Return to School/Re-Entry Plan for Students, Parents and Teachers

See Spanish Translation

Union Public Schools
2020-21 School Year
Revised August 24, 2020

[WORK IN PROGRESS]
Letter from the Superintendent

Dear Union Parents:

In the last four months, we have all had to deal with an unprecedented level of change. First, I would like to thank you for your patience. I know it has not been easy for students, parents and teachers as we adjusted to Distance Learning and an end to the school year that none of us would ever have predicted. In true Union style, everyone adapted quickly to the new Covid-19 reality, and I am proud of the outpouring of support we received from teachers, parents and our community partners. We have a wonderful support system and we are grateful.

As we move forward in preparation for the 2020-21 school year, I know Union parents and students want to know their learning options and the safety measures that will be in place. **Students and staff will be required to wear a face covering at all times** while in a school building or in a school vehicle unless they are alone in the room or vehicle. (Face coverings do not include bandanas or scarves).

Please know that the health and safety of our students and staff continues to be our #1 priority. Union Public Schools will continue to follow the guidance and expertise of state and local officials in order to protect our students and staff. This document provides detail on the safety measures in place; however, I want you to be prepared for changes, as the situation will continue to be fluid. We encourage you to check our website weekly for updates, as this is where you will always find the latest information at [www.unionps.org/coronavirus](http://www.unionps.org/coronavirus).

In our recent survey of parents, 67% of parents said they prefer their child attends school in person with safety measures in place to protect them. The remaining 31.4% said they would prefer a virtual or distance learning option. (About 2,600 parents responded in all, representing approximately 25% of our student population).

As a result, parents will be asked to choose between one of two learning options for their student: 1) in-person learning; or 2) virtual learning at home. We need your reply no later than **Monday, July 27, 2020 by 5 p.m.** Traditional in-person learning is the default position, so if we don’t hear from parents, our assumption will be that your child has opted for traditional school. (See the instructions on P. 7 for how to enroll in the virtual option on Infinite Campus).
A couple of important things . . . Once you select a learning option, your student will be committed to that option, either virtual or in-person, for the entire semester. In the event school is cancelled for any period of time, students will be provided instruction through our distance learning plan. (Please see Union’s Learning Options on P. 5).

The first day of school has changed to Monday, August 24. This will provide us with more time to make adjustments. Also, we have suspended “Late Start Fridays” for the 2020-21 school year, so school start times will be consistent for the school year. Please check the website to see if your school start/end time has changed. Some slight adjustments were made for students in grades 6-9. The updated school calendar can be found here.

I know you will have many questions. Please read the document below for details and check our website for updates. I deeply appreciate your support as we move forward to ensure our students get the education they deserve in the safest way possible.

Sincerely,

Kirt Hartzler, Ed.D., Superintendent

Frequently Asked Questions – Fall 2020-21

Introduction and Challenges . . . COVID-19 will happen!

As we plan for the upcoming school year, we are faced with uncertainty unmatched in recent years. District policies and practices will need to remain flexible and nimble as we respond to new information and work through the many issues associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we develop our initial plan to return our students to a safe learning environment.

Since you will be faced with a decision regarding the learning pathway for your child, we feel it is essential for us to communicate to you the expectations for our students and our staff as they return to school. We also want to share what precautions will be taken by the district to minimize the exposure and possible spread of COVID-19 so you can determine the learning pathway you prefer for your child.

This will be a challenging year for all of us as we try to keep our students and staff healthy and continue to provide face-to-face learning. With that in mind, it is going to require support from families in helping our students realize the importance of wearing masks and utilizing proper handwashing and sanitizing procedures. If all families can help us reinforce at home the importance of following the recommended safety guidelines, we may be able to minimize the potential spread and keep our schools open.
Given the nature of this virus, it is not a matter of “if,” but when our schools will experience an event . . .

