



**MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Milwaukee Public Schools

Internal District Reopening Plan

May 2020

Situation Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest threat to public health in the past century, but Wisconsinites are taking the steps needed through Safer at Home and physical distancing to make a difference during this pandemic. Wisconsin has seen a decrease in the exponential growth in the number of cases since Safer at Home was put into place on March 25. As part of Wisconsin's extended Safer at Home order, **all public and private K-12 schools remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.**

At the time, Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) followed the directive and moved educational services to an online format and limited the number of staff for in-person attendance at Central Services.

On May 13, 2020, the Wisconsin Supreme Court invalidated the Safer at Home order issued by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, with the exception of the provisions that closed schools for direct student instruction for the remainder of this school year. The Stay at Home order issued by the City of Milwaukee on March 25, 2020 remains in effect to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

With plans to reopen doors, it is critical that MPS has a vigorous plan for staff who will return to their normal work locations. This communications plan focuses on a successful return.

Communication is being developed in real time. The district reopening plan is an ever-evolving document; it will be updated if district needs change.

Current COVID-19 statistics in Milwaukee and Wisconsin can be found here:

- [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
- [Milwaukee Health Department](#)

Structure

Following are the facts and protocols that provide a structure for decision making in MPS as a result of a health crisis.

- The health and safety of MPS students and staff are our primary concern.
- Continuity of MPS operations during a crisis such as pandemic illness is of critical value to the City of Milwaukee. Reasons include educational services for nearly 75,000 students, more than 158 strategically located and accessible facilities, full-time employment for approximately 10,000 workers, and the daily (or twice daily) provision of food to the economically disadvantaged children who make up 82.6% of the student population.
- The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) coordinates pandemic planning for the city as a whole through its City of Milwaukee Health Department Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan. The State of Wisconsin published its plan, Wisconsin Pandemic Influenza Operations Plan, in 2007. MPS Response Plan activities are

consistent with the city and state plans and our actual responses in an emergency will often be guided by these higher authorities.

- The MHD has the authority to declare a public health emergency.
- The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has determined that when a local health official orders the closing of schools due to a health emergency, the days of school closure count toward the required 180 days of instruction.
- The MPS Superintendent can direct the closure of a school or schools in the district due to high counts of student or staff illness that make the operation of classes difficult, ill-advised, or inefficient.
- Decisions regarding operation or closure of individual schools or facilities are made after a careful review of that facility's unique staffing levels, the quality of the programming that would remain, and most important, safety of the students and staff.
- As per the Emergency School Closing Procedures 2019–2020, when MPS schools are closed, all afternoon and evening recreation, Community Learning Centers (CLCs), and interscholastic athletics/academics are cancelled.
- The district will make all efforts to continue instruction of students to assist in the meeting of graduation requirements, statewide assessment schedules, and other instructional mileposts.
- Methods of delivery for communication with staff shall vary so as to reach the greatest number of staff possible.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the MHD provide guidance/recommendations on levels of cleaning and/or sanitation required at all levels of pandemic response.

Internal Team

- Marla Bronaugh, Chief—Office of Communications and School Performance
- Chad Meyer, Director—Technology
- Shahree Douglas, MSIMC, Director—Communications & Outreach
- Leah Alsteen, Manager—Office of Communications and School Performance
- Justyce Blankenship, Internal Communications Coordinator—Office of Communications and School Performance

Level of Engagement

Level 4 – Recovery

The Superintendent, working with the internal team and with the guidance of government agencies as appropriate, establishes the schedule for a return to regular activities in schools or other MPS facilities. The schedule accommodates time for preparation of buildings, the return of employees, the proper notification of families, and the provision of grief counseling if necessary.

Determining Essential On-site Employees

Per the district email to staff on May 17, 2020, in order to ensure proper social distancing, administration may consider staggering of staff at central services.

- Decide who needs to be on-site for business to function normally instead of remote.
- Devise a plan beyond onsite essential functions for gradual headcount returns where possible.
- Develop a communication plan to explain why these positions are returning and the timeline for others returning.
- Create an implementation team, a contact person for COVID-19 questions and processes and which teams or people are responsible for communicating new and ongoing safety and security measures.
- Decide if and how you will evaluate and monitor employee health as it relates to COVID-19 such as temperature checking before entering the building.

