

SOUTHWESTERN

COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 9

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“Southwestern Students Succeed”

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School Opening Plan 2020-21

Currently, it is the intent of Southwestern CUSD #9 to begin the 2020-21 school year by offering in-person instruction to all students. Our belief is the educational and social/emotional benefits students receive from in-person instruction are immeasurable and our District should make every reasonable attempt to make that possible.

The information included in this plan outlines the steps the District will take to ensure we provide as safe of a learning environment as we can for our students and staff. This plan follows the Illinois State Board of Education’s (ISBE) guidelines. Please know that the guidance from ISBE and this plan can and will change. We will continually re-evaluate each component to ensure we have the safest and most educationally sound plan for our students.

Each building will have procedures and protocols specifically tailored to meet the requirements of this plan. Please know this plan is bound to change as we receive further guidance from ISBE. If the health of our region declines, or we cannot safely follow ISBE’s guidelines, we will likely change from in-person to remote instruction. Below are the most basic, albeit challenging guidelines school districts are asked to implement for the safety of all during in-person instruction:

- Require use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including face masks
- Prohibit more than 50 individuals from gathering in one space
- Require social distancing be observed, as much as possible
- Require that schools conduct symptom screenings and temperature checks or require that individuals self-certify that they are free of symptoms before entering school buildings
- Require an increase in schoolwide cleaning and disinfection

Requests of Parents/Guardians: The guidelines present challenges with transportation, morning arrival/breakfast and lunch. Below are some requests the District is asking of our parents/guardians that would assist us in meeting ISBE’s safety guidelines:

- Please consider transporting your student/s to and from attendance centers, if at all possible, at least for the first 2 weeks. We will have all buses and regular routes as in the past, but bus numbers 5, 6, 10, 12, 19, 20, 24 and 26 are historically near or above 50 students. If you cannot honor this request, we will gladly transport all children who are eligible.
- For those parents/guardians that transport student/s to school each morning, please make every effort to drop off at each attendance center no earlier than 7:45 a.m. This will cut down on the number of students we have to hold in spaces such as gyms and cafeterias prior to reporting to class.
- Consider sending hand sanitizer with your child, as well as donating any disinfectant wipes to your student’s teachers.
- Please consider sending a clear, plastic container of water with your student/s in lieu of using the water fountain, however water fountains will be available for use.
- Southwestern CUSD #9 will not require parents to “self-certify” their student/s are healthy each morning; however, it is a good idea to check your child prior to sending them to school for the safety of all.
- Please be aware that gatherings such as classroom parties, open house, parent/teacher conferences, etc. will not be held in person as in the past. We will do our best to offer other forms of communication to stay connected with our parents.

Instruction: The option of in-person or remote instruction will be offered to all students. In-person learning will follow the schedule outlined below in the School Day section and the updated school calendar. Please understand that by choosing the remote learning option, more expectations will be placed on the students and parents (see [Remote Learning Expectations](#)). Once the remote learning option is chosen, the student must remain committed to remote learning for a semester. At semester's end, parents can re-evaluate and choose remote or in-person learning. It is anticipated class sizes this year will be similar to years past. At this time, we do not intend to employ additional certified staff.

Health and Safety: Facemasks will be required to be worn by all students and staff in order to be in attendance at school. Students and staff who have documented health issues that do not allow them to wear a mask will not be required to wear a mask. A note from a Pediatrician or Family Practice doctor will be required. Students and staff are encouraged to bring their own mask each day. Every attempt will be made to allow students to safely remove their masks at appropriate times during the school day such as recess, meals, and any outdoor activity. Temperature checks will be conducted for all students and staff by holding their wrist next to a kiosk as they enter the buildings each morning. The District will have safety protocols in place if students or staff become ill or have an elevated temperature while at school. Distancing guidelines will be followed when possible. Any student who continually violates the safety guidelines will be removed from school and may be placed into remote learning.

School Day: We will begin school each morning at 8:10 and follow our 2:05-2:10 p.m. dismissal schedule Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday each week. Each Wednesday will be a remote learning day with no students in attendance allowing more time for communication with remote learners, increased cleaning and sanitizing at the end of the day and mid-week, staff collaboration, instructional planning and professional development. It will also reduce the amount of time students and staff are asked to wear a mask.

Transportation: Students will be required to wear a mask while riding on the school bus. Our bus route schedules will remain the same as in the past with one change. We ask that parents limit their pick-up/drop-off requests to 1 bus this year, so we can accurately assign students to the bus routes and create seating charts for the health of our students. It is imperative we have an accurate count of students on our buses to meet ISBE's guidelines. Students will receive a temperature check prior to boarding the bus each day. Protocols will be in place to deal with any student who has a temperature.

Food Service: Breakfast and lunches will be served each day. However, the menus may be different than in the past due to some meals being eaten in locations other than the cafeterias.

Maintenance: Increased cleaning and disinfecting will be standard practice as we move forward. The district has purchased several additional cleaning devices and supplies that will help in this process. All disinfectants will be EPA approved.

Below are links to a few helpful documents that were used in the development of this plan.

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/FAQ-Part-3-Transition-Guidance.pdf>

www.isbe.net/Documents/Part-3-Transition-Planning-Phase-4.pdf

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>

A Note from the Superintendent

Let me begin by saying we realize this plan is far from perfect. We appreciate the comments and survey data that parents offered us in order to help drive the development of this plan. Many parents, staff and community members will be uncomfortable with certain aspects of the plan, as it does not provide an answer for every possible scenario or circumstance, nor is it that its intent. It is almost certain this plan will change as the guidance we receive changes. Please know we will continually review the plan and alter it as we identify challenges and solutions aimed at improvement. Please also know this plan does not represent what we believe to be best for our students. But it is the best that we can do for our students right now, under the circumstances we have been given. I have advised the Board of Education to adopt this plan, and they have done so, knowing our kids deserve so much more. We look forward to the time when we can offer the services our students and community deserve. There are better days ahead of us. We will make it through this!

Kyle M. Hacke
Superintendent