

What to Consider when Restarting In-person Services and Implementing Health and Safety Requirements for Employees

These questions are intended to help frame conversations between districts and associations. The list is extensive and is intended to help create a jumping off place for conversations as we unwind the complex and challenging time.

These questions focus only on Health and Safety of Employees and are based on Labor and Industry Guidance provided September 30, 2020. Some questions were also previously included in an earlier WEA document to help bargaining teams and local union leaders guide conversations with their districts. That document is still available and is more comprehensive in its scope to also include workload, instructional practice, and equitable support for student service.

Health & Safety
District and Worksite Safety Committee
Who is the COVID Site Supervisor at each worksite? What training have these individuals taken? How is it being communicated to staff who these people are and what their role is?
Does each worksite have a Safety Committee? Are the union members on those committees? Has this committee met and reviewed the health and safety protocols and developed strategies for training and implementing?
Where are is the districts written plan for health and safety protocols related to COVID?
Is there a clear process for employees to notify the Safety committee and COVID Site Supervisor about concerns and violations regarding health and safety protocols or request additional PPE?
What is the process for employees to notify the district if the COVID Site Supervisor or Safety Committee is not following the health and safety protocols?
Who will the union be notified of concerns and violations?
What is the plan for providing a space for isolating staff and students who present with possible COVID symptoms? Does the district have the appropriate PPE for all staff who may be required to interact with these individuals including at least one person who is trained and always available?
What is the plan for cordoning off areas and deep cleaning those areas when a student or staff member with probable or confirmed COVID-19 illness has worked/touched surfaces?
Has an assessment been done of all classes/services offered to identify those classes that may have higher risk? (inability to social distance, wear masks, etc. – choir, SLP services)
Enforcement of health and safety protocols
How will expectations for wearing face coverings be enforced for students, staff, and visitors?
Will volunteers be allowed in the buildings? In the classrooms? With students?
What is the plan for training staff (including intermittent staff and volunteers) on the new health & safety protocols?
What is included in that training? (de-escalation strategies for when students refuse to follow protocols, counter to unconscious bias to prevent discriminatory discipline or enforcement, etc.)
What should a staff member do when a student refuses to put on a mask or wear it properly?
How will the District ensure staff safety regarding students who will not wear masks?

PPE – Staff, students, and visitors
What is the District doing to ensure procurement of PPE for opening of school? (ask to see it and know that it is present and ready for distribution at all worksites)
What types of face coverings/masks will the district provide to ALL staff as a baseline? What is the plan for distributing to ALL staff?
What is the standard for receiving additional or replacement PPE? How has this plan been communicated to employees?
How will an employee request alternative face-covering to cloth due to ADA?
What positions have been identified as needing additional PPE due to inability to provide social distancing when working with students (medically fragile, some therapies (OT/PT/SLP), etc)?
What is the plan for those with these assignments regarding communicating with employees about risk and regarding accommodations (additional PPE, plexiglass, more physical space) or alternative assignments?
What is the plan for these classes/services regarding communicating with employees and families about risk?
How will the district communicate with students’ families who need special accommodations due to not being able to wear a mask about the PPE requirements that will be followed by staff? (It is important that students who may be triggered by the additional protective measures are aware that they will be followed.)
How does someone request their position be considered for additional PPE?
Has the district taken action to create a clear policy about students and visitors need to wear a mask while in the building? How will the district support this policy?
Will the District be providing masks for all students?
What supports will the District provide to increase student access to PPE when needed?
Capacity for Social Distancing (6 feet) - Transitions: Lunch breaks, recess, other classes/services
How does the district plan to meet this for all employees and students?
Has the district analyzed the amount of actual classroom space? (actual maps and walk through)
How has cohorting been designed and prepared to reduce the amount of cross contact between students and staff?
What additional learning spaces are being considered both in the school and on alternate sites?
What will it take to be able to utilize that space?
How will students transition to other locations in the building or be provided breaks/recess?
Has the district provided signage and spacing markers to help students, staff, and visitors maintain proper social distancing?
How will students and staff be provided lunch? Breaks?
How does the district plan to meet this for all employees and students?
How have typical communal areas/tools been signed and arranged to provide for at least 6 feet of distancing between employees?
What regulations will be in place regarding student desk/table arrangement, alternate seating (i.e. carpet time, moving of students) and direction(s) students are facing?
In spaces such as school offices, that may have less than 6 feet of social distancing how has the district provided mitigation strategies?
Has the district requested consultation with L&I to make sure that their current plan meets necessary L&I guidance? Would the district be willing to have the Union be a part of such a visit and meeting with L&I?