Recovery Leading Activities

1. Staff are self-monitoring for COVID-19 like symptoms and are allowed to return to work sites.
2. Supervisor of Student Health Services, Linda Williams, RN BSN, continues to monitor guidance of CDC, MHD, and other authorities regarding disease trending.
3. Sites are prepared (cleaning, disinfection) per [guidance of the CDC](#).
 - a. Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Schools can be found [here](#).
4. Communication with staff now includes messaging for requirements for the return to school sites.
5. Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and/or grief counselors assist as needed.
6. Internal Response Team conducts formal debriefing to identify areas for improvement in district pandemic response.

Recommendations at Work Sites (per WI DHS)

- Place informational posters in prominent areas. CDC has developed a number of [communication materials](#) available in various languages, for employers to use.
- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees and customers.
- Instruct employees to [clean their hands often](#) with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Advise employees to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand rubs in the workplace to encourage hand hygiene. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained.
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) can be wiped down by employees before each use.
- Whenever possible, maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. See the [CDC COVID-19 Disinfection Guidance](#).
- Ensure that employees who have symptoms of respiratory illness stay home and do not come to work until they are free of fever (>100.4°F) AND/OR respiratory symptoms (for example, cough, shortness of breath) for at least three days (72 hours) without the use of fever-reducing medicine AND seven days have passed since symptoms first appeared. Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.

Social Distancing

- The Central Services building will be closed to the public and contractor visits will be monitored closely.
- Perform a workflow audit that removes instances of employees being within 6 feet of each other.
- Make use of telework and/or remote work options.
- Consider stagger schedules to limit the number of people congregating in an area at the same time, for example:
 - Staggered shifts and work hours.
 - Staggered use of shared spaces, including bathrooms, break rooms and lunchrooms.
 - Staggered facility entry and exit procedures.
- Utilize human traffic management by:
 - Limit nonessential movement within and among facilities (for example, restrict workers' movements to only the parts of the facility where they perform their duties, limit the number of employees who travel freely throughout or between facilities).
- Post signage in restrooms, conference rooms, and other shared spaces.
- Limit deliveries to only those that support emergency building maintenance.
- Tape off 6-foot by 6-foot boxes on the floor of areas where people line up, such as at the water/ice machine, door to restrooms, etc.
- Limit in-person meetings (internal or external) and employee convenings (formal or informal) of any size.
- Handle employee communication virtually, wherever possible.
- Discourage hand shaking or other forms of physical contact.

Sanitation and Hygiene

- Make hand sanitizer and disposable disinfectant wipes available in employee areas.
- Tape around surfaces that receive frequent human contact, and disinfect these surfaces multiple times daily.
- Make sure that bathrooms are fully stocked with soap and hand towels, and that sinks are in working order.
- Make single-use gloves available to employees.
- When appropriate, prop open doors.
- Do not share food.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Increase the sanitization of high touch areas.
- Wipe down shared equipment throughout the day.

Utilize Physical Barriers to Protect Staff from Infection

- Limit use of close quarter common work areas such as cubicles, supply areas and collaborative work spaces.

Employee Self-monitoring and Reporting

Employees should self-monitor for symptoms and report to their supervisor immediately if they develop signs/symptoms of being sick. Employees will be sent home immediately. The district will follow the [CDC guidelines](#) and the direction of the MHD for responding to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19. These guidelines include, but are not limited to:

- Follow the [CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations](#).
- Employees should not return to work until they have met the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#) and have consulted with a healthcare provider and state or local health department.
- The MHD will conduct contact tracing and follow up with any individuals who may have come in contact with a confirmed case.

Employee Personal Protective Equipment

- Use per the guidance of the CDC.
- Hand sanitizer will be available.
- Gloves will be available (encouraged to use for cleaning only).
- Masks will be available.

Critical Key Messages

General Messaging

- MPS is strong and determined to get through this crisis.
- The health and safety of MPS students and staff is our primary focus.
- We are spending time effectively and are working hard on improvement plans for a successful return for our staff and students.
- We continue to use best practices while planning for future operations at MPS.
- As staff returns to work, MPS will continue to monitor the public health situation.
- MPS will ensure, to the best of our ability, the health and safety of our staff.
- MPS will practice recommendations from the CDC and MHD such as social distancing and sanitizing procedures in the workplace.
- All MPS buildings will remain CLOSED to the public. Visitors are prohibited at this time.

