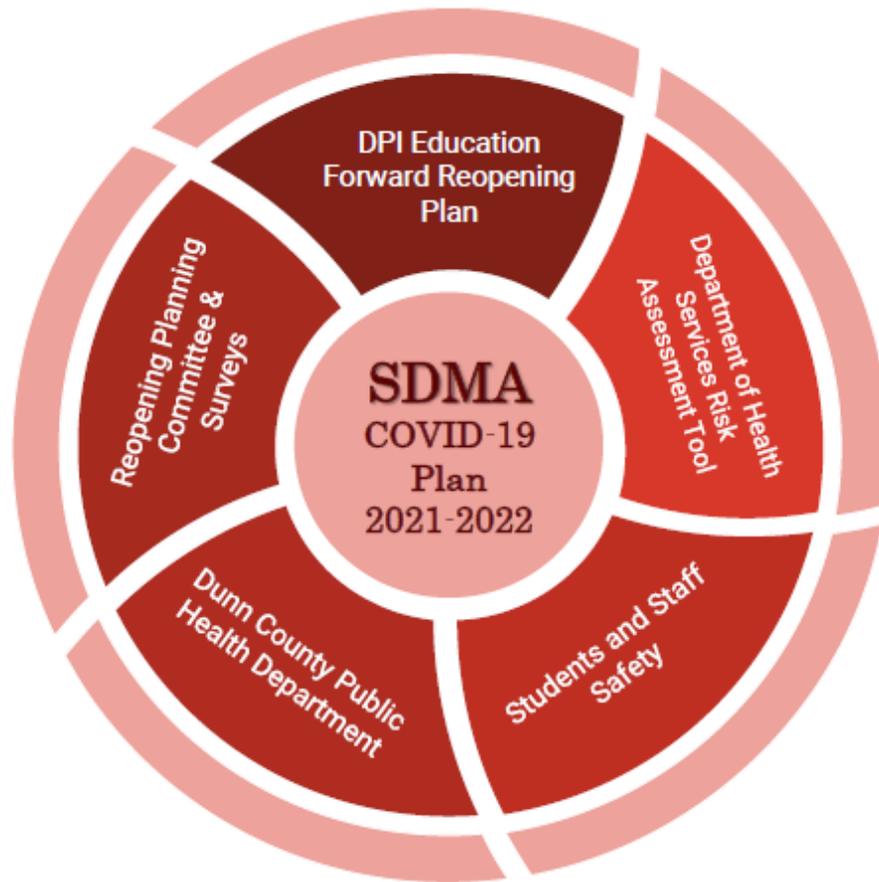


School District of the
Menomonie Area



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Introduction

Following the Spring 2020 statewide school closure for the COVID-19 pandemic, the School District of the Menomonie Area (SDMA) established a Planning Team to prioritize and expedite information gathering while developing recommendations for the 2020-2021 reopening of schools. The original SDMA Reopening Plan was developed to provide a proactive set of district decisions and actions to reduce risk and exposure to COVID-19, while also allowing for the nimble ability to pivot and adjust as needed to open schools in a meaningful and impactful manner during this pandemic. The SDMA Reopening Plan was developed with input from the SDMA Planning Team, and informed by the results of thousands of surveys completed by families and staff in the SDMA. The intent of the plan was to create a PK-12 organizational structure that supports social, emotional, and academic learning of all students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In order to implement the initial SDMA Reopening Plan, the district invested heavily in hiring additional faculty and staff, purchased necessary equipment and supplies, and expanded the inventory of technology devices. Expenses directly related to working through the COVID-19 pandemic totaled nearly \$2.7 million.