Cleaning, Ventilation, Water, Hygiene
Is there sufficient staff to do the required cleaning before opening and on an ongoing basis once school returns? What is the regular cleaning schedule? Has it been communicated with staff?
How will individual personal hygiene be handled and provided for? (Handwashing stations with hot water, hand sanitizer to supplement, but not replace handwashing) What about in locations such as portables or where there are limited sinks access?
What plans are in place for high-touch surfaces? (supplies needed? training of staff? schedule of disinfecting? Allowable/not allowable manipulatives, supplies? Protocols on sharing items?
How will desks (inside and out) and shared materials/tools be cleaned between groups of students?
What cleaning, if any, is expected of certificated staff? (between classes/transitions? certain materials, surfaces? If any, what training will be provided, and when? How will the additional time this cleaning takes be addressed?
If the school-provided sanitizing spray must sit wet for 10 minutes before being wiped with a clean cloth, and passing periods are only 4-5 minutes, how will classrooms be properly sanitized between groups of students?
What steps have been taken to provide additional materials/tools to reduce the need for sharing and sanitation?
What plans are in place to address bathrooms?
What plans are in place to address ventilation? What about in rooms with no outside access (windows or doors)?
What standard are you planning to meet regarding % of fresh air coming into the buildings? WA DOH Healthy Air Quality in Schools Webpage
What plans are in place to address water fountains?
Daily Health Screenings
If the district is planning on using an attestation form, who will be responsible for checking to make sure that it has been completed? How will in-person screening occur if they fail to complete it?
When will students & staff be screened? How will staff and students be checked into the building to make sure screening has taken place?
Will there be a need for staggered start/end times to provide better flow, reduce lines, and speed up the overall process?
What will the screening protocol be for students who show up after their scheduled start time?
How will the District ensure staff privacy & meet requirements of HIPPA during screening & with recordkeeping?
Where will students go once, they have been screened?
How will you limit possible exposure prior to screening occurring?
Who will complete the screening? (what will deem them qualified?) What safety measures will be in place for screeners?
What is the plan for when someone shows signs of or reports they have been exposed to COVID-19? (students? staff?)
What is the plan in each building for separate spaces for COVID-related symptoms/illness and regular health room needs (first aid, medications, etc.)
What self-monitoring/ self-isolation protocols are being considered?
How will the District ensure there is enough nursing staff to cover all the needs in each building, given this new health-intensive situation?
How will the District address staffing needs proactively to prepare for when nurses call in sick or must quarantine?
Does the district plan on using attestations for staff and/or students?

Limiting exposure – Notice of exposure
How will the District ensure adequate contact tracing for any positive test for a student, parent/guardian, or staff member?
What precautions are you going to take for specialized positions (OTs/PTs/SLPs/BD Room) etc.?
How many students or staff need to test positive before the decision is made to close a school building or to close the District?
What processes will be followed to notify staff and students when there may be exposure to an individual with a positive test results while following privacy protocols? (see CDC guidance) How will the union be notified of positive test results impacting worksites?
What steps will the District take to limit in-person gatherings & meetings for staff?
How else will the District address the need to limit cross-mixing students & staff as much as possible? (use of cohorts/groups at elem. & secondary? Transportation patterns? Alternating schedules?)
How will the District limit exposure & potential spread for those staff who typically work with multiple groups of students? (elem. specialists, secondary teachers)