



WEST CENTRAL COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #235

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July 23, 2020

Good afternoon West Central Family,

First, I sincerely hope this communication finds you and your family all safe and healthy and enjoying your summer. I also want to thank you all so much for your patience and understanding as we have worked diligently to discuss and develop a reopening plan that attempts to balance the health and safety of our students and staff as well as the need for in-person instruction. In developing the reopening plan, we have taken a variety of steps to gather the input of our stakeholders and taken into consideration a variety of input and guidance including parent and staff surveys; committee work; and guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Centers for Disease Control, and the Illinois State Board of Education as well as legal and insurance considerations.

COVID-19, the discussions to reopen school, and the requirements we are required to follow have all brought on a lot of emotions. Believe me, I understand them all. It is impossible to make a plan that will satisfy everyone, but we have developed a plan that we feel allows you to choose what is best for your family.

At its Special Board meeting on July 21, 2020, the West Central C.U.S.D. #235 Board of Education approved a "Resolution to Affirm the Transition to School Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year". As I outline the plan below, please keep in mind that information and guidelines continue to change daily, and it will be important for us to be flexible and ready to pivot and change to complete remote learning if the situation warrants or we are required by the state to do so.

Here is an overview of the basics of the plan:

- Families will be offered two learning options for their child(ren). One option will be a hybrid approach of in-person instruction and remote learning. The other option will be total remote learning.
- The hybrid approach will be four days of in-person instruction on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.
- Wednesdays will be a remote learning day for all students. This will allow for some flexibility for staff that could include having a student come to school for individual interventions and student support, online teaching, student/parent contact, grade-specific activities, and teacher preparation. This will also provide additional time for even more thorough cleaning.
- The option of total remote learning will be offered to all students. If a student starts with in-person learning and then wants to go to remote learning, he/she will be allowed to make that transition at any time; however, if a student starts with or transitions to remote learning, and wants to transition to in-

person instruction, that transition will have to be made at the end of the quarter unless there are extenuating circumstances.

- Students who are remote learning will be provided mini lessons and/or assignments with the same material as the in-person instruction students on the same day. The method a teacher uses to provide that material will be at the individual teacher's discretion.
- Parents will select either a hybrid approach or total remote learning when they register their child(ren) online. Online registration will be available to all students returning to West Central beginning July 27, 2020. Details on how to register online will be provided under the Registration tab on our District website beginning July 24, 2020. Students new to the District should call the appropriate office to schedule an appointment for in person registration. Phone numbers for each office are provided at the top of this letter.
- The two learning platforms that will be used are SeeSaw and Google Classroom. Teachers may also use Google Meets, Zoom, and a variety of other programs to supplement their lessons.
- Regardless of whether a student receives a hybrid approach of in-person instruction or total remote learning, teachers will take grades on assignments as they normally would have done prior to the mandated closure.
- All students who choose the hybrid approach when registering will return to in-person instruction on Thursday, August 20. Remote learners will also begin lessons on Thursday, August 20.
- As history has shown, we know the beginning days/weeks of school can be very warm. With the hot temperatures and humidity in the buildings, the lack of air conditioning, and the requirement to wear a facemask while in the building, school will be dismissed at approximately 12:15 p.m. on the in-person instruction days. Decisions to increase that time to a later dismissal time will be made based on heat and the ability to implement procedures that will protect the health and safety of our students and staff.
- We are required to provide five (5) clock hours of instruction each day. This can be a combination of in-person instruction and remote learning and include both lessons and assignments; therefore, students who opt for in-person instruction will be required to do some remote learning and/or assignments in the afternoons and on Wednesdays.
- School transportation will be provided to those who need it. In an effort to social distance students as much as possible, we are asking parents to transport their child(ren) to school if they are able. During registration, you will be asked to select if you will need school transportation or if you will transport your child(ren) to school. Bus riders will be required to adhere to the following rules:
 - The rider will be assigned a seat and must sit in their assigned seat at all times unless he/she is boarding or exiting the bus. Riders from the same family may be required to sit together.
 - The rider must wear a face mask at all times.
 - The rider's parent/guardian must certify electronically that he/she is symptom free before boarding the bus.
 - The rider may be required to have his/her temperature taken prior to boarding the bus.
 - A parent/guardian must stay at the bus stop with any child under the age of 13 until it has been confirmed that the child is symptom free.
 - If a child is exhibiting symptoms, which includes a temperature of 100.4 degrees F or higher, the child will be sent home, and a parent will be notified.
- Both breakfast and lunch will be provided to all students who want it regardless of which learning option is chosen. Breakfast and lunch prices can be found in the West Central C.U.S.D. #235 District Student Handbook and on our website.

- Parents will be required to certify electronically that their child(ren) are symptom free prior to coming to school. Temperatures may also be taken when a student boards the bus or enters the school and throughout the day. If your child exhibits symptoms, including a temperature of 100.4°F or above, please do not send them to school and notify the building office of the existing symptoms. If a child exhibits symptoms while at school, the parent will be notified, and the child may be sent home. We will have more details and instructions on how this will work in the coming days/weeks.
- Visitors to the buildings, including parents, will be kept to a minimum during this time of heightened concern for the health and safety of our students and staff.
- This plan is fluid, will continue to be under constant review and will change as the situation dictates.

Under this plan the following are requirements as outlined by the Illinois State Board of Education:

- Require use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including face masks at all times when in the buildings. Face masks are required outside if 6 ft. of social distancing cannot be maintained. West Central will provide two cloth, reusable face masks per student. The student or student's family will be responsible for laundering the face mask daily and replacing them if they are lost. West Central will make every attempt to schedule breaks outside where students can remove their face masks temporarily;
- Prohibit more than 50 individuals from gathering in one space;
- Require social distancing be observed whenever 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; and
- Require an increase in school-wide cleaning and disinfection.

I hope this helps to answer some of your questions and allows you to begin making decisions and plans for the coming year. We know that there are still many, many questions to be answered, and we are continuing to work through those and will communicate more details in the coming days. Please keep in mind this continues to be a very fluid situation, and we need to be prepared to move toward full in-person learning five days a week when it is safer to do so or reverse and go full remote learning if necessary or required by the state.

West Central Schools are committed to keeping your child(ren) safe while continuing to provide excellent educational opportunities. Remember the plan is flexible and will continue to evolve. Thank you for your continued patience and understanding.

Be safe,

Paula Markey

Paula Markey,
Superintendent

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