Zion-Benton Township
High School District 126

Interactive Remote Learning Plan
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Executive Summary

As we continue to see an increase in positive cases for COVID-19 nationwide, statewide, and particularly in Lake County, District 126 leaders have taken time to re-evaluate our school re-opening plans. As you know, reopening our schools will be a complex and challenging process. We are taking the utmost care to protect the safety of our students, families, and educators while striving to provide the balance of rigor and support that will best serve our students. I want to emphasize that this decision weighs heavily on all of us. We recognize that this decision will present challenges to our students, families, and staff, and I hope that by informing you now, you will be able to make necessary adjustments to your plans for the fall.

We consulted with the health department and other area superintendents regarding health and safety considerations of our Return-to-School Initiative. Feedback from staff, parents, students, and community members has highlighted the need for a plan that provides continuous education, support systems for students, and increased levels of engagement between school/home. Our back-to-school plan aligns the data findings to our commitment to provide the best possible education to all students.

District 126 proposes an Interactive Remote Learning Plan in which students will learn remotely five days a week, aided by virtual support systems as well as optional in-person resources for families who need to come into our buildings. The District will coordinate this in such a way that the amount of people in the school at any one time will be minimal, allowing the in-person interactions to occur in larger spaces that facilitate social distancing.

The online instruction will be mostly synchronous, which will provide the structure that is developmentally appropriate and more conducive to consistent student engagement. Instruction will be supplemented by virtual office hours and coordinated communication from teachers and support staff.

Everyone - staff, students, and visitors - must wear a mask and practice social distancing while on school property. Staff will be trained in new health and safety protocols, and we will establish new patterns and procedures for entry, exit, and movement within the buildings, which we will communicate to students, parents, and visitors.

Our plan prioritizes the health and safety of our students, families, and staff while maintaining our commitment to providing an education that centers on active engagement, rigorous instruction, and intentional support systems for students. Our community has clearly communicated a need for safety and wellness alongside - not at the expense of - innovative educational experiences for our children, and we will rise to this expectation.

Thank you for your continued support. We will make good on the promise of a healthy, equitable, caring, and educationally excellent Zion-Benton Township High School District 126 for all.

In partnership,

Jesse J. Rodriguez, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools
District 126 Standard of Care

In planning for the return to school, District 126 has maintained a focus on a standard of care for any of the programming it would develop and implement.

Any model developed and delivered to students would need to:

- Prioritize the health, safety, and wellness of its students and staff
- Provide regular opportunities to build positive relationships with students and families
- Integrate personalized safety nets and subsequent options for students and families based on instructional, medical, and social-emotional needs
- Provide continuity of educational services in a safe and welcoming environment
- Integrate additional social-emotional, nutritional, and academic supports for students
- Provide live/synchronous instruction for students to promote engagement and learning
- Ensure students maintain access to quality educational opportunities that are comparable to what they would receive under normal circumstances

Reopening Primary Focus
Context/Background

During the spring of 2019-2020, districts across the country were propelled into remote learning with little to no preparation. As a result, districts developed and implemented plans to the best of their ability, accommodating varying student and staff challenges and the circumstances of the stay-at-home order. Although Illinois is currently in Phase 4 of its Restore Illinois Plan, as the pandemic continues, District 126 has planned for and considered three models of instruction for the 2020-2021 school year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remote Learning</td>
<td>100% of students learn at home through virtual instruction and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended Learning</td>
<td>Students receive in-person instruction part of the time and learn remotely part of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Person Learning</td>
<td>100% of students resume attending the district’s campuses daily for live, face-to-face instruction</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In planning for these models, the district integrated student, parent, and staff feedback from the 19-20 school closure to improve upon its remote learning model, to develop its blended learning model, and to make a determination about the model it would adopt to start the school year. In accordance with the Illinois State Board of Education’s (ISBE) recommendations, the district also placed a high priority on ensuring any model adopted could provide comparable services for students who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), students who have 504 plans, and students who are English learners.

The district’s primary concern continues to be the health and safety of students, families, and staff while promoting continuity in education. Like many others, the district worked diligently over the summer to develop a hybrid/blended learning model to get students into the classroom two days each week. However, the district does not feel its hybrid plan would be best for students’ and staff’s safety or the ultimate goal of quality, consistent educational services for students based on the reasons below:

- COVID-19 cases continue to rise at the national, state, and local levels.
- There is increasing evidence that older children contract and pass the virus.
- There is systemic structural inequality that puts many in the Zion-Benton community at greater risk of higher infection, hospitalization, and mortality rates.
- If a case presented in one of the district’s buildings, it could lead to a disruption of educational services (school closure) and a return to remote learning for extended periods of time (2-5 days with each occurrence).
- Maintaining continuity of educational services for students and families is a top priority. A confirmed COVID-19 case in one of the district’s buildings could also require a change from a
hybrid/blended model to remote instruction, resulting in instability in the instructional delivery model. Such changes would make it more difficult to build structure, routine, and subsequent engagement.

