

COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan

(Executive Order 2020-142 & MDHHS Order MCL 333.2253)

Name of District: Niles Community Schools

Address of District: One Tyler Street, Niles MI 49120

District Code Number: 11300

Web Address of the District: www.nilesschools.org

Name of Intermediate School District: Berrien RESA

Board of Education Review: 3/1/21

Preparedness Plan Introduction

Governor Whitmer's Executive Order 2020-142 "provides a structure to support all schools in Michigan as they plan for a return of pre-K-12 education in the fall. Under the order, school districts must adopt a COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan laying out how they will cope with the disease across the various phases of the Michigan Safe Start Plan. In turn, the accompanying Michigan Return to School Roadmap Michigan's 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap offers a guide to the types of safety protocols appropriate during each phase. There's no one-size-fits-all solution: What works in Lansing may not work in Sault Sainte Marie. Districts will retain the flexibility to tailor their instruction to their particular needs and to the disease conditions present in their regions." (EO-2020-142)

Each district (public, public school academy (PSA), nonpublic, and intermediate school district (ISD) that educates pre-K-12 students) shall submit a single completed Assurance Document and Preparedness Plan to its Board in time for approval by August 15 or seven days before the first day of school, whichever comes first. This template, when completed, serves as a single Assurance Document and Preparedness Plan.

Due to the COVID19 pandemic, Niles Community Schools (NCS) reopened its schools and operations under the guidance of Governor Whitmer's Executive Orders and MI Safeschools Roadmap. After schools reopened, additional and/or modified requirements were placed on Michigan school districts by legislators, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), and Berrien County Health Department (BCHD) officials. Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) placed additional rules and requirements relative to workplace safety. Along with the Orders and Rules executed by these governing bodies, guidelines and interpretations of these Orders and Rules were provided by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA). In partnership with BCHD, Berrien Regional Educational Agency (BRESA), other Berrien County School Districts, and the BCS Athletic Conference. Niles Community Schools has provided in-person instruction and extracurricular activities in accordance with these Rules and Orders since the beginning of the school year with extremely low transmission rates.

Although requirements have continually changed during the school year, NCS has remained committed to following all Orders and Rules. The most recent guidelines from MDHHS can be found here. [State of Michigan Guidelines for Operating Schools Safely](#)

On 2/21/21, NCS reviewed all reopening and operating plans to ensure alignment with the most recent information.

District Note: The most current Orders, Rules, and legislation will be followed and will supersede language found in all submitted, approved, adopted and published district and buildings plans. Whenever new Orders, Rules or legislation are executed, NCS will review practices, procedures and policies to ensure compliance.

Preparedness Plan Assurances

The District agrees to meet all of the following requirements of Executive Order 2020-142

- ✓ The District assures that when it provides in-person instruction to its students without disabilities, the district must also provide in-person instruction to its students with disabilities, consistent with their individualized education programs (IEPs).
- ✓ The District assures that when schools are closed to in-person instruction, districts must strive in good faith and to the extent practicable, based upon available resources, technology, training, and curriculum, as well as the circumstances presented by COVID-19, to provide equal access to any alternative modes of instruction to students with disabilities from birth through age 26. This assurance includes the provision of auxiliary services under section 1296 of the Revised School Code, MCL 380.1296.
- ✓ The District assures that while any state of emergency or disaster related to the COVID-19 pandemic continues, it shall comply with guidance from the United States Department of Education, including its Office of Civil Rights and Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, and the Michigan Department of Education concerning the delivery of alternative modes of instruction to students with disabilities in light of the impact of COVID-19.
- ✓ The District assures that it shall, to the extent practicable and necessary, make individualized determinations whether and to what extent compensatory services may be needed for students with disabilities in light of the school closures during the 2019–2020 school year.
- ✓ The District assures that when schools are closed to in-person instruction (formerly denoted as **Phase 1, 2, or 3** of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan*), it will close its buildings to anyone except: (a) District employees or contractors necessary to conduct minimum basic school operations consistent with a Preparedness Plan, including those employers or contractors necessary to facilitate alternative modes of instruction, such as distributing materials and equipment or performing other necessary in-person functions. (b) Food-service workers preparing food for distribution to students or their families. (c) Licensed child-care providers and the families that they serve, if providers follow all emergency protocols identified by the state.
- ✓ The District assures that during **Phase 1, 2, or 3** of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan* it will suspend athletics, after-school activities, inter-school activities, and busing.
- ✓ The District assures that during **Phase 1, 2, or 3** of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan* it will provide for the continued pay of school employees while redeploying staff to provide meaningful work in the context of the Preparedness Plan, subject to any applicable requirements of a collective bargaining agreement.
- ✓ The District assures that in **Phases 1, 2, or 3** of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan* it will provide for the continuation of food distribution to eligible students.
- ✓ The District assures that during **Phase 4** of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan* it will prohibit indoor assemblies that bring together students from more than one classroom.
- ✓ The District assures cooperation with the local public health department if a confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified, and agrees to collect the contact information for any close contacts of the affected individual from two days before he or she showed symptoms to the time when he or she was last present in school.

Preparedness Plan

Every district must develop and adopt a COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan (“Preparedness Plan”) that is informed by [Michigan’s 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap](#) (“Return to School Roadmap”) from the COVID-19 Task Force on Education and Return to School Advisory Council.