Return to Normal Operations

- All work sites have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected per the [guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and Milwaukee County Health Department.
- The Department of Facilities and Maintenance Services have increased disinfecting protocol with an emphasis on sanitizing commonly touched surfaces throughout each building.
 - Such areas include counters, tables, desks, chairs, doorknobs, panic bars, door surfaces, light switches, elevator buttons, railings, computer keyboards and lavatory fixtures, as well as all offices, cubicles, and meeting rooms.
- Building engineers maintain an inventory check of all routine cleaning and operational supplies and place orders immediately for any supplies that are running low.
- Arrangements can be made through the building engineer at each site to obtain spray bottles of disinfectant, gloves, and paper towels for personnel to use at their discretion.

- Face masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer will be available for staff and usage based upon CDC guidelines will be encouraged.
- Special procedures have been put in place to follow social distancing guidelines, such as limiting people in restrooms and meetings spaces.

References

The guidance in this plan was prepared using the following websites/documents:

[The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus Disease 2019 Information](#)

[The Wisconsin Safety Council's Returning to Work](#)

[The City of Milwaukee Health Department Coronavirus Information](#)

[Wisconsin Department of Health Services' COVID-19 Information](#)

Communication Strategies

Strategy 1: Increase regular and honest communication with all staff

Tactic 1 - share a series of informational communications with staff returning to work locations. Full copy for these documents are listed under the communications documents section.

- Note to staff via Thursday Updates about Central Services communications preferences, ensuring all staff are aware and opt in to receive important CS communication.
- Email to staff regarding the return to work with guidelines and expectations on May 26. An auto dial, text, and email reminder will be sent.
- An email from Dr. Posley welcoming staff back on May 26.
- An email from Dr. Posley celebrating the first week back.

Tactic 2 - provide weekly updates to all staff with ongoing assurance that the organization is safeguarding employee health and safety.

- Internal communications team to draft messaging for approval and share with marketing team.
- Short and to the point, any updates we can share with staff to ensure they have as much information (ex. cleaning procedures, updates on meals and learning packets, FAQ updates and reminders to submit questions if they have them, internal campaigns that are happening, any assurance for returning to work on May 26).
- Updates to be shared via Constant Contact so ALL staff receives this information, also included into Thursday Updates.
 - Marketing team to monitor open rates and bouncebacks, and add any new emails that should be on listservs.
- Share [printed/PDF resources](#) with all staff via email and throughout the building.

What is expected with this communication tactic:

- Enhanced MPS culture
 - Increase in employee trust

- Increase credibility of MPS
- Increase transparency - employee understanding of common goals

Methods of Communication

The district will communicate return to work with staff by utilizing the following methods:

- Thursday Updates
- Email/Constant Contact
- Auto dialer
- Text message
- District website

Office Notification Procedure

When it is time for central services to safely reopen, the Office of Communications will initiate the communication chain.

- A. The internal team will convene and draft messaging.
- B. The communications and marketing team will update the district website with a homepage message.
- C. The technology support team will send out text message to all staff, auto dialer message to all staff, and switchboard message will be recorded for anyone who calls the switchboard.

Language for Notifications/Messages/Autodialers/Etc.

District staff to return to work

Autodialer/Switchboard Script:

- This is an important message from Milwaukee Public Schools. A letter has been sent to your work email address that provides important details about returning to work. Please read this communication. If you have any additional questions please contact your immediate supervisor.

Text/SMS:

- MPS: A communication update from MPS has been sent to your work email. Please check and read this important message.

Alert Banner :

- MPS district offices are open to central staff employees ONLY as of May 26, 2020. Please direct any questions to your immediate supervisor.

Thursday Updates:

- Thursday Updates will include any email and/or district news communications to staff from the prior week in order to ensure that the message is received by all staff.

Communication Documents

Below are **draft** communications documents that will be sent to all staff. At this time, they are not all final and continue to be updated as more information is provided.

