

Joint Statement from Wabash County Superintendents



Wabash County Families,

On behalf of the three Wabash County public school corporations, we appreciate the patience and cooperation of our families and communities during the spring months of remote learning. The three school districts are working with the Wabash County Health Department to create guidelines for our return to school in August. At this time, all Wabash County schools will resume class on their scheduled start dates.

In mid-June, the Indiana Department of Education released a guidance document for the reopening of Indiana schools. This document, called IN-CLASS (Indiana's Consideration for Learning and Safe Schools), provides guidance to Indiana schools regarding their re-entry planning for the 2020-2021 school year. The Wabash County superintendents reviewed the document and collaborated with the Wabash County Health Department to create the return to school guidelines for each of the schools in the county. This is based on guidance from the Indiana State Department of Health, Indiana Department of Education, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As the health of the county changes, this guidance may change.

The safety of all Wabash County students, families, teachers, and staff is always our first priority. All staff in our schools will receive training on COVID-19 symptoms and protocols as we prepare to welcome your children back to the classrooms. The three school districts will adhere to the following county-wide school guidelines as a minimum standard.

Physical Health

- Families will self-screen for symptoms of COVID-19 including fever (100.0 or above), chills, repeated shaking with chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty of breathing, sore throat, and/or new loss of taste or smell. These symptoms warrant consideration for exclusion from school, and students and staff should stay home if they exhibit any of these symptoms if not otherwise explained.
- Students and staff should be fever-free for 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication before returning to school. If students and staff experience a fever, a doctor's note will be considered for return to school in non-covid cases. If students and staff experience a fever and do not visit a doctor, a minimum exclusion from school is recommended three days after resolution of the fever.

Environmental Health

- Staff and students should have a mask with them at all times. While masks will not be required for all students at all times, there will be certain situations such as buses when wearing a mask will be required due to social distancing restraints. Masks are being provided to all of our students by the state of Indiana.

- Schools will promote social distancing when possible by maximizing instructional spaces and scheduling flexibly.
- Students can expect assigned seating on the bus, in classrooms, and other areas. This will be documented and available to the health department upon request.
- Schools will reduce capacities in the cafeterias where possible and maximize alternate eating areas to maintain proper social distancing. Food products from home are acceptable for individual student lunches. There will be no sharing of food among the students.
- Schools will enact enhanced cleaning procedures in classrooms, common areas, and buses. Hand washing will be the preferred method for hand cleaning and will be encouraged during transitional times. Additional hand sanitizer stations will be installed.
- Schools will turn off water fountains and allow students to bring water bottles. Bottle filling stations can be used where available.
- Schools will separate students in cohort groups on playgrounds to promote proper social distancing and limit interactions between students.
- Schools will discontinue perfect attendance incentives to permit families to make the best health choice for their students.
- Schools will identify isolated locations in school clinic areas to treat symptomatic students.

While we are united in these guidelines, implementation will be handled on a corporation-to-corporation basis and even on a school-to-school basis. Individual district plans will be presented at each respective July School Board meeting.

Wabash County public schools, in conjunction with the Wabash County Health Department, are creating a common response plan for confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our schools. We will continue to consult with the health department and use their guidance to inform our districts' decision to keep schools open. In general, if a positive case is identified,

- all rooms where the case was present must be closed immediately until deep cleaning can occur.
- the entire school--at minimum---will be closed by the local health department if positive close contacts cannot be identified.

We appreciate your support of Wabash County public schools as we look forward to a safe reopening for the 2020-2021 school year. As of now, these are our current plans, but due to the ever-changing nature of the virus, we may need to alter these guidelines. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Dr. Teresa Gremaux, Superintendent, Manchester Community Schools

Mr. Mike Keaffaber, Superintendent, MSD of Wabash County

Mr. Jason Callahan, Superintendent, Wabash City Schools