With the exception of a three-week period during the local and statewide COVID-19 spike in November 2020, all SDMA schools remained open for in-person instruction during the 2020-2021 school year. Cloth face coverings were required throughout the school district, as was targeted cohorting, physical distancing, and good hand hygiene. When the local COVID-19 burden reached a high level and increasing trend in September 2020, learning spaces and classroom schedules were rearranged to ensure at least 6' of physical distancing across the school district. At the time of the November spike in COVID-19 cases across the region, instruction at MHS was moved to a virtual format and some high school staff members were reassigned to help keep the elementary and middle schools open. Families at all grade levels were offered an additional Safer-at-Home learning option.

Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, students receiving in-person or virtual instruction were allowed to participate in sports and activities with mitigation measures developed by the WIAA or other governing organizations. Some competitions and program activities were halted when needed, but disruptions due to COVID-19 protocols were limited. Use of school district facilities by outside groups was quite limited for much of the school year, but some restrictions were relaxed in the spring when community transmission of COVID-19 lessened and specific safety plans were developed. MHS hosted prom on April 24 and graduation was held in the MHS gymnasium on May 30, 2021.

The SDMA partnered with the health department and regional medical providers to make COVID-19 vaccinations available to all employees when they became eligible to receive the vaccine. In addition to any employee-arranged vaccination appointments, all SDMA staff members were provided access to the vaccine at a district-arranged vaccination clinic hosted at MHS in March 2021. As of April 15, 2021, approximately 70% of SDMA employees reported having completed the COVID-19 vaccination series.

In addition to the school board providing regular guidance and approval of the annual budget and staffing plan, district planning for the 2021-2022 school year ramped up in the spring of 2021. Input was received through a family survey administered in March, and by reconvening the SDMA Planning Team in the spring of 2021. The CDC released updated guidelines for schools on July 9, and work on this plan continued during summer of 2021. This plan will continue to be modified and updated throughout the school year as more information becomes available.

Thank you to the Department of Public Instruction, KT Gallagher and the Dunn County Department of Health, SDMA Medical Advisor Dr. Paul Horvath, and many other colleagues and resources from outside of the SDMA for providing valuable resources and insight reflected in various parts of this plan.

Planning Team

Membership. Planning Team membership reflects diverse perspectives to actively involve stakeholders in the planning process. The Planning Team included staff members representing the perspectives of teachers and hourly employees, as well as all building principals, department directors, and district administrators in the SDMA. The Planning Team was diverse in their gathering of information from local, regional, state, and federal sources, as well as from parents, students, and community members.

Process. Planning Team members and the full administrative team held independent and joint meetings. Building teams also met and included additional staff members who brought direct knowledge and skills for identifying specific issues and generating a plan to address each of the identified critical actions. Other school district leadership teams, Menomonie Transportation, the Dunn County Health Department, and a number of other federal/state/county agencies were consulted or referred to in the development of this plan.

Throughout the information gathering process and the exploration of various options, several challenges and related solutions were identified to include curriculum delivery and instructional

approaches, facilities and school operations, food service, busing, technology, communication, human resources, and equity. All focus was viewed through the lens of doing what is best for students' educational, social, emotional, and physical well being.

In summary, input from the following was instrumental in developing the recommendations in this plan:

- Initial Brainstorming by Staff (individual questions, ideas, suggestions, and concerns)
- Surveys completed by students, staff, and parents
- School Board members setting a vision for school operations
- Discussions with the entire Administrative Team (and state/regional peers)
- Input sought by Principals from building leadership teams/staff and regional/state peers
- District Nurses (with regular communication with the health department and DPI)
- Director of Building and Grounds (following guidelines and consultation)
- Menomonie Transportation (who also consulted with state and national peers)
- Director of School Nutrition
- Town hall style Zoom meetings for families and staff
- Discussions with legal counsel and insurance carriers
- Numerous meetings with county, conference, regional (CESA11), and other school administrators across the state
- Regular communication with the Dunn County Health Department and regional healthcare providers
- Review of guidelines from Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association, Centers for Disease Control, and the State and County Departments of Health Services (DHS)

Guiding Principles

1. In-person curricular, extracurricular, and co-curricular experiences are vitally important to the immediate and future well-being of our students. Not providing educational opportunities for students can be detrimental to the immediate and long-term well-being of students.
2. The health, safety, and overall well-being of SDMA students and staff is the district's top priority. Orders from the Dunn County Health department will be followed to balance the known risks associated with COVID-19 with the many important educational and support services provided to children in our schools.

