



District OR-1: Home of the Panthers!!



**“Safe Return to School” Plan:
2021-2022 School Year
“DRAFT” Version # 2
Updated July 14, 2021**



District OR-1’s “Return to School” Planning Committee developed our initial COVID-19 safety protocols during the summer of 2020. This plan allowed us to successfully return to “in-person” learning and remain “in-person” throughout the 2020-2021 school year. Special thanks to this committee for their vision and hard work!

*This current “Return to School” plan was developed in the summer of 2021 for the 2021-2022 school year. The contents of the plan are based upon information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Nebraska Association of Local Health Departments (NALHD), the Lancaster and Southeast District Health Departments, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), and the United States Department of Education. The content and format of the updated plan has also been aligned to meet the requirements set forth by the **American Rescue Act (ARA)**.*

Please note: *This collaborative plan will be reviewed at least every six months and may be adjusted as new information/guidance becomes available in the future.*



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Document Purpose:

The purpose of this “Return to School” document is to continue to provide a comprehensive framework for the safe return of students to District OR-1 for the 2021-2022 school year. We will continue to review and update the plan and communicate any changes to the plan through our website, email, and social media platforms.

During the 2021-2022 school year, protocols may change for a specific school building, program, classroom or other setting based on current case transmission, community conditions, and other risks of disease spread. District OR-1 will continue to work collaboratively with our local health departments and adjust our operating protocols as necessary to effectively meet current safety requirements for our staff, students, and families.

We also will continue to gather information from various sources including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the U.S. Department of Education. Adjustments to the plan will also be made as practicable based on local community conditions and feedback received from various stakeholder groups. This work will be ongoing as new research emerges and more guidance is provided to the school district in the future.

This updated “Return to School” plan is designed to be flexible in order to adjust to the myriad of challenges and changes that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to bring forth. The plan is intended to remain dynamic in nature as it can be updated at any time based upon current COVID incidences within our district and additional guidance from local, state, and federal health officials.

School administrators shall determine specific aspects of day-to-day school operations not clearly addressed in this plan. The Superintendent has the final authority to determine how the district will operate any given day and changes in school operations will be communicated to parents in an expeditious and accurate manner.

This plan has been developed based upon the COVID Transmission Levels/Positivity Rates experienced within our schools and our geographical region. Positive cases within District OR-1 have been miniscule since January 2021 and we want to continue to keep those rates as low as possible. If COVID Transmission Levels/Positivity Rates increase, these plans may be immediately revised to include additional COVID mitigation measures, such as mandatory masking, etc.

In this updated “Return to School” Plan, District OR-1 will also continue to utilize our facilities and resources in a manner that maximizes student safety and learning.



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Objectives, Principles, and Protocols:

Objectives:

- Prioritize student and staff safety.
- Facilitate practical, purposeful, and effective instructional / operational practices.
- Maximize academic and socio-emotional learning opportunities for all students.

Guiding Principles:

- We will center decisions on what is best for all students, families, and educators.
- We will be purposeful and proactive in our planning.
- We will provide equitable access and opportunity to school-based support systems and learning resources to all of our students.
- We will critically analyze and honestly reflect on “lessons learned” and strive to get better each day.
- We understand that flexibility is essential.
- We will work collaboratively to maintain a “solution based” growth mindset.
- We will actively listen to others and seek first to understand opinions that may be different.
- We will work to maximize our resources and problem solve solutions to various challenges.
- We will provide clarity about what we can control and what is outside of our control, we will admit mistakes, and adapt quickly to changing conditions.
- We will demonstrate and expect respect for diversity, and show compassion and empathy for others.

Guiding Safety Protocols:

- Encourage staff and students to stay home when they are sick and support staff and students in their absence.
- Maintain and practice social distancing protocols as applicable.
- Provide adequate amounts of supplies and equipment (masks, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, etc.) as needed.
- Facilitate training for cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing.
- Teach and role model good personal hygiene protocols (handwashing, cover coughs, sneezes, etc.).
- Follow current health guidelines.
- Provide appropriate training and maintain high expectations for staff, students, and community members.



