



Most Recent Update: February 17, 2023



Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan Texas

Our Philosophy

At IDEA Public Schools, we maintain the steadfast belief that in-person learning is the best option for students, especially as it relates to their academic achievement and social-emotional development. For our students, having access to a high-quality education is a necessary service. Households are badly impacted by school closures, particularly economically disadvantaged and ethnically diverse families. We believe that the best and only way to successfully keep our schools safe and open is through an intentional community effort—100% of our Team & Family coming together, adhering to health and safety protocols, maintaining transparency, and doing whatever it takes.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, IDEA has used the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to safeguard the health of our students. To continue to ensure the well-being of our school community, we developed expert-guided, meticulous safety protocols and invested in robust protection equipment and building upgrades. We made every reasonable accommodation to abide by CDC protocols around health and safety. Our protocols are regularly updated based on the CDC's guidelines, the latest scientific findings, and expert advice from state and local health officials that have been effectively implemented to maximize our instructional strategy.

As we return to 100% in-person instruction, IDEA remains committed to continuing to provide a safe, rigorous, and fun in-person learning environment where students thrive and succeed on the road to and through college. We are ready to be back in school, safely learning together.

I. Health and Safety Protocols: Standard Operating Procedures

With the continuation of COVID-19, IDEA Public Schools has integrated several preventive strategies into our daily operations to ensure the health and safety of our Team & Family. It is expected that all staff will follow this protocol with fidelity when working on campus and making decisions regarding school operations and safety. This document serves as the foundation for daily operations across all IDEA campuses, regional offices, and events beginning in Summer 2022 and continuing through the new school year. These strategies have proven effective in keeping students and staff safe throughout the pandemic. As we have since the start of COVID, these procedures were created based on guidance from the CDC and state health departments. We will continue monitoring the health authorities for updates and will share additional information when needed.

Purpose

This plan includes strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19. This is meant to be used by all staff and students to ensure consistency and standards of practice. This document serves as a guide for all school-based activities, including field lessons and events.

What's Changing

Some mitigation strategies, as recommended by the CDC, will be phased out as we strive to return to our regular daily activities. Any topics that are not specifically listed may resume normal operations (i.e., class rotations, water fountain use). In addition, we have made updates to the COVID reporting and notification processes. Contact tracing is no longer required by CDC or state authorities, though schools are responsible for notifying staff, students, and families of reported COVID cases. The table below describes the policies and protocols that IDEA has adopted to follow the CDC's most recent safety recommendations.

CDC Safety Recommendation	IDEA Public Schools Implementation and Policies (As of July 1, 2022*)
Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masks are optional at all IDEA campuses, offices, and on buses for staff and students. IDEA will provide a limited supply of medical-grade masks at campuses, regional offices, and events for staff and students who choose to wear them. • The CDC updated its mask guidance for communities with low or medium risk of COVID-19. We advise staff and families to use the COVID-19 Community Levels tool to help decide what prevention steps to take based on the latest data. Levels can be low, medium, or high and are determined by looking at hospital beds being used, hospital admissions, and the total number of new COVID-19 cases in an area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use the link below to find Community Levels and prevention steps by county: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html ▪ Staff and families can also use CDC's mask locator tool to find free N95 masks in their area: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/free-n95-manufacturers.html
Hand Hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the campus, including at entrances to buildings and classrooms. • Handwashing signs will be posted inside staff and student restrooms, and students will be given time to practice hand hygiene throughout the school day..
Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities, Including Improving Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus facilities teams will frequently sanitize common spaces. • Teachers will be provided approved cleaning products by the facilities team to disinfect high-touch surfaces and objects in their classrooms throughout the school day. • The facilities team will complete a daily cleaning and sanitation protocol in each classroom or shared space after school. • The district will continue to use MERV 11 and 13 air filters at all campuses to enhance ventilation systems. Filters will be replaced on a routine basis and managed by the facilities team.
COVID Case Reporting: Contact Tracing in Combination with Isolation and Quarantine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student cases are to be reported to campus Health Services staff, who will advise parents on the isolation period and return date. The isolation period length will follow the guidance of state agencies. Quarantine for presumed close contacts is not required. • Staff cases are reported to their manager and through the self-reporting tool which can be found here: Staff COVID Self-Reporting Tool. HR advises on the isolation period and return date for staff, based on the guidance of state agencies. • Notification will be sent to staff and families when there is a positive case reported on campus, including during afterschool or extra-curricular activities. Campuses are to notify

