consist of both synchronous (live) and asynchronous (on demand) learning.



### TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Realizing that adequate technology resources are needed to effectively provide required remote learning, the district provides a district-issued device to all students in the virtual program.

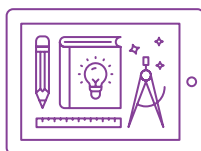
### INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

Access to the internet is 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

Students in the district's virtual learning program without access to a consistent, reliable internet access can be issued a district-owned internet hotspot to provide 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.

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DELIVERY



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.**

### MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL DELIVERY

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.**

*NOTE: The virtual learning program is open to any student currently living in the district at the time of enrollment and primarily attending virtual programs from within the district's geographical boundaries.*

*Acceptance into the virtual program may be denied or rescinded for students unable to be successful in this learning format.*



## EQUITABLY MEETING THE NEEDS OF EACH AND EVERY STUDENT

In all learning scenarios, the district remains committed to meeting the needs of each and every student we serve. Even in an online learning setting, we will continue to provide services that meet the unique needs of our learners. In doing so, we will work to remove barriers, to foster success and to recognize the extra support needed to support online learners.

The services will include, but are not limited to:

- » **Special Education:** Special education teachers and teams will continue to provide specialized instruction and support in accordance with a student's individualized education plan (IEP). IEP teams will determine the appropriate supports needed and have protocols in place to support delivery of services in virtual ways if needed.
- » **English Language Learners (ELL):** ELL teachers will hold weekly check-in meetings with students and provide ongoing support and monitoring of student learning progress. These teachers will work to develop a plan that will meet the needs of individual students utilizing ELL services.
- » **Counselor Services:** Counselors will continue to be available to support students. At the elementary level, counselors will lead weekly check-in meetings, will provide video lessons about guidance topics, and will directly support families as needed.
- » **Gifted and Talented (GT):** GT teachers will support students with weekly check-in meetings and, at the elementary level, will deliver Most Advanced Mathematicians (MAM) instruction via Zoom. GT teachers will also communicate with classroom teachers to align instruction and offer differentiated extension opportunities for students.

### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Given the length of time students have been away from school, we expect to see significant student needs in the area of social-emotional learning and wellbeing. Over the summer, the district will survey families to more accurately determine the social-emotional needs of both student and staff. Additionally, school-based outreach to each student will allow the district to appropriately gauge the needs of our school community and provide resources to support social-emotional health.

The district intends to provide culturally responsive social-emotional resources in the following areas:

- » Food insecurity, clothing, and or homelessness/shelter assistance
- » Mental health services in the community for families
- » Managing stress and loss, coping and building resiliency
- » Health and safety needs to positively impact learning



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