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District, Mission, Vision, and Beliefs:

District Vision:

- *Together we prepare our students to successfully meet the challenges of the future.*

District Mission:

- *District OR-1 commits to a course of action providing continued academic growth through a curriculum that recognizes limitless potential and inspires faith in a positive future for every student. With a sense of community ownership and responsibility, we will remain fiscally accountable and attentive to current and future high-tech facility and staffing needs.*

District Beliefs:

- *OR-1 will:*
 - *Model and reinforce self-respect and respect for others.*
 - *Provide equal opportunity for each student to develop his/her potential.*
 - *Seek to develop a sense of individual responsibility and integrity.*
 - *Seek and integrate educationally sound innovations into the curriculum.*
 - *Provide a safe learning environment.*

Stakeholder Communication and Feedback:

In order to create and sustain a plan that meets the needs of all of our students and families, we will continue to ask for feedback, comments, and suggestions from staff, students, families and the community. As we gather feedback, we will integrate this information as practicable into our plans. The most recent version of the plan will be posted on our school website at www.districtor1.com not later than July 15, 2021.

Additional revisions to the plan may be needed after July 15th and future plans will continue to be reviewed by our Board of Education. The plan will continue to be updated periodically throughout the year as needed to address changes in federal, state and local health department guidance.

Much of the feedback gathered for this plan was collected through the use of a community input survey. The survey link was sent to community stakeholders the week of June 28th, 2021. The link to the original survey is listed below:

- [District OR-1 Return to School Survey: 2021-2022 School Year.](#)



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“Return to School” Planning Team Members:

Listed below are team members that provided input on the 2021-2022 “Return to School” plan. Team members were also instrumental in the development of the original 2020-2021 “Return to School” plan. We would like to publicly thank this team again for their efforts and input!

- **Michael Hart:** Superintendent of Schools
- **Heath Johnson:** High School Principal
- **Linde Walter:** Elementary School Principal
- **Aaron Hoeft:** Activities Director/ Special Education Teacher
- **Burke Brown:** Technology Coordinator
- **Michael Chaffee:** School Counselor
- **Laura Dawson:** Bennet Elementary Secretary
- **Clarrisa Dush:** Food Service
- **Rebecca Dvorak -** Kindergarten Teacher
- **Brad Gabriel:** Industrial Technology Teacher
- **Rebecca Gill-Rose:** Spanish Teacher
- **Karen Hatcher:** Superintendent's Office
- **Julie Hippen:** Parent/ Community Member
- **April Dudney:** School Nurse
- **Tyler Maas:** Math Teacher
- **Braston Maibaum:** 6th Grade Teacher
- **Beth McCreight:** K-12 Vocal Music Teacher
- **Dominique Dowding:** 4th Grade Teacher
- **Lisa Phillips:** Superintendent's Office
- **Ryan Pollock:** English/ Psychology Teacher
- **Jane Powell:** 7-12 Secretary
- **Sarah Swartzendruber:** K-12 Art Teacher
- **Dona Balderson:** Food Service
- **Jordan Linke:** 7-12 Physical Education Teacher
- **Lisa Wilen:** Parent / Board Member



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Masking:

- Face masks are encouraged for staff, students, and visitors who have not been vaccinated.
- Face masks may be required temporarily for staff, students, and visitors if COVID-19 cases rise and the administration believes that this safety precaution is necessary to prevent further spread and a possible school closure.

Visitors:

- Parents will be allowed to walk their students to our school buildings in line with pre-COVID protocols.
- Visitors will be allowed during the school day in line with pre-COVID protocols.
 - **Please note:** *Visitors must check in at the main office at each building upon arrival.*
- Student teachers, practicum students, mentors, college representatives, vendors, guest speakers, etc. are allowed back in the building at the discretion of the building principals.
- Non-essential visitors and volunteers may be limited if case levels increase.