Communication: Central Services communication preferences

Internal District Reopening Plan/ Milwaukee Public Schools Office of Communications and School Performance/
May 2020

Channel: Thursday Updates

Copy:

ACTION ALL STAFF: Check Your Communication Preferences to Receive Important

District News

Please review and update (if applicable) your contact preferences in [Self Service](#). Updating your preferences will assure that you will receive important communications from the district via auto dialer call or text message. Once you log in to Self Service, the path is as follows:

Main Menu > MPS Employee Self Service > Personal Information > Phone Numbers

Enter your phone numbers.

Phone Numbers					
Phone Type	*Telephone	Extension	Preferred	Opt Out of MPS Text Messages	Delete
Cell Phone	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Main	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Staff can also sign up for a variety of communications via the district's email messaging system. Subjects include COVID-19 communication, news releases, and The Notebook newsletter. Sign up [here](#).

Communication: Letter to staff, returning to work

Channel: Email, Constant Contact

Status: SENT ON MAY 17 to all staff

Dear MPS Staff,

We would like to thank you for your continued support to Milwaukee Public Schools during this time of crisis due to COVID-19. This has been unfamiliar territory that we have all been working through, and we can't say thank you enough for the patience, support, and determination to quickly find a new normal during this time to keep everyone safe.

On Wednesday, the Wisconsin Supreme Court invalidated the Safer at Home order issued by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, with the exception of the provisions that closed schools for direct student instruction for the remainder of this school year. The Stay at Home order issued by the City of Milwaukee on March 25, 2020 remains in effect to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Under all orders that have been issued, Milwaukee Public Schools has been able to identify staff necessary to carry out essential district operations. We treat the health and safety of our

staff with the utmost importance, and we wanted to ensure that a physical return to work would occur only when necessary to continue district operations and only when safe to do so.

Our administrative team has been working diligently to ensure that we welcome staff back safely to all work locations. All district sites have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected per the guidance of the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), the Milwaukee County, and the City of Milwaukee Health Department. Please know that as we review work schedules and locations, we remain in communication with state and local officials and will continue to monitor the public health situation.

Using the guidance mentioned above, administration has put plans in place for all employees to return to work locations safely. Below you will find return to work information for employee groups, procedures, and recommendations.

Employee groups reporting

On Tuesday, May 26, 2020, the employee groups listed below will return to their regular work location:

- All districtwide 12-month staff
- All districtwide 11-month staff
- All assistant principals
- All specialized services supervisors
- All safety supervisors
- All deans of students
- All building service helpers
- All safety assistants assigned to central services locations
- Limited Term Employees and TalentBridge staff can return to work only with their supervisor's permission.
 - Supervisors will reach out to individual Limited Term Employees and TalentBridge staff to advise them if they are to return to work.

Additionally, on Tuesday, May 26, 2020, food service staff will be required to report to their work site or a food distribution site on a rotating basis as directed. Specific information regarding staff rotation will be provided by your supervisor under the direction of the Director of Nutrition Services.

In order to ensure proper social distancing, all staff at central services location will have a staggered start. Central services staff will receive more information about their report days from their supervisor.

Work locations

- All MPS buildings remain CLOSED to the public. All visitors are prohibited at this time. Only staff assigned to a building may enter the building; staff may not enter other MPS buildings unless authorized to work there.
- At this time, the cafeteria will remain closed. Please plan food and beverage needs accordingly.
- Signage has been placed throughout building to remind staff to follow social distancing guidelines, such as limiting people in restrooms and meeting spaces.
- Whenever possible, maintain a distance of at least six feet from others. Consider calling a team member instead of visiting their workspace. Group meetings should be limited to no more than 10 people while maintaining 6-foot distancing.

Cleaning protocols

The Department of Facilities and Maintenance Services have increased disinfecting protocol with an emphasis on sanitizing commonly touched surfaces throughout each building, such as counters, tables, desks, chairs, doorknobs, panic bars, door surfaces, light switches, elevator buttons, railings, computer keyboards and lavatory fixtures, as well as all offices, cubicles, and meeting rooms.

Building engineers continue to maintain an inventory check of all routine cleaning and operational supplies and place orders immediately for any supplies that are running low. Arrangements have been made for each site to obtain spray bottles of disinfectant, gloves, face masks, and paper towels for personnel to use at their discretion.