3. It is the school district's responsibility to help mitigate risks associated with the spread of COVID-19 and take that responsibility seriously, but the school district cannot guarantee a COVID-19-free environment.
4. Families deserve to have choices for how their children will be served by the School District of the Menomonee Area. The number of choices needs to be limited to make options feasible and mobile to support continuity of instruction if learning environments need to change during the school year.
5. To educate the whole child, the social-emotional, academic, and physical and mental health needs of all students must be considered.
6. Input from families and staff is important and must be considered in the development of the plan.
7. It is critical that all families, students, and staff understand and follow the protocols and expectations outlined in this plan.

Goals of the Plan

Identify a variety of mitigation measures and learning environments that may be needed during the 2021-2022 school year to provide families choice and support the continuity of instruction if learning environments need to change during the school year. This plan will define primary details related to instructional programming, health and safety, operations, and equity, as well as the criteria used to determine the learning environment most suitable for the changing circumstances in the local community.

Equity

All stakeholder groups will be provided opportunities to participate in the planning process to promote equity and to ensure that appropriate accommodations are made for all students. This plan will be reviewed by the Student Services Department to ensure that the implementation of this plan meets the needs of all students.

Learning Environment Options

Multiple learning environments may be utilized in the SDMA during the 2021-2022 school year, so planning must include procedures to promote a smooth transition between environments. The learning environment for students enrolled in the traditional school setting will be determined by

the criteria identified in this plan, but may need to change based on a variety of factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Students enrolled in the full-time virtual school environment will remain in that environment for the entire semester.



2021-2022 INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS

SDMA PLAN STEPS	PreK-4K	K-8	9-12	Students receiving special services (SpEd, EL, etc)
In-Person Learning				
Blended Learning				 Programming determined on an individual basis
Safer at Home Learning				
Online Virtual School				



= Virtual Learning



= Face-to-Face Learning



= Wisconsin Virtual School

IN-PERSON LEARNING- Schools operate at full capacity with risk management strategies in place to address cleaning, student and staff hygiene, and infection control and mitigation. The In-Person Learning environment will continue to be prioritized during the 2021-2022 school year.

BLENDED LEARNING- Students receive instruction and services in-school and at home. This approach in an alternating day schedule could reduce daily enrollment by 50% and support more rigorous physical distancing expectations if needed. Instruction for at-home learning may be asynchronous as teachers alternate in providing synchronous in-person instruction.

SAFER AT HOME (REMOTE) LEARNING- Students receive a remote, at-home/distance learning experience. Teachers will use a combination of digital, analog, synchronous, and asynchronous instructional methods. NOTE: SDMA faculty and staff will provide instruction and services in a “virtual/remote” learning environment. Depending on the circumstances, buildings may remain open for voluntary instruction and services.

FULL-TIME VIRTUAL LEARNING- For families who choose NOT to have their child(ren) attend school for any in-person learning. Students will be committed to a semester/trimester-long virtual school option if they choose not to attend in-person learning for COVID-related concerns and/or medical reasons. Students will be provided virtual instruction through the Wisconsin Virtual School (WVS).

