

EAU CLAIRE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

2022-2023 Safe Return to School Plan





Introduction

August 10, 2022

ECASD Staff and Families,

We are entering our fourth school year impacted by the pandemic, and we have learned a tremendous amount about the operations necessary to conduct school during these extraordinary times.

Our District is committed to providing a healthy and safe in-person learning environment during the 2022-2023 school year.

We have received updated [guidance](#) from the Department of Public instruction for the 2022-2023 school year. We know that keeping students healthy is how we keep our staff healthy, our families healthy and our health care system able to care of us in times of need. Students need to be healthy and safe to learn.

The purpose of the ECASD Safe Return to School Plan is to provide the most recent and comprehensive guide to address our COVID-19 mitigation strategies and educational priorities for the upcoming school year. It is necessary to allow our district to respond to COVID-related situations flexibly, while supporting the physical, social, emotional, and academic learning needs of all students and their families.

This ECASD Safe Return to School Plan is a constant work in progress and is subject to change. We will inform families and staff when updates are made.

We are looking forward to a new school year! Thank you so much for your continued patience, feedback, understanding, and support.

Sincerely,

Mike Johnson

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ECASD Decision-Making Framework

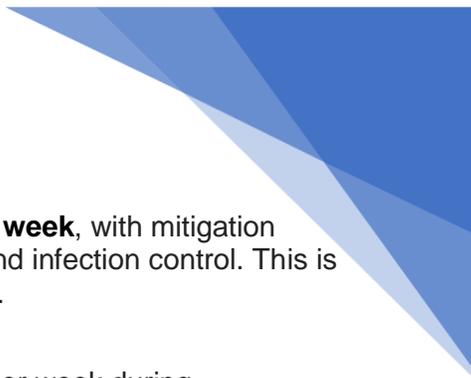
To provide the safest in-person learning experience possible for our students, as well as to inform improvements in our planning, ECASD leadership is applying the following decision-making framework:

Review of Data and Key Indicators	Centers for Disease Control (CDC), ECASD COVID Dashboard, ECCCH COVID statistics, Stakeholder data, COVID Operations Team assessment
Consultation Required	Wisconsin DPI, Wisconsin DHS, ECCCH, Local Health Providers, School Board
Consultation Desired	School Board, District and School Leadership, ECCCH, ECAE Leadership, Staff, Families and Students
Development of Planning	District Administration designs/develops Safe Return to School planning
Operational Decision-Making	District Administration with support from School Board, System Leaders' input and collaboration
Communication/Refinement	Updating stakeholders on status of Safe Return to School Plan, implement change if needed, refine implementation in current planning as feedback indicates



Key Assumptions and Approaches

- Our commitment is to prioritize in-person learning, five days a week, while also taking strong steps to limit risk to our students, staff, and community.
- Case counts due to variants may fluctuate this school year, requiring a flexible approach.
- Mitigation strategies, including vaccinations, voluntary testing, handwashing/respiratory etiquette, and cleaning are key components of our plan.
- Our decisions will be based on a unified, aligned approach to avoid confusion, to aid in preparedness, and to seek equity across the district.
- While the progression of variants may create uncertainty, we will strive for clarity and consistency for students, staff and families.



Continuity of Services

Schools operate at full capacity for **in-person learning, five days a week**, with mitigation strategies in place to address cleaning, student and staff hygiene, and infection control. This is our main priority and commitment during the 2022-2023 school year.

- Pre-kindergarten (PK) students will attend school four days per week during regular school hours. Students will attend for 3.5-hour sessions in the morning or afternoon, Monday through Thursday.
- Elementary (grades K-5) and secondary (grades 6-12) students will attend five days per week during regular school hours.
- Eau Claire Virtual School (ECVS) students will attend online five days per week.

Over the course of the past two years, we have received significant feedback from individual parents, parent focus groups, teacher leadership teams, and administrators regarding our virtual instructional models and developed the following Continuity of Services plan, based on their input:

In the event of an absence students will have the opportunity to maintain class progress through the following tools/methods: learning management systems of Canvas and Seesaw, video recordings of key instructional moments, and hard copies of activities.

It is also important that our staff stay connected with students when absent on a regular basis to support their social and emotional well-being. Expectations for these connections include: Canvas/Seesaw messaging, emailing, phone calls, video messages, Microsoft Teams calls, handwritten notes, or care packages.

There may be extreme circumstances in which we shift to a 100% virtual instructional model. This could include significant staff shortages, excessive student absences or other unforeseen circumstances.

In the event of a shift to a **100% virtual environment**, below are our expectations:

- All activities (asynchronous and synchronous) must be posted in Canvas/Seesaw by the start of the regularly scheduled school day.
- Students attend synchronously via Microsoft Teams for at least 1/3 of the scheduled class time. The remaining portion of learning activities will be asynchronous.
- Teachers must be available to students during regular instructional times.



Mitigation Strategies

Physical Distancing Physical distancing will be implemented to the extent possible within each building and classroom.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette Students will have scheduled hand washing and/or hand sanitizing throughout the school day. Students will be taught the following procedures: use soap and water and wash for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water is not available, students will use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizer will be provided at our schools. Students will also be taught to cover coughs and sneezes with tissue or inside of elbow.

Sick Child Guidelines

[ECASD Sick Child Guidelines](#)

Cleaning, Disinfection, and Ventilation

Regular cleaning will be conducted daily and high touch surfaces will be disinfected. When a known positive case of COVID-19 is identified in school, the classroom/space will be cleaned and disinfected.