- The district’s blended learning model would present three different schedules to those students who attend in person and a completely different schedule and program for its remote learners. If interrupted, students would need to adopt an additional routine through the district’s remote learning plan, causing further disruption and confusion that would interrupt engagement.
- Even in a hybrid/blended learning model that ensures no more than half of the students would be in the building at one time, staff would need to be in the building regularly, which exposes them to substantial risk.
- Students and staff would be in confined spaces with others for extended periods of time, which poses risk factors when examining infrastructural needs.
- The logistical demands in a hybrid/blended learning model of redesigning traffic flow, screening students and staff, and ensuring social distancing with adequate supervision are prohibitive and would create other problems that would cause disruptions to learning.

As a result, to ensure safety and develop consistent routines and expectations, the district will adopt an Interactive Remote Learning model with an option for in-person support to begin the 2020-2021 school year. This model will provide live remote instruction coupled with personalized support—in person or remotely—to support each individual student’s growth and development. Within this model, students receive live virtual instruction four days each week, with opportunities for in-person or virtual small group or individual support built in each day.

This model prioritizes the health and safety of families and staff while providing smaller, more controlled settings for personalized in-person support, reducing the likelihood of an outbreak on campus and ensuring continuity of its instructional delivery model even if a case should arise. The district will adopt this model for all of Quarter 1 and reevaluate the implementation of its blended learning model or return to in-person instruction at that time.

**Interactive Remote Learning Model**

After receiving feedback from students, staff, and parents and evaluating engagement and learning during the spring of 2020, it was important to build on what was effective and modify it to improve the experience and learning outcomes for all students. As a result of the feedback, the district has modified its remote/eLearning plan for the 2020-21 school year and developed a remote learning framework to be accompanied by regular professional learning to help address many of the challenges that made student learning difficult in the spring of 2020.
Remote Learning General Principles

In developing a remote learning model, the district sought to address challenges from the spring of 2020 and develop a model that best met our standards of care and service.

Each school’s model ultimately sought to increase and promote **academic rigor, student engagement, and relationship building** through the careful integration of technology. Accordingly, the district’s new remote learning model includes the following elements, which reflect best practice and address the needs of the community:

- Requires regular live remote instruction coupled with independent work time and opportunities to seek in-person or remote learning support
- Meets developmental needs by adding structure and routine and approximating a regular school day in its design, shortening the live/synchronous school day, incorporating a combination synchronous and independent/asynchronous learning, and increasing break times between live/synchronous classes
- Facilitates consistent student engagement by providing routines and procedures to support student engagement and learning
- Addresses student concerns and challenges from an asynchronous model by adding structure through live remote learning and regular office hours for personalized support.
- Provides a shorter synchronous day to allow students to work independently and get individualized support remotely or in person four days each week
- Reduces the daily workload, focusing on 3 (no more than 4) courses each day, with built in time daily and weekly for additional support and “catch up” time to alleviate students’ challenges in navigating up to 7 courses independently in one school day
- Maintains the state-mandated 5-hour clock time requirement via a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction
- Accommodates morning and afternoon Tech Campus students
- Provides multiple opportunities for in-person or remote personalized teacher support via an “Office Hours” model
Remote Learning School Day Schedule

The schedule addresses concerns about the lack of structure to the school day and students’ ability to manage a full course load every day in a remote setting. It also provides explicit time for students to receive personalized support and to work independently on assigned practice.

### Zion-Benton Township High School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZBTHS Interactive Remote Learning Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course and Department Time 7:40-8:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per. 1 8:30-9:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition/Break 9:15-9:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per. 3 9:30-10:15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transition/Break 10:15-10:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per. 7 10:30-11:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition/Break 11:15-11:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per. 5: 11:30-12:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Lunch/Student Travel 12:15-1:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Practice &amp; In Person or Remote Teacher Office Hours 1:00-2:38 Group A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Independent Practice** (7:50-12:50)

