



Return to Learn Plan

As we prepare to open up the Monticello Community School District for the 2021-2022 school year we have updated our Return to Learn Plan. We continue to see the safety of our staff and students as our top priority and are confident that we can create a learning environment in which our staff and students can return and be successful. The school year will begin for students on August 23 and the following information will help you better understand what the start of the school year will look like. We will also continue to review guidance from the Department of Education, Iowa Department of Public Health, Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Jones County Department of Public Health to keep our students and staff safe. This plan will be continuously monitored and progress reviewed monthly at our school board meetings.

Face Coverings:

In the spring of 2021, the state legislature and the Governor passed legislation (HF 847) that dictates school districts shall not adopt, enforce, or implement a policy that requires its employees, students, or members of the public to wear facial coverings for any purpose while on school district property. So unless this legislation is changed, or the Governor declares an emergency proclamation requiring face coverings, the Monticello Community School District will not require face coverings for staff, students, or visitors at the school or on school buses. If staff, students, and visitors would feel more safe wearing a face covering, it will continue to be optional.

In-Person Learning Model:

One thing we have learned over the last year is that students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction this fall is a priority. When we begin on August 23, we will only be offering in-person learning for our students as we have in years previous to the 2020-2021 school year. In addition, our school calendar will look more similar to previous years with strategically placed professional development days, collaboration days, and early dismissal professional development time for our teaching staff.

Health and Safety:

The health and safety of our staff and students continues to be a priority every school day in the Monticello Community School District. Families and staff need to work together to make our classrooms as safe as possible. Here are some priority areas for health and safety.

- **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED TO GET VACCINATED.** I know this is a controversial issue and every family, or person, has to make a decision on this, but the data we are seeing from the CDC and Public Health shows vaccinated people have been less likely to become infected with the COVID 19 virus, and if infected, they tend to show more mild symptoms. If you are not vaccinated please take some time to have a conversation with your healthcare provider to make an informed decision on this. According to Public Health it looks like vaccinations for children under 12 may be available later this fall.

- If a staff member or student shows any of the symptoms of the COVID 19 illness such as a cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, vomiting, nausea, and diarrhea they should stay home.
- We will require parents/guardians to update all emergency contact information so we can send students with symptoms home as soon as possible.
- We encourage parents to transport their children directly to and from school each day to help lower the number of riders on the school bus.
- If possible, students should bring their own water bottle, hand sanitizer, and school supplies for personal use. School water fillers will be on to refill water bottles.
- Students should not share drinks or food with other students.
- Students should practice good hygiene (such as sneezing or coughing into their sleeve) in addition to hand washing during the day.
- The schools will have hand sanitizer available in common areas and in rooms. Students should use hand sanitizer when appropriate during the day.
- When possible and practical students will practice social distancing of 3ft.
- We will continue to have additional custodial time dedicated to deeper cleaning and cleaning in common areas more frequently. In addition, buses will be cleaned and sanitized on a daily basis.

COVID 19 Exposure and Procedures:

- Staff and students that test positive for COVID 19 will be required to isolate according to current health recommendations for schools. Anyone testing positive for COVID 19 should notify the school nurse who will be able to answer specific questions related to the situation.
- Students that are at home in isolation from a positive COVID 19 test will be given make-up work to complete during their absence. This will be coordinated by their teacher(s) to help them stay on track academically.
- Staff and students at school who are exposed to a person with COVID 19 will not be quarantined but asked to monitor symptoms. If an exposed person begins to show symptoms they will need to stay home from school until the appropriate time/symptoms have passed or they have a negative COVID 19 test.

ESSER III Funding Plan:

On March 11, 2021 the federal government passed the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. As a part of that legislation, Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) was given to school districts to address learning loss by students due to the school closures in March-May of 2020 and the ongoing pandemic during the 2020-2021 school year. The Monticello Community School District was allocated over \$800,000 to use over the next two years to help our students with lost learning. The funds can only be used in specific ways, so we have developed a plan for these funds. The following will explain how we have allocated these funds over the next two years.

- As you could imagine our data shows that our youngest students, with the least time in school, have been affected the most during the last 16 months. Therefore we will be adding three staff members between kindergarten and first grade to lower class sizes and allow for more personalized teaching and interventions for our students.

- We implemented a high school summer school this summer and we will continue high school summer school during the summer of 2022.
- We implemented a K-8 summer school this summer and will continue K-8 summer school during the summer of 2022.
- We have added a high school instructional coach to assist high school staff with instruction and interventions for struggling learners.
- We have added a medical assistant to work in the elementary school opposite the school nurse so we always have medical personnel available for students.
- We have increased custodial time significantly to cover the extra cleaning needed in our schools.
- We will investigate research based before and/or after school programming that we can offer students in K-12 to provide enrichment and recover learning loss.
- We will find additional resources that can be used in classrooms to support social, emotional, and academic needs.
- We will continue to need PPE supplies for our schools and classrooms.
- In addition to our ESSER III funding we are applying to the state to receive additional funding that would give our school district additional therapeutic counseling support. This is very important in a world where it is estimated that 2 of 3 high school age students have anxiety or depression and could benefit from counseling services.

Other Relevant Information:

- **Registration:** We will be hosting in-person and online registration this school year. In person registration is scheduled for August 10. Online registration will be the week before. Please see the advertisement in the newspaper for further details.
- **Open House:** We will be hosting Open House for students and families on August 19. Elementary 4:30-6:00pm, Middle School 5:00-6:30pm, and High School 5:30-7:00pm. Open House is a drop in event and you and your student can meet your teachers and see your classrooms.
- **School Year Begins:** Monday, August 23, 2021
- **Extracurricular Activities:** Please remember to get a sports physical if your student is going out for fall sports. High school volleyball, cross country, and football will begin before the school year starts, so please contact the coach or athletic office if you need more information. Middle school sports will begin after the first day of school.
- **Homecoming Week:** Homecoming week is scheduled for September 13-18. We will have several activities for students and families building up to the Homecoming Dance on September 18th. More information will come from the high school as we get closer to this event.