How to protect yourself and others

- Wash your hands often, avoid close contact, and cover coughs and sneezes.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
- Consider covering your mouth and nose with a face cover when around others. Face covers can easily be made at home; the CDC has instructions here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- Consider checking your temperature every morning before coming to work. If you have signs of a fever, stay home and keep your supervisor informed.
- Be mindful of your surroundings and the number of people in areas, maintain physical distancing by limiting gatherings of 10 or more in all work place locations including restrooms.
- If you feel sick or have symptoms of COVID-19, please stay home and keep your supervisor informed.

If you feel sick

If you feel sick or have symptoms of COVID-19, please stay home. Symptoms include cough, shortness of breath, or at least two of these symptoms: fever, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell.

If you need to stay home, normal procedures for use of sick or vacation leave will be followed. You may be eligible for Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) if you need to stay home. You may find more information about EPSL here:

<https://mps.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/en/Employment/Current-Staff/FMLA-and-Employee-Leaves/FMLA-and-Other-Employee-Leaves-of-Absence.htm>

Employee resources

As a reminder during this difficult time, there are available resources to support any and all staff. Resources are bulleted below.

- The Aurora EAP hotline number is 800-236-3231.
- [EAP Services During COVID](#)
- [Tips for Coping](#)
- [Rogers Connect Care](#) (online mental health treatment)
- [Stockbox](#) (for low-income adults age 60 or older in your home)

For additional information and resources please visit

- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm>
- <https://county.milwaukee.gov/EN/COVID-19>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- <https://www.coronavirus.gov/>
- <https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus>

If you have additional questions, please contact your immediate supervisor.

We are excited to see you all from a distance soon!

Communication: Letter to staff, returning to work reminder

Channel: Email, Constant Contact

Send Date: TBD

Header: REMINDER

Subject Line: Return to work sites reminder

Copy: TBD

Communication: Welcome back message, email from Dr. Posley

Internal District Reopening Plan/ Milwaukee Public Schools Office of Communications and School Performance/
May 2020

Channel: Email, Constant Contact

Send Date: **TBD**

Copy:

Greetings MPS Staff!

I'd like to take a moment to welcome most of you back after time away due to the ever changing pandemic. I am so incredibly grateful for the hard work, determination, and flexibility you all have shown during this unsure time. I know there were long and difficult days, but the commitment to our district and community by our staff is incredible!

I know we will continue to grow through these changes and come out stronger than before. As we transition into our new normal, please continue to check in on and support one another.

Stay strong, healthy and MPS Proud!

Sincerely,

Dr. Keith P. Posley
Superintendent of Schools

(ADD PHOTOS FROM STAFF DURING TIME AWAY SUPPORTING COMMUNITY)

Communication: Celebrating staff's return to work, email from Dr. Posley with employee survey

Channel: Email, Constant Contact

Send Date: **TBD**

Copy:

TBD based on what we see during the first week back, highlight areas that staff need reminders about, add any changes we see from state and local officials, add any updates we can share with all staff regarding MPS progress.

A draft of the employee survey has been developed and in review. It should be included in this messaging. This gives employees the opportunity to express if we sent enough communication/direction and garners key feedback for the district about what is, and what is not working.

Timeline

Deliverable	Owner	Tentative Timing	Status
Draft reminder email for staff return for CS staff	Office of Communications and School Performance	Week of May 18	
Reminder email to be sent to all staff about returning to work	Office of Communications and School Performance	Week of May 18	
Welcome back email to be sent to all staff	Office of Communications and School Performance	May 26	
Review internal employee survey and request any changes; request survey format from research team	Office of Communications and School Performance	May 26- 28	
Draft celebratory email from Dr. Posley (week back)	Office of Communications and School Performance	June 1	
Celebratory email to be sent to all staff with survey	Office of Communications and School Performance	June 6	
Draft weekly updates to all staff with ongoing assurance that the organization is safeguarding employee health and safety	Office of Communications and School Performance	Ongoing	
Internal Response Team conducts formal debriefing to identify areas for improvement in district pandemic response.	Office of Communications and School Performance	Post pandemic	Not scheduled

Evaluation

Carefully document communications plan, take note of what communications channels, messaging and approach worked / didn't work based on employee feedback, and then update plan to use as a template in the future.