



Niles Community Schools Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan

Address of School District/PSA: 1 Tyler St. Niles, MI 49120

District/PSA Code Number: 11300

District/PSA Website Address: www.nilesschools.org

District/PSA Contact and Title: Dr. Daniel Applegate

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Name of Intermediate School District/PSA: Berrien RESA

Date of Adoption by Board of Education/Directors: 9/21/20

Date of Review by Board of Education/Directors: 3/1/21

Assurances

1. The District/PSA will make their ISD/Authorizing Body approved Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan accessible through the transparency reporting link located on the District's/PSA's website no later than October 1, 2020.
2. The District/PSA will create and make available on its transparency reporting link located on the District/PSA's website, a report concerning the progress made in meeting the educational goals contained in its Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan not later than February 1, 2021, for goals its expected would be achieved by the middle of the school year and not later than the last day of school of the 2020-2021 school year for goals the District/PSA expected would be achieved by the end of the school year.
3. Benchmark Assessments: The District/PSA will
 - select a benchmark assessment or benchmark assessments that is/are aligned to state standards.
 - administer the approved benchmark assessment, or local benchmark assessment, or any combination thereof, to all pupils in grades K to 8 to measure proficiency in reading and mathematics within the first nine weeks of the 2020-2021 school year and again not later than the last day of the of the 2020-2021 school year.
4. If delivering pupil instruction virtually, the District/PSA will
 - provide pupils with equitable access to technology and the internet necessary to participate in instruction, and
 - expose each pupil to the academic standards that apply for each pupil's grade level or courses in the same scope and sequence as the District/PSA had planned for that exposure to occur for in-person instruction.
5. The District/PSA, in consultation with a local health department will develop guidelines concerning appropriate methods for delivering pupil instruction for the 2020-2021 school year that are based on local data that are based on key metrics. *Note: A determination concerning the method for delivering pupil instruction shall remain at the District/PSA Board's discretion.* Key metrics that the District/PSA will consider shall include at least all of the following:
 - COVID-19 Cases or Positive COVID-19 tests
 - Hospitalizations due to COVID-19
 - Number of deaths resulting from COVID-19 over a 14-day period
 - COVID-19 cases for each day for each 1 million individuals
 - The percentage of positive COVID-19 tests over a 4-week period

- Health capacity strength
 - Testing, tracing, and containment infrastructure with regard to COVID-19
6. If the District/PSA determines that it is safe to provide in-person instruction to pupils, the District/PSA will prioritize providing in-person instruction to pupils in grades K to 5 who are enrolled in the District/PSA.
7. The District/PSA assures that
- instruction will be delivered as described in this plan and approved by the District/PSA Board,
 - the description of instructional delivery in this plan matches the delivery of instruction to be delivered during the 2020-2021 school year,
 - the District/PSA will re-confirm how instruction will be delivered during the 2020-2021 school year thirty days after the approval of the plan, and every 30 days thereafter at a meeting of the Board, and
 - public comment will be solicited from the parents or legal guardians of the pupils enrolled in the District/PSA during a public meeting described in PA-149.
8. The District/PSA will ensure that students with disabilities will be provided with equitable access to instruction and accommodation in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations.
9. The District/PSA will ensure that two (2), 2-way interactions occur between a pupil enrolled in the District/PSA and the pupil's teacher, or at least one (1) of the pupil's teachers during each week of the school year for at least 75% of the pupils enrolled in the District/PSA. The District/PSA will publicly announce its weekly interaction rates at each District/PSA Board meeting where it re-confirms how instruction is being delivered. The District/PSA will make those rates available through the transparency reporting link located on the District/PSA website each month for the 2020-2021 school year.
10. District Note: The most current legislation requirements will be followed and will supersede language found in this submitted plan.



District Superintendent

Date: 9/25/20

Learning Plan Narrative

Opening Statement

- Please provide a statement indicating why an Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan is necessary to increase pupil engagement and achievement for the 2020-2021 school year.

The COVID-19 global pandemic is impacting our school community in a number of ways: we are experiencing a traumatic event, many students may have significant gaps in their learning, and equity issues are more pronounced.