To meet this requirement, Niles Community Schools has designed plans for each of the 6 Phases of the Michigan Safe Start Plan. While the plans are distinct to each Phase, moving from one Phase to another may require short-term transitional plans which may overlap portions of the plans from the existing Phase to a new Phase. Transitional plans will remain within the requirements of the plans detailed below.

In accordance with Executive Order 2020-142 and subsequent MDHHS and MIOSHA Orders and Rules - our plan includes all the following parts:

- A. The policies and procedures that the District will follow when the region in which the district is located is in **Phase 1, 2, or 3** of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan*.
 - 1. Describe how the district will offer alternative modes of instruction other than in-person instruction and a summary of materials each student and the student’s parents or guardians will need to meaningfully access the alternative modes of instruction included in the Preparedness Plan. If the Preparedness Plan relies on electronic instruction, the Preparedness Plan must consider how the district will aid students who lack access to computers or to the internet. This is also in the Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 Response Plan submitted in April. You may want to update and link to this plan in your response below.

Considering the large number of determinants in this pandemic, Niles Community Schools (NCS) considers this a fluid document. Our Preparedness Plan will be published on our district website. Any updates to the plan will be communicated and indicated on the website.

1. Description of the methods NCS will use to provide alternative modes of instruction other than in-person instruction and a summary of materials each pupil and the pupil’s parents or guardians will need to meaningfully access the alternative modes of instruction included in the Plan.

During a COVID related school closure, teachers and support staff at Niles Community Schools will continue to provide students with instruction that is designed to build upon learning trajectories already established within classrooms and prepare students for the next school year by focusing on critical skills and standards needed for success.

The district plans to use an online model of instruction using Google Classroom and Echo platforms. To support this online model, all staff will utilize district approved digital curricular applications. All applications and platforms will be housed on Clever, a Single Sign on Portal. Clever will allow families to monitor all their students accounts from one site. Teachers will continue to report to the building during their contracted time to facilitate live daily sessions, prep lessons, provide tutoring and collaborate in PLCs.

All students in grades 6-12 will be provided a device for daily use during in-person instruction that will be used during remote instruction. For students in K-5, who do not have a personal device, one will be made available for them. Students without internet access in the home will be provided alternative options for access including a district purchased mobile hotspot. For the small number of students who cannot be accommodated with access options, they will be provided with instructional materials through a weekly instructional packet. All students will need access to materials such as paper, pencils, and crayons, which will be made available to families. The district will replenish supplies upon request. All students will have access to grade-level/course textbooks and workbooks as needed to complete their work.

Grades K-5 Remote Learning Plan

Focus on core skills: When remote learning is needed, teachers will continue to progress in the district approved scope and sequence and continue to focus on power standards. Modifications in delivery of content may be made to accommodate the remote learning environment. Lessons may be pared down, along with time and work expectations appropriate for students' developmental levels. NCS will require all K-5 teachers to engage in live instruction from 8:45-12:45 daily. Student attendance will be required at all sessions and students will complete assignments in google classroom.

Weekly Assignments: We know students take varying amounts of time to complete assignments, be it in class or at home. Teachers will adjust the quantity and type of work they are assigning as they assess student work and progress. Flexibility along with compassion for everyone's life situation is key for us. Teachers will post assignments daily at 8:30 a.m. Students with internet difficulties will be able to pick up paper copies at each building and will be available for pick up at each building and food sites. Additional accommodations may be made for students who are unable to pick up paper copies.

Provide opportunities for feedback: During remote learning, teachers will identify a variety of daily assignments and assessments on essential standards for required submission. Students will be able to submit assignments via Google Classroom/ECHO and may also drop off submissions at the building. Submission dates will vary by teacher and/or grade level. Because we know that intentional and targeted feedback promotes student achievement, teachers will provide timely feedback on assessments and assignments via Google Classroom/ECHO.

A Note on Math, English Language Arts and Science Resources: Many of the assignments and assessments that teachers will be assigning during remote learning will be from student workbooks. It is important that students have access to the curriculum resource that they are most familiar with. Therefore, in the event of remote learning parents will be asked to pick up various student workbooks. Deliveries will be made to parents who are unable to pick up the necessary materials.

Grades 6-12 Remote Learning Plan

Focus on core skills: When remote learning is needed, teachers will continue to progress in the district approved scope and sequence and continue to focus on power standards. Modifications in delivery of content may be made to accommodate the remote learning environment. Lessons may be pared down, along with time and work expectations appropriate for students' developmental levels. NCS will require all 6-12 teachers to engage in live instruction from 7:45-11:45 daily. Student attendance will be required at all sessions and students will complete assignments in google classroom.

Weekly Assignments: We know students take varying amounts of time to complete assignments, be it in class or at home. Teachers will adjust the quantity and type of work they are assigning as they assess student work and progress. Flexibility along with compassion for everyone's life situation is key for us. Teachers will post assignments daily at 7:30a.m. Students with internet difficulties will be able to pick up paper copies at each building and will be available for pick up at each building and food sites. Additional accommodations may be made for students who are unable to pick up paper copies.

Provide opportunities for feedback: During remote learning, teachers will identify a variety of daily assignments and assessments on essential standards for required submission. Students will be able to submit assignments via Google Classroom/ECHO and may also drop off submissions at the building. Submission dates will vary by teacher and/or grade level. Because we know that intentional and targeted feedback promotes student achievement, teachers will provide timely feedback on assessments and assignments via Google Classroom/ECHO.