	<p>of a positive case only specifying classroom, not specifying if it is staff or student, to maintain privacy of the individual. Notification will go to staff/ students who were in a shared space (i.e., bus, after-school program, classroom). Contact tracing will not be conducted. A letter template will be provided to campuses which can be sent via email or Remind.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All COVID cases will also be posted weekly on IDEA’s public website. Health Services and HR staff will continue reporting cases internally, which will populate on the IDEA website to show the number of active cases by week. Health Services will report cases to the county and/or state as required.
COVID Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tests will be available to staff and students based on campus inventory. • Testing is optional and registration must be completed to testing. • Parents must be contacted before students are tested. Testing will also be available to students in the clinic through telemedicine, as determined by the provider. Students may be tested by the Health Aide/LVN in the clinic. Staff testing will occur outside of the clinic and will be self-administered.
Efforts to Provide Vaccinations to School Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDEA’s Health & Wellness Department will continue scheduling COVID vaccine clinics for staff and students throughout the year. • In addition, community resources are posted on the IDEA public website for students and families. Resources can be found at: https://ideapublicschools.org/health-services/.
Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities with Respect to Health and Safety Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The same health and safety protocols that are in place for general education students apply to our students with disabilities. • If there is a student who may be health compromised due to their disability, a 504 or IEP plan will address any accommodation that may need to be included for that student. • A campus can request PPE as needed that might be required per IEP/IAP.
Meal Consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campuses will utilize the cafeteria for lunch and may use it for part or all of breakfast and/or supper meals. • Students will wash their hands/use hand sanitizer before and after lunch. Hand sanitizer needs to be provided by the campus and be placed at the beginning of the service line. • Tables and kitchen serving lines will be sanitized between groups.
Staff and Student Illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and students who are not feeling well shall follow state exclusionary criteria when determining if they should attend school/work. • Campus Health Services staff will follow exclusionary criteria and telemedicine visits when determining whether a student needs to be sent home. • Staff cannot be treated in the school clinic and should therefore consult with their manager and primary care provider regarding illness and attendance.
COVID Leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the 22-23 school year, campus staff are eligible for up to 5 days or 40 hours of paid COVID leave if they test positive. This time must be requested of and approved by HR and is only available to campus-based staff.

** All protocols and policies are subject to change. IDEA’s Health Services and Human Resources teams continue to monitor CDC and TEA guidelines and regulations while consulting with health experts to update our policies as needed.*

II. Continuity of Services

For our families, schools provide a refuge of safety. We continue to be committed to the health and safety of our students, staff, and the communities that we serve. We will continue to utilize our resources to reduce the risk of contagion and support our staff and students' physical selves. In addition to providing personal protective equipment (PPE) for all our campuses, we will continue to invest in and maintain facility improvements such as MERV 13 air filters, handwashing and hand sanitizer stations, auto-flush kits for restrooms, water bottle filling stations, and other amenities.

Additionally, we will continue our efforts to make the COVID-19 vaccine available to all those are eligible and request it. If the age requirement for the COVID-19 is lowered further, we are prepared to administer the vaccines to our students and children in the communities that we serve. We will also leverage our partnerships in telemedicine and community health to offer additional services to our students and families.