As we return to school in the fall, our first priority will be to ensure the well-being of all members of our school community. Because of the wide range of experiences students had during the remote learning portion of the 19-20 school year, we anticipate that students will come to school in the fall of 2020 with a wider than usual range of competencies. We expect that many students will be behind and will need opportunities to catch up. Teachers will need opportunities to collaborate with each other as they examine student work and determine what comes next in the learning for each student.

As COVID-19 pandemic constitutes a statewide emergency and disaster, an extended COVID-19 Learning Plan is necessary to bring continuity and consistency to our school community as we anticipate future disruptions to student learning and well-being.

Niles Community Schools will begin the school year both in-person and virtually. If in-person instruction must cease due to the pandemic, our remote learning plans will be designed to promote student engagement and achievement for all. This plan will focus on teaching and learning, with an emphasis on continuity, equity, and the well-being of students and staff.

Educational Goals

- **Please outline and describe** the educational goals expected to be achieved for the 2020-2021 school year. The District/PSA must establish all of its goals no later than September 15, 2020. Authorizing bodies expect PSA educational goals will be aligned to the educational goal within your charter contract.
- **Specify** which goals are expected to be achieved by the middle of the school year and which goals are expected to be achieved by the end of the school year.
- **Ensure** that all of the following apply to the educational goals described in this section: (a) The goals include increased pupil achievement or, if growth can be validly and reliably measured using a benchmark assessment or benchmark assessments, growth on a benchmark assessment in the aggregate and for all subgroups of pupils; (b) The District/PSA benchmark assessment(s) are aligned to state standards and will be administered to all pupils K-8 at least once within the first 9 weeks of the 2020-2021 school year and not later than the last day of the 2020-2021 school year to determine whether pupils are making meaningful progress toward mastery of these standards; and (c) the District's/PSA's educational goals are measurable through a benchmark assessment or benchmark assessments.
- To the extent practicable, the District/PSA will administer the same benchmark assessment or benchmark assessments that it administered to pupils in previous years.

Quality Evidence-Based Assessment Practices

Niles Community Schools believes that benchmark assessment evidence can be used to monitor and evaluate patterns and trends in school/district academic performance and to identify effective instructional programs. We believe it can provide guidance for standardizing or adjusting curriculum and instruction across grade levels, schools, and districts.

However, we will not use benchmark assessment data to make high-stakes instructional decisions about individual student learning. Rather, NCS will continue the use of (and professional learning around the use of) the formative assessment process as a powerful practice embedded in the teaching and learning process to continuously observe where our students are in order to modify instruction.

We believe the use of the formative assessment process, which is supported by an extensive body of research, provides in-time data for both our teachers and students to accelerate their learning and progress and gives us a more complete picture of what our students know and are able to do.

Educational Goals

The NWEA assessments in reading and mathematics will be administered to all students twice: once in the first nine weeks of the school year, and again prior to the last day of school. Formative assessments will provide information to inform our progress toward our goals over the course of the year. Progress reports will be available on our website in February and June.

As a means of continuous improvement in teaching and learning, all teachers will receive **additional** professional development in, and commit to the use of, the formative assessment process.

Additionally, we will continue to engage stakeholders in the district's balanced assessment system, including publicly sharing aggregate and student subgroup performance reports on NWEA results.

Goal 1 - All students (K-8) will improve performance in Reading/ELA from Fall to Spring as measured by NWEA.

- All teachers will use the formative assessment process to support adjustment to teaching and learning, to support meaningful student progress towards mastery of Reading/ELA academic standards.
- Results from Reading/ELA benchmark assessments, local Reading/ELA summative assessments, and formative assessment will be continuously discussed and analyzed by staff.

Goal 2 - All students (K-8) will improve performance in Mathematics from Fall to Spring as measured by NWEA.

- All teachers will use the formative assessment process to support adjustment to teaching and learning, to support meaningful student progress towards mastery of Math academic standards.
- Results from Math benchmark assessments, local Math summative assessments, and formative assessment will be continuously discussed and analyzed by staff.