Criteria for Determining the Learning Environment

The SDMA will prioritize keeping schools open for in-person learning during the 2021-2022 school year. Input from the Dunn County Health Department will be considered when determining the aggressiveness of safety measures that may be needed to keep schools open, as well as whether schools may ever need to move to a blended or fully virtual option during the school year. Safety measures may include graduated policy changes related to mask use, physical distancing, cohorting, or other recommendations by the district’s medical advisors. There may be a period of time during the school year when moving In-Person Instruction to the Blended Learning or Safer-at-Home learning environments could be needed, but virtual or blended learning will only be considered as a last resort. Current thresholds recommended for determining the learning environment call for a period of virtual instruction if student exclusions exceed 50% on any particular day, if students exclusions exceed 20% for a period of four consecutive weeks, or if the district is not able to provide enough staff to operate schools. In the event that some schools or individual classrooms need to close, in-person instruction will be prioritized in grades K-8. **Please understand that plans and thresholds may change during the year, and the district may need to innovate beyond these criteria as more becomes known about COVID-19, vaccines become more available to more students, more virus variants emerge, etc.**

Transitions Between Environments

Learning management systems. The school district adopted and purchased learning management systems to provide greater consistency if blended or remote learning is needed. Students and teachers in grades 4K-2 will utilize SeeSaw, while grades 3-12 will use GoogleClassroom.

Video conferencing software. The school district has adopted GoogleMeet for video conferencing to provide a more consistent platform for students and staff.

Instructional Programming

Teaching and Learning/Staff Development. Instruction within the SDMA will be designed to be delivered in-person, but plans will be in place for potential transitions to blended, and virtual (at home) learning environments as needed. Staff within the SDMA will have access to instructional resources and tools designed to facilitate transitions between instructional delivery models. Professional development and training opportunities have been made available for instructional staff to develop their skills with these tools. To support the continuity of instruction for students, [Protocols for Student Learning During School Exclusion](#) have been developed to help support students and staff for situations when students are not able to attend school.

Full-Time Virtual School. Families within the School District of the Menomonee Area may choose to enroll their Five Year Old Kindergarten -12th Grade child(ren) in full-time virtual education programming provided by the SDMA. For more information, please visit the virtual school [Information and Resources](#) page on the SDMA website.

Special Education. The school district recognizes that some specially designed instruction, related services, and supplementary aides and services cannot be effectively provided during a school closure. In the event of a future school closure due to COVID-19, IEP teams and buildings should prioritize in-person instruction for students with IEP's to ensure the delivery of the services in the IEP. If in-person instruction cannot be provided during a school closure, IEP teams may need to consider additional services and/or support when schools reopen.

English Learners. The school district recognizes that some specially designed instruction, and language services cannot be effectively provided during a school closure. In the event of a school closure due to COVID-19, EL teachers and buildings should prioritize in-person instruction for

EL students to ensure the delivery of the language services and supports that students need to make progress. If in-person instruction cannot be provided during a school closure, EL teachers may need to consider additional services and/or support when schools reopen.

4 Year Old Kindergarten. The SDMA will continue to offer 4K programming in a community based approach. This approach provides families the option to request placements at 4K sites located within SDMA elementary schools (River Heights, and Wakanda), at the University of WI-Stout Child and Family Studies Center, Menomonie Head Start, participating child care centers (Bouncin’ Babies & Kool Kids, Little Sprouts Academy, Milestones Education Community), and one parochial partner (St. Joseph’s School). All 4K sites will follow the protocols of the SDMA COVID-19 plan while offering in person learning opportunities for families.

Health and Safety

COVID-19 mitigation efforts have been designed and adopted across the school district to keep learning environments as safe as possible by making strategic and ethical decisions to comply with requirements and guidelines from state and county agencies, including but not limited to:

Hygiene and related educational campaigns. Strategies and protocols for reducing the potential spread of the virus (eg. proper hand washing, physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, and mask use) will continue to be taught and implemented across the school district.