**Teacher Office Hours** (7:40-11:00)

**Staff Professional Learning** (11:45-2:38)
# NT@ZB Interactive Remote Learning Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course and Department Time 7:20-8:30</th>
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<th>Student Independent Practice (7:20-12:50)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per. 1 8:30-9:15</td>
<td>Per. 2 8:30-9:15</td>
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<td>Per. 2 8:30-9:15</td>
<td>Teacher Office Hours (7:20-11:00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition/Break 9:15-9:30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Staff Professional Learning (11:45-2:24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per. 3 9:30-10:15</td>
<td>Per. 4 9:30-10:15</td>
<td>Per. 3 9:30-10:15</td>
<td>Per. 4 9:30-10:15</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Per. 6 10:30-11:15</td>
<td>Per. 8 10:30-11:15</td>
<td>Per. 6 10:30-11:15</td>
<td>Per. 8 10:30-11:15</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per. 7 11:30-12:15</td>
<td>Advisory/Interv. 11:30-12:15</td>
<td>Per. 7 11:30-12:15</td>
<td>Advisory/Interv. 11:30-12:15</td>
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<td>Independent Practice &amp; In Person or Remote Teacher Office Hours 1:00-2:24 Group B</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In-Person Teacher Office Hours Rotation

To maintain the safety of students and staff, the district has developed an “Office Hours” model to ensure students have daily access to their teachers for instructional support, including in-person access to teachers up to twice each week.

- All teachers will be available daily for virtual instructional support, but to ensure safety, the district will provide a schedule that outlines which teachers will be on campus each day for in-person office hours. If not on campus, teachers will still be available to support students via remote meetings.
- To ensure appropriate classroom space and social distancing, students will need to sign up for appointments and follow the district’s health and safety protocols before entering and while in the district’s buildings.
- Students will have access to an additional private space at the building to continue working should they need to relocate after their appointment but want to continue working.
- Teachers will be available twice each week for in-person appointments.
- Teachers will also use this time to work with students remotely and make contact with students and families regarding student progress.
- During this time, bilingual and special education instructional aides, counselors, social workers, and interventionists will also be available for scheduled remote or in-person support.

Getting Students Started

The district recognizes that students, especially freshmen, may be confused about how to use the district-issued device and access their coursework and live remote classes on that first day of school. As a result, it will provide training and support before and at the start of the school year:

Registration

- The district will distribute Chromebooks (freshman and transfer students) and help every student get logged on to their Chromebook during the in-person portion of the registration process.
- Students will also be shown how to access their courses via their school’s Learning Management System (Canvas for ZBTHS and ECHO for New Tech).
- Students will be provided with written instructions for future use and reference.
Online Tutorials

- The district will post an introductory video to YouTube, both schools’ websites, and to both schools’ learning management systems (Canvas for ZBTHS and ECHO for New Tech) that explains how to log in and be prepared to attend their classes on the first day of school. It will also include information about how to receive technical support should they have an issue with their username and password or their Chromebook.

- Chromebooks will be configured so that the home page and initial loading page displays the directions for accessing their courses and any additional information relevant to online learning.

- As needed, the district will continue to develop and post helpful videos for its students and families.

Parent and Student Information Sessions

- The district will post a video explaining the district’s Interactive Remote Learning plan on Thursday, July 23, 2020.

- The district will host a series of 1-hour virtual live information sessions to be streamed via Zoom for students and families to learn about the plan and learn how to use the district-issued technology to ensure a strong academic start for students.
  - Wednesday, August 19 at 5:30 p.m.
  - Thursday, August 20 at 9:00 a.m.

Freshman Zero Day

The district will provide a freshmen-only first day on Friday, August 28 to occur remotely. This day will focus on building positive relationships and establishing routines for a successful start on the first day of school.

- Students will run through a shortened schedule for all class periods to meet each of their teachers and access each teacher’s course page on Canvas or ECHO.

- Access to the “live” class will be found via a link on each teacher’s Canvas or ECHO page.
School Calendar

The following calendar outlines the respective start date for freshmen (Friday, August 28) and all other students (Monday, August 31).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>August 2020</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sunday</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Red = Non-Attendance Days for students

Prior to their first day on August 28 (freshmen) or August 31 (sophomores, juniors, and seniors), students should make sure they have done the following:

1. Turned on and logged on to their Chromebook

2. Connected to Wi-Fi or contacted Mr. Carlson at carlsonj@zbths.org or (847) 731-9356 in Student Services if Wi-Fi is not accessible in their home.