Instructional Delivery & Exposure to Core Content

- **Please describe** how and where instruction will be delivered during the 2020-2021 school year. (e.g. instruction may be delivered at school or a different location, in-person, online, digitally, by other remote means, in a synchronous or asynchronous format, or any combination thereof).

Note: The Niles Community Schools District full instructional plan can be found in the [Niles COVID19 Preparedness and Response Plan 2020-21](#)

Mode of Instruction

To start the school year, all students at NCS will have the choice to attend in-person or virtually.

K-12 students that attend in-person will typically follow a full day schedule, similar to the pre-pandemic school schedule. Due to changing conditions and in collaboration with local health officials, a hybrid (alternate day) or partial day schedule may be employed for short periods of time. For K-8 students that attend school every day or through a hybrid model for face-to-face instruction, health and safety will be addressed through a cohort model that keeps students together for the entire school day. Proper personal protection equipment, sanitizing and handwashing protocols will be followed by all staff and students.

If in-person instruction must cease, NCS will implement the [Phase 3](#) plan of instructional delivery as outlined in our COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan. In short, students will learn remotely. Students will be provided with the necessary equipment and materials to progress in the general education curriculum and to make progress on IEP goals.

K-12 students choosing to attend virtually will be assigned to a third party platform. K-5 students will be provided core instruction via Lincoln Learning, while 6-12 students will be assigned core content via Edgenuity, E2020. Students will be instructed via the third party vendor and will receive support and guidance from the assigned NCS Teacher of Record (TOR). The NCS TOR will ensure sufficient academic progress for all virtual learners. Virtual learners are required to make at least a semester commitment to the program. Students in this program will be provided a device and internet access upon request.

Due to the fluid nature of COVID-19 or if an outbreak were to occur, a combination of synchronous or asynchronous format may be employed and the delivery of instruction may be modified to meet the needs of students.

- **Please describe** how instruction for core academic areas will expose each pupil to the academic standards that apply for each pupil's grade level or course in the same scope and sequence as the District/PSA had planned for that exposure to occur for in-person instruction.

Note: The Niles Community School full instructional plan can be found in the [Niles COVID19 Preparedness and Response Plan 2020-21](#)

Curriculum and Instruction: Academic Standards

The NCS curriculum for core academic areas is aligned to state standards and housed in the district google drive. As teachers navigate the wider than usual range of competencies expected this fall, teachers will create a plan to accelerate learning. According to the *April 2020, Learning Acceleration Guide: Planning for Acceleration in the 2020-2021 School Year*, there are four steps involved in closing learning gaps created by the mandatory school closure of 2020. These steps include; prioritizing the most critical standards for each subject area and grade level, diagnosing unfinished learning, adapting the scope and sequence, and monitoring student progress.

From June 2020 to August 2020, teachers reviewed power standards and diagnosed unfinished learning which informed strategic pauses within each grade level/subject area scope and sequence. Overall, the scope and sequence adopted in 19-20 will be the same scope and sequence that teachers will strive to adhere to during the 20-21 school year. Teachers have identified those areas where students may be lacking prior knowledge and have been provided resources and strategies to scaffold additional support at the exact time of need. Therefore, teachers will not spend weeks reviewing prior grade level content. As research suggests this will not allow all students access to current grade level content. Additionally, teachers will provide students with strategic tier 2 interventions, in both math and reading to further bolster student comprehension of grade level power standards.

Using the formative assessment practices that teachers have engaged in for several years in the districts, they will utilize data from a variety of sources to monitor student progress. Professional development time will be provided for professional learning communities to develop and implement strategies that ensure mastery of the core curriculum. Teachers will continue to utilize the Marzano instructional framework as a resource for evidence based practices.

For virtual students, instruction for core academic areas will expose each pupil to the academic standards that apply for each pupil's grade level or course in the same scope and sequence as the District had planned throughout the semester without disruption even if in-person instruction moves to remote instruction. Virtual students will not move to remote learning and therefore, there will be no disruption to the exposure of the academic standards.