Schools, according to the CDC, play a critical role in assisting children and adolescents in eating healthy and engaging in regular physical activity. To ensure the continuity of food services, students will have daily access to healthy breakfasts and lunches (and supper on some campuses) and receive the proper nutrition for their minds and bodies to stay healthy and strong. The district's registered dietitians and chefs design meals that meet optimal nutrition standards to properly fuel students for a successful day. Also, our health education curriculum will address wellness practices and reinforce healthy behaviors related to food, physical activity, the spreading of germs, and other topics.

As we start the 2022-2023 academic year, we will continue to promote two-way communication with our families and build and maintain a safe, rigorous, and interactive in-person learning environment where students thrive and succeed on the road to and through college. We are ready to be back in school, safely learning together.

Academic and Socio-Emotional Approach

Our approach for continuity of academic and social emotional services are designed to solve the following problems and issues:

- Shifting all students back to in-person learning after an extended time out of school and normal routines,
- Addressing the lack of school-based opportunities to develop social and emotional skills that students need to be successful,
- Accurately diagnosing and addressing the unfinished learning that may limit students' ability to engage in rigorous, on-level learning,
- Preparing leaders to effectively coach teachers to address students' knowledge gaps, and
- Identifying the most effective practices to address unfinished learning while moving forward with on-level coursework.

In order to tackle the issues listed above, IDEA has key tenets that we are grounding our work in. They are:

1. All students will have access to on-level coursework every day, for the majority of time.
2. Grade-level content is the academic priority.
3. All unit plans/module addenda will have the prerequisites identified for each lesson and suggestions for how to teach those prerequisites through micro-interventions.
4. Leader training will be held regularly and focused on better implementation.
5. Critical Student Intervention will continue to be the intervention strategy for our highest-needs students (2 or more years behind grade level).
6. The most effective instruction will address student learning gaps while also building on the knowledge and skills they've acquired during the last year and a half.
7. IDEA's 1:1 program across PK-12 is foundational infrastructure for executing the acceleration plan.
8. Families play a critical role in the success of each scholar. Family development, engagement and education will support student learning.

Acceleration Vision

All students have access to grade-level coursework from the first day of school. In order to close gaps from

unlearned content, teachers use diagnostic data (where appropriate and administered throughout the year in specific content areas) to determine priority content and skills that will need to be pre-taught; this prerequisite content will be embedded within the units/modules throughout the year. Curriculum unit plans/module addenda will provide direction for how to teach these prerequisites within a unit/module, making vertical connections visible at the lesson level and providing access to resources to support with implementation.

Diagnostics

Full diagnostics at the beginning of the year are ineffective because they typically take a lot of time and are not necessary to begin on-level coursework. *Instead*, teachers will administer diagnostics aligned to priority content only, and diagnostics will be administered “just in time” and in small doses so teachers have information about which gaps persist in relation to content that will be taught immediately. Diagnostic data will be used differently based on specific content areas—for example, in science, diagnostics around discrete content knowledge and science and engineering practices will be baked into lessons as Do Nows, Thinking Tasks, and Checks for Understanding while in social studies, writing portfolio artifacts throughout the school year will focus on extracting evidence from a source and using that evidence in a response.

Professional Development

In order to support the use of diagnostic data to make informed decisions for micro-interventions, teachers will receive training on how to interpret the data. The curriculum documents will provide guidance on the specific knowledge and skills that are prerequisites to access grade-level content; teachers should use the diagnostic data to determine if knowledge and skills gaps persist that may impact their ability to master on-level material. If gaps persist, teachers will provide micro-interventions to address those gaps just prior to on-level instruction.

Maximizing Technology to Scaffold and Increase Rigor for ALL Students

The 2021-2022 school year was a learning year for all on how to best leverage technology to increase instructional effectiveness and academic achievement. Therefore, we will continue to operate with grace and a mentality of problem solving and continuous improvement. Our operating principle is that every IDEA student PK-12 will have an IDEA issued device (laptop) next year to use at school and at home. IDEA’s Operations and Information Systems & Technology teams will ensure that the infrastructure will accommodate the high number of devices in schools and procure the necessary equipment and software (and investment in technology literacy and digital citizenship software) to ensure success of students and staff, while the Academic Services team will create resources and tools on how to leverage devices in all classrooms and programs. All documents, resources, and links that will support the execution of this work will be housed on an internal website accessible to all IDEA staff.