Teach and communicate with compassion and flexibility: This is perhaps most important as we know significant physical, emotional, and financial strain are new realities for our families. Teachers will be available daily to address any questions that may arise.

A Note about Special Education and Related Services: Teachers and related Service Providers will continue to reach out to families to determine how to best support students. A [special education contingency student learning plan](#) has been developed. Teachers are reviewing initial plans, listening to parent feedback, and determining how to best provide services remotely without overwhelming families. Team members are working to engage families in either virtual meetings or phone conferences.

A Note on Course Completion: Students who continue to demonstrate mastery of district power standards during remote learning will be on track for grade promotion upon the conclusion of the school year.

A Note on Devices: In the event of remote learning, building administrators will work to ensue pick up or delivery of chromebooks.

A Note on Connectivity: We understand that some students do not have internet access. Below are options on how to access free internet.

- Go to <http://wifi.xfinity.com/> and enter your zip code to find a hotspot near you. There are countless in the Niles, MI area.
- If you have a Niles Community Schools device, then you can access the WiFi outside of any school building by using *NCSStudent*.
- Many carriers are increasing data or providing unlimited data. Check with your carrier to make your device a wifi hotspot. [COVID-19 Internet & Wireless Data Resources for Families](#)
- If a student absolutely cannot connect via the internet, please contact the building administrator.

In the event that connectivity cannot be established, hard copies or USB flash drives with assignments will be made available. Parents, guardians or students can contact the building administrators to request work for each course. When the student's learning packets are ready for pickup, parents will be notified.

A Note about the 2020-21 School Year Learning Options: NCS is providing families Return to School Roadmap Options for the 2020-21 school year. Details for our [NCS Virtual Vikings Campus](#) can be found on the district website.

2. Description of the methods NCS will use to keep pupils at the center of educational activities, including how NCS will outreach and continue building relationships and maintain connections, as well as help pupils feel safe and valued.

NCS has designed learning opportunities that ensure equity and access for all students. Our primary goal is to maintain relationships, ensure that all pupils feel valued and safe and keep all learners at the center of educational activities. This goal will be achieved utilizing the following strategies:

- The instructional support staff work in teams to ensure all students receive the support needed to feel connected and supported, both emotionally and in the learning context.
- Instructional staff will adhere to recommendations for instructional time frames and daily student schedules.
- Principals and instructional support staff will continue to seek feedback from individual families on the best mode of two-way personalized communication.
- All staff of NCS will continuously and collaboratively identify processes to make sure the basic needs of all students and families continue to be met (e.g. providing bagged meals, snacks, and student supplies).

- All staff of NCS continuously encourage families to spend time with one another to bond and talk. Prompts and resources are provided to families for ideas, etc. both online at our district website or via paper copies.
- NCS provides translation and special support to families that speak languages other than English.
- Translations, accessibility or variable reading levels are considered during planning.
- NCS staff ensure that our families are able to utilize hot spots, local public wifi access, paper/pencil, video, and phone to access developed curricular resources.
- The instructional staff assesses what learning standards and targets are most meaningful and relevant under the current circumstances.
- The instructional staff ensures that any assessment practices are accurate, bias resistant and motivational.

3. Description of plans to deliver content in multiple ways so that all pupils can access learning.

Content will be delivered through Google classroom and ECHO. Teachers will host daily live sessions to facilitate direct instruction, classroom discussion and interactions. Additionally, teachers can provide instruction through pre-made videos or slideshows. Teachers will be available during their daily planning times to respond to individual student and parent concerns.

For those students who cannot connect to the internet, the main mode of delivery will be through instructional packets and district provided workbooks. This will be supplemented with phone conferencing to support instruction. Families will work with building administrators to pick up printed materials at the buildings or feeding sites weekly. Print materials will be mailed to families who are unable to pick up materials.

4. Description of plans to manage and monitor learning by pupils.

During these unprecedented times, the connectedness and care for our students and one another is our first priority as we maintain a continuity of learning.

Teachers will:

- **Meet in PLCs once a week**

PLCs will meet weekly via Google Hangout or in person to:

- a. Celebrate successes
- b. Share Strategies & Resources

c. Monitor Student progress

- **Provide Daily Instruction on new content via Google classroom or ECHO**

Teachers will continue to provide instruction on district power standards via live daily sessions and assignments in Google Classroom/ECHO. Instruction will be delivered both synchronously and asynchronously. Teachers will continue to take daily attendance in PowerSchool.

- **Provide Instruction on Social Emotional Learning**

Grade Levels and Departments will incorporate Social Emotional Learning into their instruction. Teachers will be provided the text “Everyday SEL” to support them in embedding high quality SEL into their instruction.

- **Identify assessment opportunities on identified essential standards**

Grade levels/Departments have identified essential standards in the district curriculum documents. All essential/power standards will be introduced, practiced and assessed during remote learning. Benchmark testing using local instruments will be conducted. Standardized tests will be conducted as feasible.

- **Provide critical feedback to students**

Teachers will provide timely feedback on assignments and assessments via Google Classroom or ECHO. Students may resubmit assessments based on teacher feedback. Students will continue to self-monitor their own progress using district scales. Scales will be provided to students via Google Classroom and ECHO

- **Monitor student submissions of required assessments/assignments**

It is important that students submit all assignments and assessments by the due date established by the classroom teacher. Teachers will document students who are not being successful during remote learning. These students will be referred to the building principal and/or building support to support staff as needed.