Classroom Instruction/ Modes of Learning:

- District OR-1 will operate with “in-person” learning at each building site and there will **not** be a “remote learning” option this year. Having all students return safely back to the school buildings is another step in the process of getting back to more “normal” school operations. There is really no substitute for “in-person” on site learning with a classroom teacher and we are excited to have all of our students back in our buildings.
- “Remote Learning” will also **not** be an option for quarantined students or students with an extended absence. Extended absences from in-person school will be handled as they were prior to the pandemic.
- It is the responsibility of the student to contact their teachers and make up work which has been missed because of any absence. School staff will support the student’s initiative to make up for any missed work.
- We will continue to use “Canvas” as our student digital learning platform to provide consistency and continuity of learning and to allow the students to manage their assignments responsibly.
- Shared school supplies will be limited to the degree possible. Please refer to class lists for needed school supplies.
- High school / junior high students will follow a normal bell schedule and field trips, guest speakers, assemblies, etc. and other learning events will return in line with pre-COVID protocols.
- Elementary students will have “specials” classes, recess, field trips, guest speakers, assemblies, etc. and other learning events will return in line with pre-COVID protocols.

Student Attendance:

- All students who are enrolled in the school district are required to attend school on all days when school is open for providing instruction, unless they are excused from attendance by law.
 - *Please note: Student IEP or 504 Plan teams may take into consideration alternate learning accommodations based on risks associated with specific student disabilities.*
- Students who need to quarantine due to COVID-19 contraction or exposure, or students who stay home because they have COVID-19 related symptoms, are expected to make up missed school



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work and learning in the same manner as for any illness-related missed school days as outlined in the student handbooks and board policy.

- All COVID-19 related missed school days will be treated as medically-excused absences with a parent/guardian or doctor's note.

Vaccinations:

- COVID-19 vaccines will not be required for students or staff.
- Please note that each individual's vaccination status is based on a self-identified system.
- Proof of vaccination may be required in individual circumstances, but is generally not required for admittance to school.
- District OR-1 will continue to provide information to parents and students regarding when/how they could receive vaccinations within the community.
- District OR-1 will continue to monitor information regarding vaccinations and provide updates to staff, students and parents, when necessary.

Transportation:

- Bus routes and activity trips will operate at full student capacity.
- Drivers shall stay home if they have a fever or other COVID-19 related symptoms.
- If a shortage of certified drivers occurs, clause 001.02A (iv) in NDE Rule 91 may be utilized, allowing for "*...the operation of small vehicles in emergency situations when approved by the school administrator or person designated by the local governing school board.*"
- All vehicles will be sanitized daily.
- Hand sanitizer will be available when boarding school vehicles.
- Masks can be worn on buses according to individual discretion and will be available to passengers if needed.
- Students and parents will be encouraged to self-screen for cold or flu-like symptoms prior to coming to the vehicle.
- All students should have individual supplies rather than shared when possible.

Activities and Before and After School Programming:

- For high school NSAA-governed activities, the District will follow current guidance from NSAA.
- Jr. high activities, that are the same activities as those covered by the NSAA for high school students, will follow the same guidelines for participation and public attendance as applied to NSAA-governed high school activities.
- Activities not governed by NSAA (e.g. FFA, NHS, Quiz Bowl, Student Council, etc.) shall follow the same guidelines for participation and public attendance as applied to NSAA-governed activities.
- School dances, assemblies, and other school sponsored events will return as current health conditions allow.
- Masks can be worn on buses and district vehicles according to individual discretion and will be available to passengers if needed.
- All before and after school activities will return in line with pre-COVID protocols.



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Social Distancing and Facility Modifications:

- Social distancing will be practiced to the greatest extent possible.
- District staff will plan to remove nonessential furniture and make other changes to classroom layouts and student areas as much as practical.
- Additional social distancing measures may be encouraged for all students if COVID-19 cases rise and the administration believes that this safety precaution is necessary to prevent further spread and a possible school closure.