Physical distancing. Physical distancing will be considered when placing desks in classrooms, arranging seating for meals, and when students are lined up for transitions. SDMA students and staff members are encouraged to maintain at least 6 feet of physical distancing when practical. In accordance with CDC guidelines, classrooms will be set up with at least 3 feet of physical distancing between desks, but 6 feet of distancing will be emphasized when possible. Distance between desks may be reduced down to the 3 foot minimum to make space for collaboration tables or other equipment important to the learning environment approved by the building principal. If stricter physical distancing requirements become necessary and student enrollment does not allow for adequate physical distancing to be achieved, the school district may implement a Blending Learning plan to prioritize at least 6 feet of physical distancing throughout the school district.

Student and staff masks and PPE. The use of masks and personal protective equipment (PPE) by staff and students in the SDMA will be encouraged in alignment with recommendations from the Department of Public Health, and the [Department of Public Instruction](#), and the CDC. Masks

are required for all individuals traveling on school buses, school vans, and other school sponsored transportation services. Masks are also required for all higher risk exposure situations such as singing **indoors**, specialized healthcare services (eg. toileting, feeding, therapies, first aid, etc.), and for any individuals entering SDMA buildings **under abbreviated quarantine protocols** **or** COVID-19 testing. Absent any subsequent order by the state, health department, school board, or other governing authority, the use of masks in the SDMA will be optional during the 2021-2022 school year, but all unvaccinated individuals are strongly encouraged to wear masks while attending or visiting any SDMA school facility.

Cohorting. Students under 12 years old will be grouped as much as practical while inside school buildings during the school day to reduce the risk of transmission and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of any needed contact tracing. Students may be scheduled outside of classroom cohorts for specialized instruction (ie. special education, intervention, middle school specials, etc.) and for outdoor recess.

Illness monitoring. Screening and response protocols will be followed to identify, separate, and support students and staff with COVID-symptoms. **NOTE: individual students, staff members, or other visitors are prohibited from entering school facilities or participating in any in-person school activity during a time at which ANY of the following conditions are present:**

- The individual has contracted COVID-19 and has not been released from isolation as determined by their local County Health Department.
- ~~The individual has been notified of potential COVID-19 exposure (close contact, etc.) and has not been released from quarantine as determined by their local County Health Department. NOTE: asymptomatic individuals are not required to quarantine if fully vaccinated.~~
- If a student, staff member, or someone in their household is **isolating for COVID-19**, experiencing COVID-related symptoms, and/or is awaiting test results, all **unvaccinated** household members should not report to work or school until a negative result is returned **unless fully vaccinated and asymptomatic**.
- The individual (whether vaccinated or not) is exhibiting any one (1) of the following primary COVID-19 symptoms:
 - Cough
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fever (Temperature of 100 degrees or higher)
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea

- Taken medication (e.g. Tylenol, ibuprofen, etc.) in the past 24 hours to lower temperature
- The student or staff member (whether vaccinated or not) is exhibiting two (2) or more secondary symptoms such as:
 - Headache
 - Unusual Fatigue
 - Sore throat
 - Chills/shivering
 - Nausea
 - Runny nose or nasal congestion
 - Muscle or body aches
- Anyone who has been prohibited from entering school facilities, or participating in any in-person school activity due to illness or illness symptoms, will be required to follow the [DPI's Returning to School After COVID-19](#) criteria before being allowed to return.

Abbreviated Quarantine. In accordance with updated guidance from the CDC, the school district has developed [student guidelines](#) and [staff guidelines](#) for abbreviated quarantine options for potential COVID-19 exposures that do not result in the development of any COVID-19 symptoms. (see updated student guidelines link)

Contact Tracing. The SDMA will conduct contact tracing for any potential COVID-19 exposures that might occur during the school day and during school sponsored activities. All students and staff are expected to cooperate with contact tracing efforts. **All individuals identified as closed contacts will be notified by the school district.** NOTE: In the K-12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition does not include students who were within 3-6 feet of an infected student where (1.) both students were engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitting masks; and (2.) other K-12 school prevention strategies were in place.

COVID-19 Testing. A federally funded COVID-19 testing program may be offered by the SDMA during the 2021-2022 school year. Any testing program offered in the district will be voluntary and only administered with parent/guardian consent.