- **Stay connected with students via two-way personalized communication**

During remote learning teachers will maintain two-way personalized communication. Teachers will document two-way contact in phone logs that are shared with their Principal. Teachers will also contact families/students when they do not turn in assignments. Students who do not respond will be referred to support staff (Behavior Specialists, Social Workers, etc) as needed.

5. Budget Outline: This is an estimate of additional expenditures associated with the Plan and sources of revenue to pay for those expenditures.

The budget for 20/21 would include:

- Personal Protective Equipment including
 - Masks - child and adult

- Face shields
- Protective dividers/barriers
- Portable washing stations
- Water bottle refilling stations
- Hand sanitizer
- Gloves
- Cleaning supplies and equipment
- Hot spots/connectivity
- Chromebooks
- Covid Preparedness Coordinator
- Corox 360 Electrostatic sprayers
- Classroom food service carts and trash cans

Sources:

- ESSER Funds - \$720,000

6. Description of the manner in which district administrators, board members, teachers, and any representatives of teachers collaborated in the development of the Plan. Please list all dates of meeting with teachers in which you collaborated to develop our Remote Learning Plan.

Central office administrators sought input from building level administrators, teachers and ancillary staff when designing the key components of this learning plan. Our Curriculum Director met with department and grade level PLC leaders and Ed Tech Facilitators and used feedback from the spring 2020 closure learning plan to develop the learning portions of this plan. A draft plan for Phase 1-3 was designed and vetted through the PLC leaders and feedback was obtained from July 30th to August 7th. Our Special Ed Director developed the [special education contingency student learning plan](#) with input from special ed teachers and ancillary staff. All building administrators continued to meet throughout the summer and are developing their building level specific plans based off of the district plan.

The Superintendent attends weekly meetings with Berrien County superintendents to exchange ideas so that we attend to the needs of our shared students. We have also sought information and guidance from other entities - MDE, Middle Cities, MASA, MAISA to form the content.

The district added questions to our comprehensive needs assessment in spring to gather feedback from all stakeholders on spring 2020 remote learning. The Superintendent and our Covid Preparedness Coordinator held parent meetings on July 27th, August 7th, October 14th and February 8th (2021), after sending out a parent survey on July 31st to gather feedback from all families. On August 4th, the Superintendent held open meeting times for all staff. The president of our local teachers union is a department PLC leader and attends meetings regarding the plan and least monthly. Union leaders and district administration have met on 5/26, 6/23, 7/30, 8/4, 8/4, and 8/10 to discuss remote learning and reopening plans.

7. Description of methods the district will use to notify pupils and parents or guardians of the Plan.

Information on the plan, including the timeline for implementation, as well as the logistics for deployment of the plan, will be shared utilizing communication platforms stakeholders are already familiar with and that currently exist in our system. Information is posted on Facebook, the District website and communicated through various media opportunities. Superintendent holds biweekly interviews and posts them on the district's new youtube channel. News media has been contacted and information relative to our reopening plans have been broadcasted regularly on local news. We will also utilize School Messenger, emails, texts, and phone calls to ensure parents and guardians receive any updates or new and necessary information.

All district communication is posted on our website. Print newsletters and e-Newsletters contain valuable information regarding reopening plans and enrollment opportunities. In addition, letters and communication are translated into Spanish and posted on our website.

Student lesson agendas will be made available to parents weekly in the following ways: teacher email, district website, social media, and will be available for pick up at each building and food sites. Teachers will be able to monitor which students and families access the learning agenda.

We will utilize our food sites to distribute information related to our learning plan.

8. District implementation date of the Plan.

Full implementation and learning at a distance will be done during Phases 1-3 of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan*.

9. Assistance for pupils enrolled in any postsecondary dual enrollment courses under the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act, 1996 PA 160, as amended, MCL 388.511 to 388.524, and the Career and Technical Preparation Act, 2000 PA 258, as amended, MCL 388.1901 to 388.1913, in completing the courses during the 2019-2020 school year.

Dual Credit

Students will continue to remain enrolled in dual credit courses. High school counselors and administrators will work with the local area institutions (LMC, SMC, Andrew's University) and the student and student's family to monitor progress. Technology needs will also be assessed and addressed. Students will be encouraged to seek out tutoring, as needed, either through college resources or within our high school resources.

Career Technical Education

When weighing content decisions for CTE students, essential skills/knowledge must be considered along with what is required for students to earn industry credentials and meet standards of employers/certifying bodies. We will work with the ISD CTE Director as well as state-level CTE directives to ensure our students have the ability to complete these courses.

Teachers may choose to use various delivery methods for materials and evaluation of knowledge. The presentation may include, but not be limited to, video, YouTube, self-guided activities, posting materials with discussion and questioning, reading of texts and readings, essay writing, and sequential process flow. Additional recommendations for CTE are being developed at the county level and will be shared with students by teachers through normal means of communication.

10. Provision and arrangement for continuation of food distribution to eligible pupils.

Niles Community Schools Food Service started delivering lunch and breakfast beginning on Monday, March 16th, the first day of the initial mandated closure. In the weeks that followed, we continued having breakfast and lunch at all available sites. These meals were for all children ages 18 and under and were taken to homes to eat. On Fridays, additional meals were prepared for the weekend days. We served over 15,000 meals per week. In addition, we also worked with our local Salvation Army to provide weekend family meals for 40 students. We delivered these meals directly to the homes. For the 20/21 school year we will follow federal guidelines for meal distribution. We will push out our food distribution information through our normal communication methods and our Facebook pages and website will contain the details. Major changes will be communicated through Facebook, our website (school and district), parent email, texts, and phone calls via School Messenger.