3. Accessed each teacher’s Canvas (ZBTHS) or ECHO (NT@ZB) page and located the Zoom meeting link for live instruction.

Additional Supports for Special Needs Populations

The district’s Interactive Remote Learning Plan ensures students’ educational services are provided in person or remotely. Special Education and English Learner services will be provided through assigned teachers and instructional aides, and any additional compensatory services will continue to be provided. Likewise, all 504 plan accommodations will be provided within the virtual setting, with an option for in person support. The district will also provide supplemental in-person options for Special Education students and English Learners and will continue to evaluate the needs of its programming and create differentiated plans to support the different needs within the various programs the district offers.
District 126 will work with families to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that is adjusted to meet the needs of each student. The district’s primary goal is to protect the health and safety of all students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students. In this unique and ever-changing environment, the district recognizes that these exceptional circumstances may affect how all educational and related services and supports are provided. During remote learning, Special Education, English Learner, and related services will be offered in a variety of modalities—in person, virtually, online, or telephonically.

**Special Education and English Learner Additional Supports**

* Bilingual and Special Education Support Centers

While there will be a supervised space for any student who wishes to virtually engage in their live remote classes in the district’s buildings, there will also be dedicated spaces for Special Education students and English Learners to receive support from special education or bilingual instructional aides.

* Bilingual and Special Education Support Courses

In addition, the district has doubled its number of English Learner Resource classes for the 2020-2021 school year, providing students an additional course to receive educational support from a certified bilingual teacher. Similarly, many Special Education students who require greater support will be enrolled in and receive support through their Learning Resource Support class.

* Bilingual and Special Education After School Supports

For those students who need support extending beyond the school day, there will be allocated support centers for English Learners and Special Education students available from 2:38-3:45 p.m. Monday-Thursday. Students can engage remotely or attend in person to receive support.

* Individualized Remote Learning Plans

The district will provide individualized remote learning plans for students enrolled in its most supported Special Education programs.

**After School Supports for All Students**

In addition to offering support during the school day, all students will be able to receive remote or in-person support through the following after school district tutoring or support programs. Each program will run from after school (2:24/2:38 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.).

- After Hours (New Tech)
- Math, Literacy, and Science Labs (ZBTHS)
- English Learner Support Lab
One challenge students faced during the spring of 2020 remote learning was consistent access to Wi-Fi. As a result, the district will implement the following measures to ensure students are able to remain connected:

**Technology Access**

- The district will survey families during registration to determine the level of Wi-Fi access in their residence and their interest in their student using the school buildings for their synchronous instruction days.
- The district will provide mobile cellular hotspots free of charge for students who need Wi-Fi access so they can work remotely.
- The district will provide a supervised space in each of its buildings where students can socially distance and access Wi-Fi to engage in their classes (e.g., South Cafeteria at ZBTHS or Cafetorium at NT@ZB).
- The district will provide access to its facilities during the afternoon for students who want to come to its buildings to receive in-person tutoring support or continue working.
- Each student will be issued a district-provided Chromebook loaded with the applications to be used for remote synchronous and asynchronous instruction.

**Technology Support**

The best way to get technology support is to contact the ZB·IT Service Desk directly. All channels to contact the ZB·IT Service Desk can be found at [www.zbths.org/it](http://www.zbths.org/it) and service hours can be found with each contact method.

**Attendance Expectations**

Students will be expected to attend classes daily, and attendance procedures will function as they would in a traditional setting:
● Teachers will take attendance for their respective course periods each day on Monday-Thursday.

● Students will log attendance via each teacher’s page for each course on Canvas and ECHO on asynchronous learning days (i.e., Fridays).

● Parents or guardians should call the attendance line for their specific school should their student be absent from school.

### Grading Guidelines

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) recommends school districts return to traditional grading policies, but it advises that school districts make modifications to ensure students have the tools and support necessary to complete required work. Because a remote learning model may still present technology challenges for students and because students will be asked to complete more work independently than they would be asked to do in a traditional in-person model, the district will work with its schools to develop and communicate the details of those consistent grading policies as the school year approaches. However, students will be expected to complete all assigned work and should expect to be graded on their performance in each course. Once finalized, specific grading policies will be outlined on each teacher’s syllabus and communicated to students at the start of the year and throughout the year.

### Transportation

● The district will continue to make transportation available for all students to attend afternoon in-person office hours. These bus routes would function similar to the district’s activity bus routes.

● Daily transportation will be available upon request for students who require a socially-distanced, supervised space to engage in live remote instruction for their classes.

### Food Services

● The district will provide a “grab and go” option for breakfast and lunch for all students.