This document is intended to be a fluid, working document which will change as needed based on the current COVID-19 status and recommendations of health professionals. It is not intended to be a complete plan, but an initial outline of strategies and protocols based on the current community health threat to our students and staff. Information will be updated on a weekly basis as recommended by the Reentry Task Force members. We recommend checking the Union website frequently at www.unionps.org/Coronavirus for updates.

Reentry Task Force and Input

Union’s Reentry Task Force, formed in May 2020, has been working to create and present a plan for the return to school in the fall of 2020. The information presented is part of an overall plan to safely return students and staff to an In-Person Learning Environment when school begins in the 2020-21 School Year.

The committee consists of 29 members and includes two board members, two parents, two teachers, two support employees, two elementary principals, two secondary principals, the lead school nurse, the head athletic trainer, and fifteen other district administrators. We thank them for their service!

Reentry Task Force Members
Kirt Hartzler, Superintendent
Charlie Bushyhead, Associate Superintendent
Sandi Calvin, Assistant Superintendent
Trish Williams, Chief Financial Officer
Christopher Payne, Chief Communications Officer
John Federline, Executive Director of Secondary Education
Theresa Kiger, Executive Director of Elementary Education
Todd Borland, Executive Director of Technology
Gart Morris, Executive Director of Instructional Technology
Jay Loegering, Executive Director of Human Resources
Joshua Robinson, Director of Operations
Ty Wardlow, Director of Safety and Security
Deborah Wolin, Director of Special Services
David Young, Director of Purchasing and Supply Management
Jamie Ward, Senior Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent
Michelle Cundy, Principal, Union 8th Grade Center
Rita Long, Principal, Ellen Ochoa Elementary School
Lindsay Smith, Principal, Marshall T. Moore Elementary
Tony Tempest, Principal, Union High School
Dan Newman, Head Athletic Trainer
Debbie Furgerson, Lead School Nurse
Frank Brazwell, USPA President
Union’s Learning Options – 2 CHOICES

As Union Public Schools plans for the 2020-21 school year facing the challenges associated with COVID-19, we know it is imperative that we offer our students options for an exemplary educational experience. For the upcoming school year, there will be two learning pathways offered to our students: 1) in-person learning; or 2) virtual learning.

While we are planning for two different instructional environments, please know we will continue to consult with local and state health officials and the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for school opening and operations.
Parents will be able to choose one of two learning environments:

**OPTION 1: IN-PERSON LEARNING**

**Learning at school grades PK-5**
- Teachers will provide face-to-face instruction.
- Students will attend class in-person five days a week.
- Schools will be open during regular instructional hours.
- In the event school is cancelled for any period of time, students will be provided instruction through our distance learning plan.
- Specific safety measures are described beginning on P. 8 of this document.

**Learning at school grades 6-12**
- Teachers will provide face-to-face instruction.
- Students will attend class in-person five days a week.
- Schools will be opened during regular instructional hours.
- In the event school is cancelled for any period of time, students will be provided instruction through our distance learning plan.
- In-person includes the blended class options; Union Career Connect; and Service-Learning opportunities students chose during spring enrollment.
- Specific safety measures are described beginning on P. 8 of this document.

**OPTION 2: VIRTUAL LEARNING**

**Elementary Students (Grades PK-5)**
- Learning at home.
- A Union teacher will deliver all instruction remotely and provide support utilizing the Seesaw educational software.
- A Union teacher will use Union curricular materials and Oklahoma Academic Standards while maintaining the continuity of learning.
- Virtual learning is a minimum of a one-semester commitment. Once a student begins virtual learning, he/she will remain in virtual learning for the semester. Students will check out the following at each grade level:
  - Pre-K – a device will be provided
  - Kindergarten – 2nd grade – iPad
  - 3rd – 5th grade – laptop
- Elementary virtual learning information can be found here.