11. Provisions of pay for school employees and redeployment of staff who can provide meaningful work in the context of the Plan, subject to any applicable requirements of a collective bargaining agreement.

As mentioned our Board has approved paying school employees through the initial school closure in the 19/20 school year. For the 20/21 school year our Board Finance Committee will review that all hourly and salaried employees who continue to provide service to the students and the District of Niles will earn their regular compensation. While all staff will work within the same role and job descriptions, many will be deployed to assist with food distribution and other tasks and communication associated with our learning plan and students learning from a distance. Also, for the 20/21 school year our 3rd party contracts will be reviewed by the Finance Committee and recommendations will be made on negotiating for payments made for services rendered.

12. Evaluation of participation in the Plan by pupils.

Teachers will use the instructional platform to monitor student wellness, engagement, and completion of assignments. They will also keep a log of communication with students and families. Inconsistent completion and/or communication with a parent or student will be raised to the principal or counselor level to develop a plan to connect with the student and family. Additional support agencies may be sought to make these connections.

Feedback on assignments will be provided as well as individualized assistance as needed. Feedback will be meaningful and an assessment of student learning. Criteria for work and

expectations will be clearly articulated. Student learning will continue but will not have a negative impact on students. For students who cannot engage or choose to disengage will receive an “incomplete” that can be made up will be offered or no grade. Attempts to engage students will be documented.

13. Mental health supports for pupils affected by a state of emergency or state of disaster prompted by COVID-19.

In the Spring of 2020, all certified staff engaged in virtual professional learning around social emotional learning (SEL), as part of our 30 hours of district provided professional development. Learning outcomes included: defining social emotional learning for students, managing personal social-emotional health during times of uncertainty and providing SEL support to students. Teachers explored resources from CASEL the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning and the text “Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators” by Elana Aguilar. This professional learning served as a launch for this year’s district focus on SEL.

All of our staff have been trained on trauma informed care and most of our staff have gone through a second, more extensive, training on trauma informed care.

We have a plan for contacting families throughout this time and we will rely on our mental health experts to meet the socio-emotional needs of our students. Based on already identified needs, our behavior specialist, school social workers, counselors, teacher consultants and principals will reach out to individual students and families to determine mental health needs during this time. The counselor, principal or social worker will help connect the family to outside agencies to help meet their needs. A list of outside agencies has been sent to parents and is posted on the District’s website. NCS will utilize a mental health screener developed by Berrien RESA to identify the need for assistance of students and staff.

While teachers are making weekly contacts, they will monitor and assess the needs of students and families. When necessary, mental health questions will be directly asked of families and students. If a mental health concern is shared, the teacher will elevate that need to the principal or counselor to make the necessary follow-up. The principal will hold weekly meetings with teachers to identify any additional students or families in need.

The Niles Community School Crisis Response Team is meeting on an as needed basis and stands ready to support our students, families and staff during these unprecedented times. The team developed a Crisis Response Team Referral form that is available by building administrators and posted on the district web site under COVID 19 info. The completed form will be emailed to Adam Burtsfield and Tracy Hertsel and in turn will be directed to the appropriate team members to support the needs of each situation. Also available on the district website will be links to resources available for various needs.

Crisis Response Team Plan During School Closure

NCS Crisis Response Team Referral Form

Free Resources

Niles Community Schools is providing support to students by regular contact with families, parents/guardians, and students themselves. This contact includes reviewing coping strategies, sharing community resources, sharing self regulation resources and discussion around how the closure is impacting their day to day lives. This population includes, but is not limited to, students with School Social Work services on their IEP, students placed in center based and self contained programs, as well as students classified as At Risk and receiving Behavior Specialist support prior to the closure.

Mental health supports are being provided to pupils during the state of emergency through the following methods:

- The Crisis Response Team has a remote plan to support students and staff in the event of a crisis such as a death. Crisis Response Team Plan During School Closure
- A referral for support is available on the district website. The referral allows individuals to refer themselves or others for support from members of the The Crisis Response Team. NCS Crisis Response Team Referral Form
- Resources (websites, mental health agencies, activities) are shared with families, some of which are also posted on the district website.
- Students, along with their parents/guardians, with School Social Work services on their IEP are being contacted on a regular basis to review coping strategies, share resources, and discuss emotions. All contacts are documented.
- Students, along with their parents/guardians, placed in center based and self contained programs are contacted on a regular basis to receive academic support as well as review coping strategies, share resources and discuss emotions. All contacts are documented.
- Behavior Specialists and Deans are contacting students along with parents/guardians to offer review coping strategies, share resources and discuss emotions. All contacts are documented.

- B.** The policies and procedures that the District will follow when the region in which the District is located is in **Phase 4** of the Michigan Safe Start Plan.

NOTE: Taking into account the multiple variables impacting the safety and well-being of our students and staff, a decision may be made to shift into Remote Learning or phase into live instruction for our in-person students during Phase 4. This Remote Learning option will mirror the plan developed for Phase 1-3 but may include in-person instruction, live tutoring, or another approach designed to deliver instruction to an identified portion of our students who may not progress in the curriculum when in full-time remote learning (i.e., young children, students with disabilities and/or special needs, students who have disengaged from

the current remote learning process or remote learning process in the past, etc.) and to dual enrollment students, students enrolled in county-wide programs, and students new to the district.