● The district will maintain a weekly pick-up system to provide meals for all students.
Health & Safety Measures

General Guidelines

Student and staff health and safety will be a top priority to ensure health and safety for anyone who enters the district’s facilities. As a result, the district will implement the following measures:

- Regular and deep cleaning
- Social distancing maintained at all times
- Required use of face coverings, properly covering the nose and mouth, when in the district’s buildings
- Daily health and wellness screenings when entering the district’s buildings

Student and Staff Wellness Checks

- Daily temperature checks for all students and staff prior to entering any of the district’s campuses
- Daily staff self-certification responses upon entry
- Daily student self-certification responses upon entry

Visitor Entry Plan

- Outside visitation will be limited (school business and principal approved only).
- All visitors will need to have their temperature checked, complete a wellness questionnaire, and sanitize their hands prior to entering the building.

Managing Symptoms

- Students or staff who present with any symptoms or a temperature at or above 100.4 will be sent home. If utilizing district transportation, the district will transport the student home.
- Those who test positive for COVID-19 or those who show symptoms and were not tested can return to school 72 hours following the resolution of a fever without fever reducing medication and 10 days following the appearance of symptoms.
- Individuals who were within 6 feet of another individual with symptoms for more than 15 minutes will be asked to isolate at home and monitor symptoms for 14 days.
## Cleaning

- Increased cleaning will occur during the day, with regular sanitization of “high touch” surfaces (e.g., door knobs).

- The district will conduct deep cleaning on **Fridays** each week, so facilities will be closed during the school day.

- The district will provide access to hand sanitizer in each classroom and throughout its buildings.

- The district will provide disinfectant spray or sanitizing wipes for all common areas and classrooms.

## Face Coverings

- The district will provide each student and staff member with a cloth Zee Bee face covering.

- The district will also make disposable face coverings available for any student, staff member, or visitor who needs one at its entrances, on its buses, and within its classrooms.
Signage

- The district will maintain signs for proper hand washing, social distancing, and other health and safety procedures for using restrooms and drinking fountains and accessing other common areas.

Transportation

- Buses will be sanitized daily and after each route.
- A district paraprofessional will accompany all bus routes and will conduct temperature checks prior to student entry on the bus.
- Students will be required to wear a face covering to enter the bus. Bus drivers will have disposable masks available if students do not have a face covering.
  - Students who have been exempt due to an approved medical condition will be provided with documentation to present upon entry regarding this exemption.
- Students will be asked to socially distance as much as possible on the buses.

Activities and Athletics

Activities and athletics can continue to operate within the Illinois IHSA guidelines and the respective requirements of the IDPH guidelines.

- Groups and teams can continue to meet remotely or in person.
- If groups and teams are to meet in person, all health and safety measures would apply, and gatherings would need to be approved by the Athletic Director and/or Assistant Principal.
- District transportation will be available for students to get to the building after school, and a 4:00 pm activity bus run will still operate to transport students home.

School Closure Plan

The district recognizes that the circumstances of the pandemic continue to evolve and will be prepared for a short- or long-term closure during which time the district would restrict any in-person access to its buildings and programs. In consultation with the Lake County Health Department and Illinois Department of Public Health, the district will monitor community and school- or district-wide spread to make and communicate that determination.
Supporting Student Learning in an Interactive Remote Learning Model

Staff have developed the framework below to help ensure a successful learning experience for all students within a blended or remote learning environment. The framework will provide guidance for educators on best practices to support students as the district navigates these new instructional models.

Remote Learning Vision: An equitable, consistent learning experience where students have clearly defined expectations, feel connected to their peers and teachers, and can take ownership of their learning to be successful.

Remote Learning Framework: The framework reflects the key pillars to a successful remote learning experience for our students. The district developed a Remote Learning Committee that sought to define and develop best practices for instructional design (lesson structure and delivery), relationships (fostering student-teacher, parent-teacher, and student-student relationships), assessment (how and what to assess), and technology integration (use of technology to support teaching and learning) all the while developing principles and practices through an equity lens, considering cultural, economic, special education, and language differences and subsequent needs. Each of the components were developed, and staff will receive professional learning at the start of the year and throughout the year to provide more consistency for students and incorporate best practices to support blended and full remote learning.
Blended Learning Model

In preparation for the 2020-2021 school year, the district developed a comprehensive blended learning model. If the district feels it can safely return students in partial capacity to its school buildings while maintaining health and safety guidelines provided by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), it will communicate an effective start date and any health and safety guidelines applicable at that time.

In-Person Learning Model

This model reflects the traditional, familiar model of education students and families know and are accustomed to experiencing. When the district can safely return all students to its school buildings while maintaining health and safety guidelines provided by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), it will communicate an effective start date and any health and safety guidelines applicable at that time.