Cleaning/ Sanitation/ Maintenance of Facilities:

- Proper handwashing, cough and sneeze etiquette will be reinforced and monitored.
- Students and staff are still encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and immediately wash their hands after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Water fountains and refilling stations will reopen for use. *Students may bring individual water bottles at their discretion.*
- Hand sanitizer dispensers will be available at the building main entrances, and at the entrances of classrooms and learning areas as practicable.
- Restrooms will be sanitized daily.
- Hand sanitizer shall be encouraged to be used before and after using the restroom.
- Additional cleaning supplies will be made available in all learning settings as needed.
- Staff will continue to support healthy hygiene behaviors.
- High-touch surfaces will be cleaned frequently and routinely.
- Heating, ventilation and air conditioning settings will be adjusted as needed to maximize ventilation and bring in as much outdoor air as possible.
- Air filters will be changed at regular intervals.
- Exhaust fans will be used, where available and windows will be opened as needed if feasible.

Isolation / Quarantine:

- All Directed Health Measures in the state of Nebraska (including contact tracing, isolation, and quarantines) were removed on May 24, 2021. A confirmed positive individual following the isolation guidelines is now a function of personal responsibility.
- Our local health departments have also discontinued contract tracing, isolation and quarantines due to our low levels of transmission.
- School-related contacts to a positive COVID-19 case who remain asymptomatic are not currently recommended for quarantine. If enhanced practices are reinstated, District OR-1 will cooperate with adjusted guidance in this area.
- Normal health procedures for illnesses will continue to be followed as normal:
 - Students and staff who are sick must stay home.
 - Students and staff must be fever free for 24 hours (without medication) before returning to school.
- Students and staff who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms will still be encouraged to stay home
- Students will continue to be excused for COVID-related absences.
- Parents will be asked to follow local health department guidance regarding testing and quarantine. Testing is up to the individual, but should be encouraged when warranted.



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- If COVID levels rise, District OR-1 administrative staff will consult with the local health departments to determine if screening or additional testing should be offered to students and/or staff.

Diagnostics and Screening:

- District health staff will offer referrals to diagnostic testing to any student, teacher, or staff member who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 at school.
- There will not be any temperature screenings at the beginning of the school day.
 - *Please note: If COVID cases rise, on-site symptom checks may be reinstated for everyone entering a district building or site if needed.*
- Students and staff are encouraged to stay home if they are sick.
- Students who are feeling ill or experiencing flu-like symptoms should be sent to the nurse's office at the elementary school and the main office at the high school for further evaluation.
- Students, staff, or visitors with temperatures of 100.4 or higher are to stay home until they are fever free for 24 hours without the assistance of medication.
- If during the day a student becomes ill or develops a fever, students may be required to wear a mask and be placed in an isolated room as needed.
- Staff members with symptoms should stay home from school if symptoms are not obviously the result of explainable circumstances.
- Families are encouraged to screen students for COVID symptoms before sending students to school or activities.

Food Service:

- *Please note that school meals (breakfast and lunch) will be offered again this year at no cost to all families.*

Bennet Elementary School:

- Breakfast and lunch will be served in line with pre-COVID protocols. *Building principals will provide additional information about breakfast and lunch procedures at the beginning of the school year.*
- Students will be encouraged to use hand sanitizer as they enter the cafeteria and eating areas.
- Food options will be served to students. Items will be pre-packaged as possible to help with sanitation measures.
- Students will be assigned to tables if needed.

Palmyra High School

- Breakfast and lunch will be served in line with pre-COVID protocols. *Building principals will provide additional information about breakfast and lunch procedures at the beginning of the school year.*
- Students will be encouraged to use hand sanitizer as they enter the cafeteria and eating areas.
- Lunch will be served in line with pre-COVID protocols.
- Food options will be served to students whenever possible. Items will be pre-packaged as possible to help with sanitation measures.



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Coordination with State and Local Health Officials:

As indicated in the requirements set forth by the **American Rescue Act (ARA)** for the 2021-2022 “Return to School” Plans, we will continue to collaborate with local and state health departments on a regular basis to monitor COVID case levels, implement new guidance protocols and procedures, and revise our current operations when necessary. In accordance with state and federal guidance, this plan will be revised at least once every 6 months.

We will also continue to proactively assess the level of community COVID related transmissions to understand the burden of the disease in our community. We understand that the transmission level can quickly change at any time and that our operating protocols and prevention strategies should be regularly reassessed to continuously inform our planning and decision-making.

Appropriate Accommodations:

Student IEPs and 504 Plans will be followed according to the identified needs of each student. These plans may include accommodations that apply to the health and safety of students, relative to COVID-19.