The ventilation systems run times will be increased both prior to the start of each day and extending longer after the building occupants leave for the day, so that we can provide enough time to exchange air though out the building. We will also increase the amount of outside air that is brought into the building as well as adjusting minimum and maximum air flows to spaces while remaining within equipment design specifications. The filter changes and equipment maintenance will be completed based on established maintenance schedules currently in place.

Voluntary Diagnostic Testing

Testing is recommended for individuals if they exhibit COVID-19 symptoms. With the support of Wisconsin Department of Health Services, ECASD offers free voluntary diagnostic testing at a few of our school sites with the assistance of Accelerated Clinical Labs (ACL). Testing is voluntary and will require parent/guardian consent for students under the age of 18.

Access to Vaccinations

Public health officials recommend vaccinations for eligible individuals. If you require assistance in finding or scheduling a vaccination appointment, please call the Eau Claire City-County Health Department for assistance at 715-839-4718.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Per the IEP or health plan, accommodations for students with disabilities will be provided or offered when necessary to ensure the health and safety of all.

Coordination with State and Local Health Officials

Coordination with local entities includes area-county school district leadership meetings with Prevea, meetings between Executive Director of Student Services and ECCCH Health Team, and meetings with Executive Director of Student Services, School Nurses, and DPI School Nurse Consultant.

District COVID Operations Team membership includes: Superintendent, District and School Administration, District Nurse, and local health officials.



Data Monitoring

Our ECASD Covid Operations team will meet as necessary to review the most recent data and guidelines provided by the CDC, Wisconsin Department of Health Services and the Eau Claire County City County Health Department. We are poised to respond appropriately based on what we learn from new data.



Equity

The ECASD strives to meet the needs of its underrepresented students and families. We must eliminate systemic inequities as we build responsive and equitable learning environments while also partnering with other community connections to support students and families.



Special Education and 504 Plans

The ECASD is committed to serving the needs of our students with disabilities. The District will continue to provide a free appropriate public education to our students with disabilities as we align our pandemic response planning to public health guidelines. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or 504 plan teams, which includes families, will update IEPs or 504 plans to reflect five days of in person learning or virtual supports/services when enrolled in the Eau Claire Virtual School. IEPs or 504 plans may be adjusted, and services aligned to current COVID-status and the instructional model when necessary. Meetings may be held in person or held virtually utilizing Microsoft Teams.



Access to Technology

The ECASD has ensured 1:1 technology for its students and teachers to connect virtually and will provide internet hotspot devices to students without internet access at home. Our learning management systems of Canvas and SeeSaw are the platforms for connecting teachers and students for virtual learning.



Social and Emotional Support

As our staff and students return to school this year, we must dedicate effort and resources to social emotional learning of all district stakeholders: students, staff, and families. This is crucial due to the past three school years' impact on our learning and teaching environment.

Through our Equitable Multi-level System of Supports Framework, we offer support for students at the universal, selected, and intensive levels. Under the PBIS framework, all staff are prepared to provide universal instruction through the Character Strong SEL program. In addition, all secondary staff have been trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid as a first step in developing relationships with students and knowing when to refer students for additional support. At the selected level, our counseling staff will be providing interventions based on student data and needs throughout the school year. At the intensive level, there will be

opportunities for support such as School Based Mental Health Services and other wraparound services with the County.

We continue to offer System of Care (SOC) in conjunction with the Eau Claire County Department of Human Services. This program offers an additional level of support to secondary students who have committed a misdemeanor. Instead of a referral to juvenile intake, the student can be referred to SOC for support and restorative practices.

Our School Based Mental Health Coordinator actively collaborates with community agencies to provide community support for students and families. We also offer a Family Support Program that offers free counseling services to ECASD families who qualify with a grant from the United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley through Real Living.

It's critical that our staff remain socially and emotionally healthy to ensure the appropriate supports needed for our students. As in years past, we will continue to offer social and emotional supports to staff through the District's Employee Achievement Program. Additionally, the District will continue to communicate with our employee groups to gain input from our staff to provide them with additional opportunities and supports regarding their social, emotional, and physical wellness.



Before and After School Childcare and Activities (Elementary)

A variety of before and after school childcare and activities are offered throughout the year at select elementary schools. These childcare locations and activities will follow our district protocols and mitigation strategies.



Eau Claire Virtual School

If a family is uncomfortable with or unable to attend our in-person learning environment for their student, the Eau Claire Virtual School (ECVS) may be an option of interest.

ECVS provides an innovative educational path that allows for the creative blend of opportunities to continually build the strengths of each learner. It offers high-quality, relevant, and enriching learning experiences. The school engages passionate learners who are confident in their abilities and able to retain and apply developed skills.

ECVS offers flexible and personalized learning experiences while maintaining the high quality and local support of the Eau Claire Area School District. In addition to online learning, the school provides hands-on, community-based experiences to enable individuals to learn and grow with other students.

The programming and enrollment information is found in this [LINK](#). The deadline for first semester enrollment is September 9.

 **Resources**

Centers for Disease Control: Guidance for Schools 2022-23 ([LINK](#))

Eau Claire City-County Health Department: COVID-19 Information Hub ([LINK](#))

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: Guidance for Schools 2022-23 ([LINK](#))

Wisconsin Department of Health Services: Guidance for Schools ([LINK](#))