**Secondary Students (Grades 6-12)**
(Continued on next page)
OPTION 2: VIRTUAL LEARNING (continued)

Secondary Students (Grades 6-12)

- Learning at home
- Students will receive instruction and coursework through one of our contracted virtual programming and curriculum offerings supported by Union teachers.
- This program will ensure a student has the credits they need for graduation; however, some class choices may be limited.
- In-person participation in extra-curricular activities (fine arts and athletics) may be available by request. Transportation will not be provided for extra-curricular activities.
- Virtual learning is a minimum of a one-semester commitment. Once a student begins virtual learning, he/she will remain in virtual learning for the semester.
- The virtual program now meets NCAA clearinghouse requirements.
- Students will check out a laptop.
- Virtual class options can be found here.

Union Public Schools’ families will select which learning pathway is right for their student(s). If electing to attend the in-person learning option, no action is needed. (That is the “default” option). In order to effectively plan, we are asking parents who are selecting Virtual Learning to submit this request by 5 p.m., Monday, July 27, 2020. Making this decision as soon as possible allows Union Public Schools to plan for student schedules, staffing, and preventative health and safety measures.

Instructions for Selecting In-Person or Virtual Learning

- **In-Person Learning** - No action is needed. Your student(s) is automatically enrolled for in-person learning.
- **Virtual Learning** - You will need to complete a simple form: [Virtual Learning Enrollment Request](#).

We value each of our students and families and appreciate the trust you have placed in our school system. We look forward to seeing you for the 2020-21 school year!

Schools will plan for student schedules, staffing, and preventative health and safety measures. Should you have questions, please contact your child’s school. School phone numbers can be found on Union’s website at [www.unionps.org](http://www.unionps.org) under the “Schools” tab.

**Interruptions at School**

In the event of a large outbreak of COVID-19 or a high risk of community spread at one or more schools, Union will activate distance learning for all students who select “In-Person Learning.” Union will work with the Tulsa Health Department and other health officials in determining the level of risk. Union will also publish by site the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 when we are made aware of the diagnosis. Please know the district’s ability to conduct contact tracing and notify all parties may be limited and delayed, depending on a number of factors. We will
honor FERPA (student confidentiality) and HIPAA (medical confidentiality), but will do our best to notify students and families on a timely basis in the event there is an exposure to COVID-19 at school.

Also, there may be a need to make changes to procedures as things progress. Our policies and procedures are designed to mitigate the risk of COVID-19. However, there is no way to completely eliminate the potential risk of spread. The district will closely follow CDC guidelines and the advice of other health officials in an effort to adhere to those guidelines.

Health Monitoring of Your Student
It is important that all families partner with the district in monitoring the health of students and families. Students with a fever or other prominent COVID-19 symptoms (dry cough, shortness of breath, congestion, runny nose, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, body aches, chills, etc.) should not be sent to school until they are fever-free (without medication) for 24 hours. Once school resumes, temperature checks will not be conducted by school personnel on students or staff prior to entry on buses or in school buildings.

Families are expected to monitor the health of their children. Parents or guardians will need to notify the school if their child is symptomatic or has had possible exposure to COVID-19. If anyone in your household has had a possible exposure to COVID-19 and is being testing, please quarantine your student until test results are received.

Safety Strategies
To minimize the spread of COVID-19, Union is prioritizing the following the safety strategies:

Facial Coverings
Until the threat of COVID-19 spread is considered minimal, students and staff will be required to wear a face covering at all times while in a school building or vehicle UNLESS they are alone in the room or vehicle. The only other exception is while eating a meal, but staff are expected to physically distance when their face covering is not on. Students may have situations where they are allowed to remove their face covering due to an activity and the ability to physically distance. Face coverings must cover the mouth and nose or encapsulate the mouth and nose. Acceptable styles are cloth masks, surgical-style masks, or the "beekeeper"-style shield that covers the face and neck. As of 8/20/20, gaiter-style neck/face coverings are allowed.

Unacceptable face coverings are ones that do not adequately cover the mouth and nose or encapsulate the mouth and nose. Masks with exhalation valves/vents, face shields, bandanas, or scarves are not permitted.

