

Return-to-learn Plan (Assurances) 2020 – 2021

Background:

When confronted with the COVID-19 pandemic shut-down, most Iowa schools decided they were unprepared or unable to provide education to their students by remote means after the school closures on March 16. The governor and the director of the Iowa Department of Education both allowed schools to remain closed and offer education only on an optional basis. As other surrounding states were providing distance learning, our state government took some criticism and some heat for their decision.

To ensure that all schools are able to provide mandatory educational services, regardless of the circumstances, in the coming school year, the Iowa Department of Education required all schools to submit a Return-to-learn plan by July 1, 2020. The plan was really more a list of assurances that schools were preparing to educate students in the fall under a variety of circumstances.

Purpose (according to the Iowa Department of Education):

Return-to-Learn plans are required to be submitted to the Iowa Department of Education (Department) by July 1, 2020. These plans are designed to help districts and nonpublic schools meet the challenges of 2020-21 by:

- Ensuring that remote learning options are available for all students;
- Planning to help students catch-up for the learning they may have missed during school closures;
- Integrating public health strategies into Iowa's schools;
- Enabling schools to move between on-site and remote learning as needed; and
- Helping the Department and our partners at Iowa's area education agencies (AEAs) understand how best to support schools.

All districts and nonpublic schools must submit a Return-to-Learn Plan through the Department's Consolidated Accountability and Support Application (CASA).

Recommended Action:

The Return-to-learn Assurances are available for review on the BoardBook website under the category of *EXTRAS*. These assurances will also be posted for our public.

Although the assurances were due into the state by July 1, 2020, I am asking the school board to approve the plan after-the-fact as submitted.