Supporting Student Social Emotional Needs and Development

All students will begin in-person learning in a year unlike any other. To support students in this transition, IDEA will use daily implementation of the Move This World curriculum, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) assessments, and resource sharing mechanisms. Students will engage in daily, uninterrupted time to build social emotional skills, practice mindfulness, and establish classroom community. Staff will also be equipped with additional resources to use after transitions throughout the day to recenter students and model regulation skills. This is an opportunity to establish Move This World and other social emotional resources as essential aspects of campus culture.

The COVID-19 pandemic had different impacts across communities and regions. Each campus faces its own unique challenges and strengths. To understand more about student needs and ensure students are psychologically safe enough to learn and feel like they belong on our campuses, schools will assess school climate, student sense of belonging, and social emotional competencies to inform campus actions. All students will be assessed twice a year (beginning-of-year and end-of-year) on SEL competencies, school climate, safety, and sense of belonging. This data will be assessed and trends will be shared with school leaders to develop additional actionable steps to address gaps in data.

Finally, it is important to empower our families in reinforcing the skills their students learn in schools and give them access to the most up-to-date and relevant information on supporting their children. Families have access to resources for supporting student mental health and social emotional learning. Weekly newsletters to families will

include SEL resources. Also, a family login to Move This World will be created for families to easily access videos at home on campus-provided computers that students will use.

Returning to school safely will be a community effort. The COVID-19 pandemic is a life event that has deeply impacted our Team & Family. It is crucial that the variety of services that IDEA provides—academic, social emotional, character development, safety, health, etc.—maintain the safe, rigorous, and fun in-person learning environment where our students previously thrived in before the pandemic. We are ready to be back in school, safely learning together.

III. Public Comment

A summary of public comment will be shared following the special meeting of the IDEA Board of Directors on July 16, 2022. Public comment and input from our various stakeholders will be an important aspect in our regular reviews of IDEA’s Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan. Each round of reviews, public input will be collected through a survey—in English and Spanish—that will be posted on IDEA’s ESSER website along with the most up-to-date plans and revisions.

IV. Periodic Review Process

Review/Revisit Dates:

- July 13, 2021: Posted for public comment to IDEA’s ESSER page.
- July 26, 2021: Adopted plan posted to IDEA’s ESSER page.
- January 24, 2022: Revised plan posted to IDEA’s ESSER page
 - January 10, 2022: Draft revisions posted for public comment.
 - January 21, 2022: IDEA Board of Directors meeting, public comment received and reviewed, and plan revisions adopted
- July 25, 2022: Revised plan posted to IDEA’s ESSER page
 - July 11, 2022: Draft revisions posted for public comment.
 - July 2022: IDEA Board of Directors meeting, public comment received and reviewed, and plan revisions adopted
- March 27, 2023: Revised plan posted to IDEA’s ESSER page
 - January 18-February 17, 2023: Committee reviews current plan to provide revisions.
 - February 23, 2023: Draft revisions posted for public comment.
 - March 24, 2023: IDEA Board of Directors meeting, public comment received and reviewed, and plan revisions adopted
- July 24, 2023: Revised plan posted to IDEA’s ESSER page
 - July 10, 2023: Draft revisions posted for public comment.
 - July 2023: IDEA Board of Directors meeting

V. Understandable and Uniform Format

Many of the students, families, and communities that we serve—in addition to members of our staff—do not use English as their primary form of communication. Hence, to ensure access to this written plan and to the various public comment mechanisms, the website and all relevant materials will be translated into Spanish. If we receive any requests or become aware of the need for resources presented in a different format, we will provide the necessary accommodations for those individuals who need an alternate format that they can use to access the plan.