Face coverings cannot violate district Board Policy 5060 regarding appropriate dress/student attire. We understand there may be situations where wearing a face covering will not be feasible due to the activity or the specific age or condition of the student. Those circumstances will be reviewed on an individual basis.
Physical Distancing
Students will be physically distanced from one another as much as possible. Although a six-foot minimum distance is not likely to be achieved given the size limitations in some classrooms, individual schools will consider the following changes (when possible): Block scheduling, limited locker use, one-way hallways, physical markers, or any other needed strategies to help maintain social distancing.

Elementary Cohorts
Elementary school sites will prioritize keeping students together in cohorts to limit the spread of COVID-19. Recess and outside time will continue to be available to students, but an effort will be made to limit recess to individual classroom cohorts.

In cooperation with local health officials, a decision may be made to cease “In-Person Learning” for a period of time. In these instances, students would transition to “Distance Learning” led by their regular classroom teacher. Please note: Distance Learning is not the same as Virtual Learning. (The Virtual option takes place entirely at home for an entire semester). Distance Learning will be put in place for those students choosing “In-Person Learning” only when there is a need to close school buildings. There will likely not be much advance notice in the event we need to move to Distance Learning due to circumstances beyond our control. Again, our #1 priority is keeping students and staff safe in the event of an outbreak.

School Calendar / School Hours
The district calendar and school hours have been amended, which will result in the following changes:

- The first day of school for students will be Monday, August 24, with all other days remaining the same as previously approved by the School Board.
- School start and end times previously approved will be adjusted at all sites on Fridays only. Late Start Fridays will not occur during the 2020-21 school year, and school start and end times will be the same Monday – Friday. The loss of embedded collaboration time for staff is intended to last one year only.
- If other changes are made, they will be quickly announced to all parents and staff via our typical communication methods (phone, email, the website and social media).

School Closures – COVID Response Team
The district has a COVID Response Team that will meet every school day at 5:30 p.m. to determine if any closures are warranted based on several data sets provided for that particular day. The team may make the decision to close a classroom(s), a grade level(s), a school(s), or the entire district and move to distance learning if the information presented supports that decision. The team will meet daily as long as is needed. If the decision is made to close, the affected students, parents and staff will be notified that same evening.

Data being considered may include, but is not limited to, the following: 1) The number of Covid-positive students or staff exceeds our ability to provide a safe learning environment; 2) There are an inadequate number of teachers or substitutes to cover classes; 3) Absentee rates of
essential staff prevent us from having school; 4) The inability to adequately clean and sanitize all areas; 5) The inability to provide meal service to students; or 6) other relevant data related to providing a safe school environment.

**Transportation**
Union plans to resume traditional transportation at the beginning of the new school year. Until the threat of COVID spread is considered minimal, students will be required to wear a face covering while boarding, riding, and exiting the bus. Only exceptions approved by the principal will be allowed. Alternate transportation may be required if compliance is not possible. Students in grades 9 through 12 will **not** be allowed to board a bus without a face covering in place. Students in grades K-8 may be provided a face covering if they forget to bring one, but there will be a limited number of times a face covering will be provided to students.

If a student fails to have an appropriate face covering or fails to keep it on, he/she may be refused transportation and/or receive other disciplinary action. Whenever possible, windows will be lowered to increase airflow inside the bus. The first two rows of the bus may be left open to provide adequate social distancing from the driver. Buses will be wiped down with disinfectant in between each route and will be fully sanitized at the end of each day.

Students will be asked to load the bus beginning with the back seat, with students working their way towards the front as seats fill. Every effort will be made to socially distance on the bus, but this may not always be possible. Windows will be left open, when possible, for better ventilation. When unloading, students will exit the bus beginning with those in the front seats. Routes will be readjusted after the first few weeks to accommodate better spacing of students.

Whenever possible, additional buses will be provided for activity trips to allow for more social distancing on the bus. The availability of buses and/or drivers may limit our ability to provide additional buses.