Vaccinations. There will be no requirements for students, staff, or visitors to be vaccinated from COVID-19 to attend school, school district events, or school-sponsored activities. The SDMA may partner with the health department and/or local medical providers to offer students, staff, and community members information about and/or access to COVID-19 vaccinations. NOTE: asymptomatic individuals are not required to quarantine if fully vaccinated.

Operations

Cleaning and disinfecting. Increased cleaning of high-touch surfaces by custodial staff will continue to reduce the potential for virus spread. Cleaning supplies will be made available in all classrooms for use as needed by faculty and staff.

Air filtration and exchange. HVAC settings in all school district buildings will be programmed for an increased amount of air exchange when buildings are occupied. Air filters in the school district will be replaced as scheduled by the Director of Buildings and Grounds.

Food service. Breakfast and lunch will be offered to all students, while still promoting physical distancing between students and cohort grouping as much as practical.

Transportation. Transportation will be offered to students, while still promoting mitigation strategies like hand sanitation, physical distancing between students and cohort groupings when feasible. The use of cloth face coverings is required on all school buses and other school-sponsored transportation. Families are encouraged to transport children on their own if/when possible.

Staffing. Staffing levels will be adjusted as needed to meet the goals outlined for all potential learning environments.

Staff Development. Training and support for educators will be provided for operational responsibilities such as symptom screening, enforcing mitigation measures, maintaining physical distancing, and using PPE safely.

Communication. The sharing of information related to COVID-19 will adhere to all laws and regulations associated with student and employee privacy. Districtwide communications will be provided as needed related to decisions, plans, learning environment transitions, and other important information related to COVID-19 to students, families, staff, and the community. Any required notices of COVID-19 cases in schools will be communicated at the school level, and a dashboard of district-level COVID-19 data posted on the school district website will be updated weekly.

School visitors. Building-level plans and procedures may be changed as needed for limiting school access for visitors as needed. Safety protocols will be implemented as necessary for school visits and access to the schools by parents for both planned visits and emergencies.

Field trips. Field trips off of school grounds will be allowed provided that a mitigation plan is approved by the building principal.

Food and drinks from home. Food and drinks brought from home will be allowed for individual use in accordance with existing policies and school rules. Individual food and drink items are not to be shared. Classroom treats (eg. birthday treats) will be allowed during the 2021-2022 school year in accordance with existing district policies and school regulations.

Facility Use Requests. Facility use requests by outside groups may be considered, but an approved COVID-19 plan must accompany all requests and be strictly adhered to during the use of any school facility.

Community Education. Community Education programming may be considered, but an approved COVID-19 plan must accompany all requests and be strictly adhered to during the use of any school facility.

Athletics and Co-Curricular Activities

The school district recognizes that athletics and co-curricular activities are a vital part of the school experience for students. Activities will be offered by the school district with safety protocols for participants and spectators advised by the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA), the Dunn County Health Department, the Big Rivers Conference, and any other relevant organizations. Athletes required to isolate or quarantine will be allowed to return to participation in accordance with protocols outlined in the [WIAA Medical Clearance Form](#). Event capacity for spectators will not be limited due to COVID-19 at events hosted in school district facilities.

Resources / Guidelines Considered in Developing this Plan

- Centers for Disease Control (CDC) School Guidance: [LINK](#)
- State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services (State DHS): [LINK](#)
- DHS School Guidance: [LINK](#)
- Updated DHS School Guidance: [LINK](#)
- State DHS Reopening School Risk Assessment Tool: [LINK](#)
- Department of Public Instruction (DPI) School Guidance (6/21/20): [LINK](#)
- WIAA Guidance on Infectious Disease: [LINK](#)

- WIAA Return to Fall Sports Considerations: [LINK](#)
- The Dunn County Health Department Dashboard: [LINK](#)