Fairfield Community School District’s Return to Learn Plan

An update on Fairfield Community School District’s Return to Learn plan from Dr. Laurie Noll, Superintendent:

- On Tuesday, June 28th, Fairfield CSD submitted its Return to Learn checklist to the state. It was approved the same day. On July 1st, this checklist was placed on the website.
- The plan offers student learning options for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year, which means both in-person and virtual instruction will be offered.
- We are getting new information about health and safety standards every day, including the new guidance this week from the Iowa Department of Education on reopening schools. Please know we will continually review our plan as needed, but always ensuring we error on the side of caution for students and staff safety. We will also seek input from our families and the community before finalizing our plan.
- July 21 after the board meeting a draft of the detailed Return to Learn plan will be shared with various stakeholder groups (including staff, families and community members)
- Online registration will give families an opportunity to share their feedback about how comfortable they feel when it comes to in-person instruction and transportation needs.
- Shields and or cloth face masks will be provided for students and staff.
- Understanding the Department of Education’s recommendations are high-level guidance and used with other guidance and resources the Department of Education has provided. FCSD will work with Jefferson County Public Health, Iowa Department of Public Health and the DE to provide a safe way for students and staff to be in school.

As we prepare our district’s Return-to-Learn plans for the next school year, we continue to do so with student and staff safety at the forefront of our decision-making. As our community partners, we are thankful for your partnership and hope this update provides helpful information as you support students and families through your own organizations.

We have learned over the past few months that information regarding COVID-19 continues to evolve, as does the best-practice guidance issued by state and federal educational agencies and public health officials. Be assured that we are in contact regularly with local and state public health officials as we conduct our planning.

Because this situation is fluid, we are preparing for a variety of scenarios as to what the beginning of next year will look like, ranging from welcoming all students back in person to
some form of virtual education. Regardless of what it looks like, we are committed to doing what we do best – being there to support students and families each step of the way. We will do this in a way that seeks to ensure the same opportunities for each and every one of our students, regardless of the challenges or barriers they may be facing.

Fairfield’s administrators, in conjunction with approximately 50 staff members, are determining the details needed for three scenario plans. Each team is working through a list of guided supports from the Iowa Department of Education. The categories’ focuses include Academics, Infrastructure, Data, Health & Safety, Equity, Social Emotional Mental Health, and Leadership.

At this point, all students will have a device they can take home each day.
Prek-1 - Used iPad from current FCSD program
2-4 - new iPads
5-8 - refurbished MacBook Airs
9-12 new MacBook Airs

Staff will have training in a Learning Management System called Canvas which will house all the learning for students. Our high school teachers and students are familiar with Canvas. Middle school teachers were starting the training last school year. The elementary and middle school will have more training in the system before school starts. This Learning Management System will help families to be familiar with one system rather than several when or if we need to be virtual at any point of the year.

The district is working on connectivity and bandwidth. There may be a pencil/paper, recorded lessons, or transportation to an area with internet access.

The health and safety of all students and staff is a high priority. Additional cleaning supplies have been purchased, cleaning fog machines are ordered which can be used in the classrooms and on the buses. There are hand sanitizers by classroom doors in elementary and middle school and at various locations in the high school. Food sealing products are being tested so food can be either in the classrooms or in separate areas of the building with a seal over the food. The building locks have been changed on the outside of the buildings so the entry of individuals is closely monitored.
Throughout the summer, we will be communicating monthly updates as our planning progresses and more guidance is given. And, as always, we invite you to reach out at any time if we can be of assistance or if you have ideas/suggestions that may support our preparations for next year.

We also hope that you will encourage the students and families you work with to watch closely for information about in-person school registration for next year, which begins on August 3, 2020. Online registration will open July 13th to accommodate families. Having not seen students in person for some time, we will be working hard to reconnect them with their school and keep track of any address changes that may have occurred during the prolonged absence.

School is scheduled to start on August 24 for all students in some capacity. At this moment a determination of how that first day will look has not been decided. The district is working closely with public health on the best practices for schools. More details will be released from the Iowa Department of Public Health in the next few weeks which will help to determine how we will start school.

Overall, we are excited to begin the Return-to-Learn process and, like you, have missed the vibrancy that our students and families bring to our schools and community. The process has started with baseball and softball games. Students and coaches are happy to be back on the field and fans are excited to watch some games. This is going well as we learn the needs with COVID to keep everyone as safe as possible. Thank you for your continued partnership in creating safe, equitable learning spaces for all of our students.