- Students with underlying health conditions may participate in remote learning if the school is provided with medical documentation indicating that this is necessary.
- Students with disabilities may be prioritized for in-person learning if cases rise to the level where hybrid or home-based learning is required.

Continuity of Services:

- Our goal is to continue to provide “in-person” learning to all students, addressing their academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs via the many programs in place within our schools.
- We will return to a regular school year schedule that follows our normal curriculum, assessment, activities, and parent-teacher conference cycles.
- If schools have to be closed, we will implement a comprehensive PK-12 transition plan which includes on-site and virtual interventions and services for students, as well as before and after school tutoring as needed.
- If COVID cases rise significantly and we are required to close a school, every effort will be made to provide these services virtually.
- All special education services will be provided according to students’ IEPs, and families will be provided with access to free meals as needed.
- Additional Chromebooks and Internet hotspots will be utilized as needed in order to ensure equitable digital access for students.

Consideration of Public Comment:

- Public input on the 2021-2022 “Return to School” plan is critical and District OR-1 has afforded the opportunity for public feedback through information shared on our school website and various social media platforms. Information was also shared and requested through our summer district newsletter.



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- Additional public input is encouraged and information will continue to be analyzed and integrated into future revisions of the plan as practicable.

Communication:

- District OR-1 will utilize a number of communication methods to ensure parents, students, staff, and the community are all informed of potential changes.
- Phone, email and text messages to parents will be sent through Powerschool, the district website, and various social media platforms.
- To help us maximize these communication channels, **it is vital that all students and families are registered in PowerSchool for the 2021-2022 school year and that all parent/guardian contact information is updated and current.**
- If you have questions about registration, please contact the elementary or high school offices.
- District OR-1 will continue to provide community updates as needed in order to effectively and efficiently share information regarding updates or changes to the return to school plan. ***Please note: There will not be a set schedule as to when these updates will occur, but they will be distributed according to changes and extenuating circumstances in relation to daily operations.***
- Contacting administration is the district's preferred method for communication. Please also contact our school offices immediately if there is an address, name, etc. update so that we can be sure information is distributed accurately to everyone.
- In-person on-site meetings should be scheduled in advance in line with pre-COVID protocols.
- Meetings between parents and teachers should be communicated through the main offices at each building in line with pre-COVID protocols.
- Parent/teacher conferences will resume this year, but there may be adjustments to the format due to the popularity of the digital option last year. More information on the specific format for parent-teacher conferences will be distributed after school reopens in the fall
- Parents should continue to contact their students' teachers as needed.

What Can I Do to Help?

The District strives to maintain a healthy environment for all students with these measures happening at school, but there are also lots of things families can do at home to encourage overall mental and physical wellness for students. Listed below are just a few suggestions that will help build immunity so our kids can fight off illness and stay in school.

- *Provide healthy meals to include the recommended intake of fruits and vegetables each day.*
- *Limit sugar to help boost the immune system.*
- *Set regular sleep schedules to provide for adequate rest and limit "screen time", especially before bed.*
- *Be present for each other and limit distractions if possible.*
- *Strive for balance between academics, activities, social, leisure, and technology.*
- *Consider multivitamins to help bridge the gap toward proper nutrition.*
- *Encourage regular physical exercise which is good for the heart, lungs, and mind.*



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Conclusion / Contact Information

While we understand that there are still many decisions yet to be made, we are confident this plan can be adjusted as needed to meet changing conditions and extenuating circumstances.

In summary, we have the best interests of our students, families, and staff at the forefront of our planning and our commitment to educating our children in a safe and secure environment is paramount. Please know that staff and student safety, and a commitment to student learning remain the underlying core principles of this plan.

Thank you for being a part of our district and thank you again for your flexibility and support. Our district remains tremendously appreciative of the support of our families and community members and it is our hope to provide our students the best possible learning experience regardless of the context and circumstances of the challenges we face.

If you have any additional questions regarding elements of this plan, please feel free to contact us at either (402) 780-5327 or (402) 782- 3535.

Go Panthers!