Please know there may be times when the district is unable to provide bus service for all students due to driver shortages, etc., so routes may be cancelled with little advance notice. In the event routes need to be cancelled, the cancellation of routes will start with grades 10 through 12, then 9th grade, then 8th grade, etc. The cancellation of routes will **not** impact special education routes unless specifically noted.

**Athletics, Fine Arts & Other Extracurricular Activities**
Depending on the level of community spread, all athletics, electives, and fine arts classes will continue as planned with extra measures taken to ensure the safety of students and staff. There may be limitations placed on the number of events, the number of people allowed to attend an event, limited access to the performing areas, or other safety measures as warranted.
Breakfast and Lunch

Union cafeterias will remain open and provide healthy meals to Union students. Students will be required to wear a face covering on their way to and from the cafeteria. Food offerings may be limited and self-serve options will be eliminated, including salad bars, drink stations (except for water), condiments, etc. Disposable paper cups will be provided at water fountains for student use.

Every effort will be made to allow enough space for social distancing while students eat their meal, including the following options.

- Placement of physical barriers, i.e. partitions, between students during the time they are eating in grades 6 through 9.
- Spreading tables and chairs out into other common areas such as gyms, lobbies, etc.
- Allowing students to eat in areas outside of the cafeteria such as a gym, outside courtyard, in a classroom, in the media center, etc.
- Spacing students in the cafeteria

Union High School will allow all students, grades 10-12, to have open campus options during lunch. Students will be asked to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer prior to returning to class.

Elementary sites may implement additional policies based on the availability of space and student supervision.

Parents and Visitors

No visitors, including parents, will be allowed past the receptionist vestibule while the threat of community spread exists, with some limited exceptions. Exceptions must be granted by the principal or director and may include IEP meetings, limited teacher conferences, etc. The meetings will be scheduled and held in an area near the front entry to limit access to the rest of the building. Parents / guardians will be given the option of holding meetings virtually. It is also possible certain staff members will choose to attend meetings virtually. There will be times when volunteers may be allowed to enter the building, but their access will be limited to areas used by adults only. All visitors, including parents, will be required to wear a face covering while in the building. First-day procedures at all school sites will be adjusted. Parents will not be allowed to walk their child to a classroom or other areas within the school.

Extended Day Program (EDP) and After-School Programming

The district will continue to offer the EDP program to the families of Union students. The district is also working with community partners to offer after-school opportunities for our students. Please know there is an increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 due to an increase in the number of people the students will interact with in the EDP program and during after-school programming. Safety protocols, such as face-coverings, will be required in EDP and after-school programming.
Libraries, Computers and Other Shared Materials
Each site will be able to establish protocols to limit the sharing of materials and to restrict shared use if effective disinfecting procedures are not feasible. All shared equipment, materials, etc. will either be disinfected after every use or will be placed in quarantine for 72 hours prior to the next use. This does not apply to playground equipment, water fountain handles, toilets, sinks, etc., which cannot be disinfected after every use.

District Protocol – Cleaning, Disinfection and Ventilation
The following actions will be taken by Union to reduce the chance of COVID spread:

- Each classroom will be provided an adequate supply of hand sanitizer, spray disinfectant, and towels. When available, disinfectant wipes will also be provided.
- Adequate provision of hand washing stations, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes in common areas
- A much higher percentage of outside air is being introduced into the ventilation system and circulating fans are running longer where possible
- Restriction of non-essential visitors
- Requirement of face coverings when in the presence of others
- Placement of clear plastic barriers at key locations
- Purchase and placement of additional ionizing machines for more thorough disinfecting and other cleaning materials
- Increase the outside air circulating in buildings through HVAC damper controls, open windows and/or doors
- Limitations placed on the use of school facilities when school is in session, including before and after school programs and practice
- Increased communication to students and staff promoting behaviors that reduce spread, such as social distancing, frequent hand washing, and the use of face coverings
- Areas may be shut down for additional cleaning if conditions warrant it