Phase 4 policies and procedures must, at a minimum, include:

1. **Implementation of the requirements Face coverings (p. 22)**

Personal Protective Equipment

Reusable face coverings have been ordered and each staff member will be provided one reusable face covering at the beginning of the school year. Disposable masks will be available on all buses and in each building in case staff or students do not have one that day.

- **Face coverings will be worn by staff at all times except when eating meals.** Requests for face shields and table barriers may be granted on a case-by-case basis and the district will assume the cost. These cannot be used to replace face covering requirements.*
- **Face coverings must be worn by PreK-12 students during transportation to and from school.***
- **Face coverings must always be worn in hallways and common areas by PreK-12 students in the building except for meals.** [Wearing Mask](#) *
- **Face coverings must be worn in classrooms by all students grade Pre K-12.**
- Individuals (staff or students) who claim medical exemption will need to meet with the building principal or Covid19 Preparedness Coordinator, Tracy Hertsel and provide rationale and documentation.
- Students who are capable of wearing a face covering and refuse to do so in an area where a face covering is required will be issued a face covering by a school official and asked to put the face covering on. The instance will be documented as a log entry in PowerSchool.
- Staff who are capable of wearing a face covering and refuse to do so will be addressed by the school administrator.
- Guests to the school building will be issued a disposable face covering upon signing in at the main office and will be instructed to wear the face covering at all times.

Face Coverings - Face Coverings will be provided by the district. Each staff will receive one reusable mask. Staff and students may wear homemade face coverings or a disposable level-one (basic) grade surgical mask. Homemade facial coverings must be washed daily. Disposable facial coverings must be disposed of at the end of each day. Disposable masks will be available in the event that a staff/student facemask becomes unusable.

Any staff member or student who cannot medically tolerate a facial covering must not wear one. Any staff member that is incapacitated or unable to remove the facial covering without assistance, must not wear a facial covering.

PreK-5 and special education teachers should consider wearing clear masks. One reusable clear mask will be provided by the district.

Spacing Movement and Access

Students will be spaced as far apart as feasible within classrooms.

Family members or other guests are not allowed in the school building except under extenuating circumstances determined by district and school officials.

Anyone entering the office must be wearing a face covering and sanitize hands and follow social distancing guidelines.

Signage will be posted to indicate proper social distancing. Signs will be posted on the doors of restrooms to indicate proper social distancing and hand hygiene techniques.

2. Implementation of requirements for hygiene protocols from the Return to School Roadmap (p. 22-23).

- Hand washing is always the preferred choice, however, when not possible, all schools and classrooms will be supplied with adequate hand sanitizer. Hand washing/sanitizer times throughout the day will be implemented including, but not limited to: entering/exiting the building, entering/exiting classrooms, before/after eating, before/after recess, before/after mask removal and touching the face, after handling shared objects and after coughing/sneezing/blowing nose. At a minimum students and teachers must have scheduled handwashing with soap and water every 2-3 hours.
- Buildings will be provided with adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors (including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol for safe use by staff and students, paper towels, tissues, and signs reinforcing proper handwashing techniques).
- The schedule will allow time to teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol
- Educate staff and students on how to cough and sneeze into their elbows, or to cover with a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately using proper hand hygiene techniques.

The district will provide adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors.

The district's Director of Maintenance and Operations will be responsible for seeing that adequate handwashing facilities are available in each facility and that regular hand washing is required.

When handwashing facilities are not available, the district will install dispensers that shall provide staff and students with antiseptic hand sanitizers or towelettes.

The district will provide scheduled time for staff and students to wash hands frequently and to use hand sanitizer throughout the day.

Signs reinforcing proper handwashing techniques will be displayed throughout the building and in each bathroom. (example: [Washing Your Hands](#))

Specific lessons will be used to teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and/or the safe use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

In addition, the district will continue its effort to:

- educate staff and students on how to cough and sneeze into their elbows, or to cover with a tissue; (example: [Proper Covering of Cough](#))
- limit use of classroom materials to small groups and disinfect between use, or provide adequate supplies to assign for individual student use;
- limit sharing of personal items and supplies such as writing utensils; and
- keep students' personal items separate and in individually labeled cubbies, containers, or lockers.

3. *Implementation of cleaning requirements for cleaning protocols from the Return to School Roadmap (p. 27).

District administrators, the Director of Operations and COVID-19 Preparedness Coordinator will meet to review all guidance related to cleaning and disinfecting of buildings and to review the Building Operations in the MI Safe Schools: Michigan 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap.

An inventory of all cleaning supplies that are in compliance with the EPA-approved related to COVID will be monitored and orders taken in anticipation of increased cleaning. The district will increase facility cleaning and disinfection to limit exposure to COVID-19, especially on high-touch surfaces (for example, door handles), paying special attention to parts, products, and shared equipment (for example tools, machinery, vehicles).

The Director of Maintenance and Operations will be responsible for seeing that environmental surfaces in the workplace are cleaned and disinfected. Frequency of such disinfection will be determined in part by factors such as when and how often the environmental surfaces are potentially exposed to SARS-CoV-2.

When choosing cleaning chemicals, Niles Community Schools will consult information on Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved disinfectant labels with claims against emerging viral pathogens. Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against SARS-CoV-2 based on data for harder to kill viruses. The manufacturer's instructions for use of all cleaning and disinfection products will be strictly adhered to.