Should the need for remote learning arise, students will continue the plan to accelerate learning, in a manner similar to that of in-person instruction.

- **Please describe** how pupil progress toward mastery of the standards described within this section will be graded or otherwise reported to the pupil and the pupil's parent or legal guardian.

Assessment and Grading

Niles Community Schools bases its assessment system on the Michigan Standards. We regularly assess students at the district and classroom level to determine if they are making progress toward meeting those standards. We place a heavy emphasis on formative assessment. This is critical in the instructional process so that students receive timely feedback that helps them know what they need to do to improve. It also gives the teacher important information to know how to adjust the teaching and learning process to meet each student's needs.

We also have a system for delivering summative assessments at the district and classroom levels. These are given at the end of a period of learning as an evaluation of what has been learned and are part of our district grading process. For example, our teachers can deliver summative assessments at the end of each unit of study in our curriculum. These assessments are based on a coherent set of power or essential standards in the subject area that focus on a related group of skills and disciplinary knowledge.

We make available to our parents and legal guardians a web-based system that allows them to see their children's grades at any time. Our teachers keep up-to-date information on student grades in this system. We also send progress reports to our parents and guardians during each marking period. This is in addition to the expectation we have for all teachers that they keep parents and guardians abreast of any concerns regarding a student's grade through emails and phone calls. Finally, we send out to parents report cards at the end of each marking period.

For our virtual learners, all assignments are graded by the third party vendor and then shared with parents/students with the grade. They also have a dashboard that shows their current score overall as well as on individual assignments/assessments. Virtual students will be assessed using the same local benchmark assessments as in-person students and the results will be shared with parents and legal guardians.

Should the need for remote learning arise, the assessment and grading practices will resemble that of in person instruction.

Equitable Access

- If delivering pupil instruction virtually, please **describe** how the District/PSA will provide pupils with equitable access to technology and the internet necessary to participate in instruction.

Technology

The Niles Community School district ensures all students will be provided equitable access to technology and the internet as described in our Continuity of Learning Plan that was previously submitted to the state. The Niles Community Schools system for maintaining student access to technology devices and the internet is described in the Continuity of Learning Plan, and again in the [MI Safe Schools Roadmap--Sample District Preparedness Plan](#).

- **Please describe** how the District/PSA will ensure that students with disabilities will be provided with equitable access to instruction and accommodation in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations.

Students with identified special needs

When school starts, students' IEPs and 504 plans will be reviewed in coordination with general and special education teachers and/or providers to address any data-driven accommodations and/or services that are needed due to known changes in students' needs.

For students from birth to five, those with identified special needs, and those attending CTE programming, intervention and support services will be integrated into the student's program immediately upon the start of school.

The district has established structures for general and special education teachers and/or providers to collaborate and communicate regarding student performance and student needs on IEP goals and objectives with special consideration regarding assistive technology and accessibility.

Resources to consider: Alt+Shift consultation or web resources at - <https://www.altshift.education/resources/remote-learning-resources>

The district ensures a continuation of services for students receiving speech and language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or social work services within their IEP. The district also ensures a method for the continuation of evaluation for students suspected of having a disability as well as those requiring re-evaluation.

- **Optional Considerations for District/PSA Extended COVID-19 Learning Plans:**

- 1. In addition to the students with disabilities noted above, please describe how the District/PSA will ensure that the needs of other vulnerable student populations, such as but not limited to, early English Learners and Fledgling/struggling students, are met.
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- 2. Please describe how the District/PSA will ensure that students will, during pandemic learning, have continued access to programs such as, but not limited to, Early Childhood, CTE, Early-Middle College, Dual Enrollment and Advanced Placement as applicable within the District/PSA.

Vulnerable student populations will continue to have access to the core academic content through tier two interventions and support, just as they did before the pandemic.

Programs such as, but not limited to, Early Childhood, CTE, Early-Middle College, Dual Enrollment and Advanced Placement, will continue to be offered even if the instructional delivery changes. Modifications and accommodations to course content will be made based on federal, state, or Michigan Department of Education guidance.