Frequently touched surfaces including light switches, doors, benches, bathrooms, will undergo cleaning at least every four hours with either an EPA-approved disinfectant or diluted bleach solution.

Libraries, computer labs, arts, and other hands-on classrooms will undergo cleaning after every class period with either an EPA-approved disinfectant or diluted bleach solution.

Student desks will be wiped down with either an EPA-approved disinfectant or diluted bleach

solution after every class period (secondary) or when cohorts change classrooms (elementary).

Playground structures will continue to undergo normal routine cleaning, but using an EPA approved disinfectant is unnecessary.

The district will ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing products securely away from children, and with adequate ventilation when staff use products. Staff must wear gloves, a surgical mask, and/or a face shield **when using all cleaning supplies for cleaning activities.**

4. **Athletics**

Please describe how you will implement the **requirements** for athletics protocols from the *Return to School Roadmap* (p. 27).

The District will comply with all guidance published by Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) and the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

Workouts and Practice will follow the latest MDHHS order:

Outdoor physical conditioning activities are allowed while maintaining social distancing.

Indoor weight rooms and physical conditioning activities that require shared equipment will follow the latest MDHHS order.

All coaches, Volunteers, and student athletes will be screened with the MHSAA covid 19 monitoring form as required by the latest MDHHS order f -prior to parents leaving -which includes a temperature check--all Student information must be confidential and is subject to FERPA. This will be completed with the student athlete and close to the parking area.

All activities/workouts/practices in the Summer are voluntary

No Water or beverages shall be provided. Students will bring their own water/hydration drinks--marked with their name

Students, teachers, and staff must use proper hand hygiene techniques before and after every practice, event, or other gathering. Hand sanitizing stations are provided at each facility.

All equipment must be disinfected before and after use. Equipment and supplies for sanitizing will be provided by the district.

Each participant must use a clearly marked water bottle for individual use. There should be no sharing of this equipment when feasible.

Handshakes, fist bumps, and other unnecessary contact must not occur.

Inter-school Competitions:

Participants must maintain a minimum of 6 feet of social distancing at all times while checking in.

Participants must use proper hand hygiene techniques before and after every practice, event, or other gathering. Hand sanitizing stations are provided at each facility.

If transportation is provided to or from an event, facial coverings must be worn during transport. Buses will be cleaned and disinfected before and after every use, as detailed in the subsequent "Busing and Student Transportation" section.

All equipment must be disinfected before and after use. Equipment and supplies for sanitizing will be provided by the district.

Each participant must use a clearly marked water bottle for individual use. There should be no sharing of this equipment when feasible.

Handshakes, fist bumps, and other unnecessary contact must not occur.

Large scale indoor spectator events will follow the latest MDHHS order. Large scale outdoor spectator or stadium events will follow the latest MDHHS order, and people not part of the same household must maintain six feet of distance from one another.

Spectators are required to wear facial coverings and maintain six feet of social distancing at all times.

Multiple entry and exit points will be established to prevent crowding and clearly marked with appropriate signage. Presale only tickets will be considered.

5. **Screening**

Please describe how you will implement the **requirements** for screening protocols from the *Return to School Roadmap* (p. 24).

The district collaborated with the Berrien County Health Department in the development and implementation of protocols for screening students and staff.

The district will strictly follow the Berrien County Health Department recommendations relative to protocols for screening staff and students.

The district will strictly follow the Berrien County Health Department recommendations relative to "isolation" and "quarantine."

Employees are required to screen themselves and report those findings prior to starting work each day until further notice. In order to facilitate this process in as easy and convenient manner possible, the district is using a check-in screening survey at all staff accessible entry points. The screening survey collects responses to mandatory questions relative to COVID-19 symptoms. The questions were provided by the BCHD and may be updated based on BCHD recommendations. Each day prior to entering a district facility, employees are required to

complete the screening survey. Employees exhibiting symptoms (i.e., answering “Yes” to survey questions) shall NOT enter a district facility.

All employees must notify the District as soon as possible if they develop symptoms of, or are diagnosed with, COVID-19 or if they have been exposed or are suspected to have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19.

The District will physically isolate any employees with known or suspected COVID-19 from the remainder of the workforce, using measures such as, but are not limited to:

- Not allowing known or suspected cases to report to or remain at their work location.
- Sending known or suspected cases to a location (for example, home) where they are self-isolating during their illness.
- Assigning known or suspected cases to work alone at the location where they are self-isolating during their illness.

An electronic monitoring list for screening employees and use of security cameras for tracing has been developed.

Families are encouraged to check their child’s temperature at home every morning using oral, tympanic, or temporal scanners; students with a temperature of 100.4 or greater should stay home and consider coronavirus testing if symptoms of COVID-19 are present.

Families are encouraged to monitor their children for symptoms of COVID-19. The presence of any symptoms, including cough or shortness of breath, should prompt the family to keep the student home from school and to follow up with a primary care provider.

6. Testing

Please describe how you will implement the **requirements** for testing protocols from the *Return to School Roadmap* (p. 25).

The district collaborated with the Berrien County Health Department in the development and implementation of protocols for testing and responding to positive cases as well as for screening students and staff as noted in the prior section.

All employees must notify the District as soon as possible if they develop symptoms of, or are diagnosed with, COVID-19 or if they have been exposed or are suspected to have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19.

Parents are encouraged to notify the District as soon as possible if their child(ren) develop symptoms of, or are diagnosed with, COVID-19 or if they have been exposed or are suspected to have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19.

The district will notify local health officials, staff, and students immediately of any possible case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality consistent with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and other applicable federal and state privacy laws.

The Local Health Department will initiate contact tracing, following regular public health

practice.

7. Busing and Student Transportation

Please describe how you will implement the **requirements** for busing and student transportation protocols from the *Return to School Roadmap* (p. 28).

The following protocols have been established to support safe transportation of students.

- Require the use of hand sanitizer before entering the bus. Hand sanitizer must be supplied on the bus.
- The bus driver, staff, and all students in grades preK-12, if medically feasible, must wear facial coverings while on the bus. Note: there may be situations where it is not safe for the bus driver to wear a facial covering. Decisions about these situations should be made on a case-by-case basis with local public health officials.
- Clean and disinfect transportation vehicles before and after every transit route. Children must not be present when a vehicle is being cleaned.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in the vehicle (e.g., surfaces in the driver's cockpit, hard seats, arm rests, door handles, seat belt buckles, light and air controls, doors and windows, and grab handles) prior to morning routes and prior to afternoon routes.
- Clean, sanitize, and disinfect equipment including items such as car seats, wheelchairs, walkers, and adaptive equipment being transported to schools daily.
- Weather permitting, keep doors and windows open when cleaning the vehicle and between trips to let the vehicles thoroughly air out.
- Weather permitting, consider keeping windows open while the vehicle is in motion to help reduce spread of the virus by increasing air circulation, if appropriate and safe.

If a student becomes sick during the day, they must not use group transportation to return home and must follow protocols outlined above. The district has created a plan to supervise students and get them home safely if they are not allowed to board the vehicle.

If a driver becomes sick during the day, they must follow protocols for sick staff outlined above and must not return to drive students.

Assigned seating, loading students from the back to front and having members of the same family seated next to one another are additional cohort measures that may be implemented.

C. Describe the policies and procedures that the district will follow when the region in which the district is located is in Phase 5 of the Michigan Safe Start Plan.

The district has decided to maintain all policies and procedures that are stated in Phase 4 of the Michigan Safe Start Plan. If we remain in Phase 5 for a period of time.

1. Indicate which highly recommended protocols from the *Return to School Roadmap* the district will include in its Preparedness Plan when the region in which the district is located is in **Phase 5** of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan*.

District will space students as far apart as feasible, throughout the school day.

- District will not allow visitors (past the office) except in extenuating circumstances.
- Anyone entering the building must be wearing a face covering and sanitize hands.
- Off-site field trips that require bus transportation to indoor locations are suspended.
- Suspend all off-site field trips that require bus transportation to outdoor locations, unless it is the only way that curriculum can be applied and social distancing of six feet can be followed.
- Encourage all clubs to meet virtually or outside.

2. Indicate which highly recommended protocols from the *Return to School Roadmap* the district will not include in its Preparedness Plan when the region in which the district is located is in **Phase 5** of the *Michigan Safe Start Plan*.

- The district will maintain all policies and procedures that are stated in Phase 4 of Michigan Safe Start Plan thus incorporating highly recommended recommendations from Phase 5.

- D. After considering all the protocols that are highly recommended in the *Return to School Roadmap*, please indicate if a school plans to exclude protocols that are highly recommended for any of the categories above in **Phase 4**.

Space desks six feet apart in classrooms. Class sizes should be kept to the level afforded by necessary spacing requirements. - *Desks in classes will be spaced to the maximum extent possible.*

Additional guidance was provided by

CDC Return to School Guide

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

CDC Statement regarding the importance of Reopening schools

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools.html>

Berrien County Return to Learn: Handouts for Schools and Families

<http://berriencounty.org/DocumentCenter/View/12182/COVID-in-Schools-Handouts-for-Schools-and-Parents-73120?bidId=>

Launch 2 Learn Berrien County's Return to School Guide

Michigan Association for Local Public Health (MALPH) Safe Schools Workgroup with input from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and the Grand Traverse County Health Department.

[COVID-19 Return to School Toolkit](#)

American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://www.aappublications.org/news/2020/07/24/pandemicsurvey072420>

<https://www.aappublications.org/news/2020/07/10/schoolreentrysafety071020>

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

Final Steps for Submission

Each district shall submit a single completed Assurance Document and Preparedness Plan to its Board of Education (in the case of a PSA, the Academy Board of Directors; in the case of a nonpublic school, the chief or designated school administrator) in time for approval by August 15 or seven days before the first day of school, whichever comes first.

Date of Approval by the District Board of Education, PSA Board of Directors, or nonpublic school chief/designated school administrator: August 13, 2020

Signature of Board President: _____

Link to the approved Plan posted on the District school website:

<https://www.nilesschools.org>

The Preparedness Plan will be collected by the Intermediate School District for public school districts, the authorizing body for public school academies, or the chief/designated school administrator for nonpublic schools for transmission to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and State Treasurer by August 17, 2020. Additionally, this Preparedness Plan must be posted on the district's/PSA's, or nonpublic school's public website home page no later than August 17, 2020.

Name of District Leader Submitting Plan: Dr. Dan Applegate, Superintendent

Date Received by the ISD/Authorizing Body/Chief or designated School Administrator:

Date Submitted to State Superintendent and State Treasurer: