

Back ***To School***

Opening School Guide

School Year 2021–2022



Washoe County School District

Every Child, By Name And Face, To GraduationSM



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Please note: The Washoe County School District will continue to follow guidance from the Governor's Office and local, state, and federal health officials. These directives may change during the school year, and WCSD will communicate closely with families and staff about these changes. This document will be updated as guidance changes.

August 2021

Dear Washoe County School District Family,

On behalf of the Washoe County School District Board of Trustees and all of us at the District, we welcome you and your students back for a new year of teaching and learning.

As we embark on the 2021-22 school year, we want to thank you for your support as our District continues to deal with developments resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. We are proud of our staff members and grateful for the efforts of everyone whose hard work and encouragement helped our students succeed during an extraordinary school year.

In the coming year, many aspects of education will return to more traditional practices and protocols. As always, our District will follow the Governor's directives and guidance from local, state, and federal health authorities, which may change during the school year. If directives are adjusted, we will keep our students, families, and staff members informed about the latest requirements and how they may impact our day-to-day operations throughout the District.

We will resume classes full time this fall and will continue to offer an online learning option through North Star Online School for students who choose to participate in this learning model.

We are grateful for assistance from lawmakers at the state and federal level who have directed ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funding to WCSD. With this financial assistance, we will offer the intensive extra support our students need as they emerge from the pandemic, move forward with their education, and make plans for their future. Our dedicated staff members stand ready to help.

Washoe County School District
Superintendent

Dr. Kristen McNeill



Washoe County School District
Board of Trustees President

Dr. Angela Taylor



In addition, WCSD has created a “Response to Recovery” Strategic Plan which will guide our steps forward and ensure the needs of our students, families, and staff members are being met. View the plan at www.washoeschools.net/domain/633. The plan serves as a District-wide roadmap for:

- achieving equitable access for all students;
- maintaining high academic expectations for all students;
- continuing to follow health guidelines issued by authorities and providing safe in-person instruction; and
- addressing the academic, social, emotional, and mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The past year brought hardship and heartache to many people in our community, but it also provided moments of inspiration and hope. Our teachers and students adapted to new ways of teaching and learning, most of our students were able to attend school in classrooms by the end of the school year, and our seniors and their families were able to celebrate graduation ceremonies together. Along the way, there were countless stories of compassion and collaboration that enabled our students and staff members to succeed and finish the school year strong.

Throughout this tumultuous and challenging year, WCSD’s commitment to students and families has never wavered. As we begin the 2021-22 academic year, we remember the lessons of the past and look forward to another year of teaching, learning, and achieving.

President Dr. Angie Taylor

WCSD Board of Trustees

Superintendent Dr. Kristen McNeill

Washoe County School District



The Washoe County School District will continue to follow current governor's directives as well as guidance from local, state, and federal health officials.

As the school year moves forward, some of these directives may change. The District will post updates at www.washoeschools.net and will employ its usual methods of communication with students, staff, and families to provide information about changes that may impact day-to-day school operations.

Use of face masks

All students, staff and visitors are required to wear masks inside WCSD schools and buildings regardless of vaccination status, following Governor's Directive 048.

Masks are not required outdoors or while eating or drinking.

In accordance with federal guidelines, staff and students will be required to wear face coverings while riding the school bus, regardless of vaccination status.



Face coverings must be worn over both the nose and mouth and should fit snugly against the face. See page 6 for the correct way to wear a face covering.

Additionally, staff will be encouraged to find innovative ways to allow for mask breaks for all students.

As per the Governor's Directive, students and staff may request a medical exemption from wearing a cloth face covering. Students who are medically fragile as documented per an existing Individualized Education Program or health-related 504 Plan; or,

Students or staff who can produce documentation from a qualified Nevada-licensed medical professional that they are exempt in accordance with subsection 3 of section 7 of Directive 024: "Individuals who cannot wear a face covering due to a medical condition or disability, or who are unable to remove a mask without assistance. Person exempted under this provision should wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield."

Parents, vendors, volunteers, visitors, and guests who are unable or unwilling to wear face coverings under any circumstances or exemptions will not be permitted on school buses, in school buildings, or on school campuses.

Self-screening

All WCSD employees and students must use the screening tool daily before entering a WCSD facility to determine if they should come to school. If an individual or anyone in their household is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, has tested positive for COVID-19, or is waiting for test results, they should not enter a WCSD building. Students and staff must use WCSD's self-screening every morning before coming into school, available at www.washoeschools.net/selfscreening.

Handwashing guidelines/recommendations

Students will be encouraged to wash their hands several times throughout the day with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds. Staff should also maintain good hygiene and wash their hands frequently. Hand sanitizer will be made available in every classroom for students and staff to use throughout the day but should only be used when it is not possible to wash hands in warm, soapy water. If hand sanitizer is used, hands should still be washed in warm, soapy water when it is reasonable to do so.



Exclusions

WCSD is working with the Washoe County Health District on protocols for handling students who may become ill at school and exclusions for when students and staff must remain home from school.

Exclusion of ill individuals from school premises is necessary to ensure the safety and protect the wellness of students, staff, and the community. The period of the exclusion depends on the specific illness and time it takes for recovery, followed by the contagious period of the illness. Additionally, the extent of exclusion depends on the illness and the number of individuals exposed. Close contacts identified through contact tracing may require further exclusion, which will be determined by the Washoe County Health District.

Close contacts who are unvaccinated will be quarantined for a minimum of 10 days. Close contacts who are vaccinated and who are showing no symptoms will not be asked to quarantine. Vaccination status will be verified through Web IZ and until it is validated the individual will need to be excluded.

For general information about student health guidelines, immunization requirements, food allergy procedures, and more, please visit www.washoeschools.net/studenthealth.

Efforts to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to school communities

The District is working in collaboration with the Washoe County Health District and other community partners to provide COVID-19 vaccination opportunities for students, staff, and the school community after school hours at our school facilities. Currently, COVID-19 vaccinations are not required for students and staff.





WCSD Reopening

How to Safely Wear and Take Off a Cloth Face Covering

A face covering should fit snugly and entirely cover your mouth and nose.

Wearing a Face Covering



Wash your hands before putting on your face covering. Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin. Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face. Make sure you can breathe easily. Do not put the covering around your neck or up on your forehead. Do not touch the face covering, and, if you do, clean your hands. Do not place a mask on a child younger than 2.

Removing a Face Covering



Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops. Handle only by the ear loops or ties. Fold outside corners together. Wash your face covering after each use. Wash your hands with soap and water.

Communication with Families



The Washoe County School District is making every effort to communicate information and plans with our families and staff. All information is shared on our website at www.washoeschools.net/covid19. The District has communicated with families and staff via email and telephone messages frequently throughout the pandemic and will continue to do so.

Connect Ed System:

The District uses the Connect Ed call system to provide information about lockdowns, exclusions, weather delays/cancellations, bus delays, school events, and other important developments. Families receive text messages, automated phone calls, and/or emails with details.

School staff members also communicate with families via the Connect Ed call system and post information on individual school web pages.

In addition, emergency information is posted and updated on the WCSD website at www.washoeschools.net.

For more information about emergency procedures, go to www.washoeschools.net/Page/11521.





Infinite Campus Parent Portal:

Infinite Campus is an online application designed to track your student's progress in school. With this tool, you can see their grades, class schedule, and upcoming assignments, as well as other important messages and documents. There are two versions of Infinite Campus: a parental version and a student version. If you have more than one student, you can use the same account to monitor each student's progress. Both the student and parent versions include teachers' e-mail address to set up direct communication.

To set up your account for the first time, you need to complete the online student registration at www.washoeschools.net/register. If you already have an account, use this link to register: <https://washoeenv.infinitecampus.org/campus/portal/washoe.jsp>. If you forgot your username, contact your student's school.

We encourage families to get this app to help their students stay on track with their schoolwork and attendance, and to foster communication between families and school staff members.



Supporting Mental Health and Wellness



The COVID-19 pandemic has had lingering effects on young people across the country, with many students experiencing anxiety and loss of learning. As schools return to more traditional schedules and learning models in the coming year, WCSD counselors, psychologists, social workers, and teachers will work together to practice social and emotional skills with students.

In Washington, D.C., Congress approved financial assistance through the Elementary and Secondary Emergency Education Relief (ESSER) funds. WCSD's ESSER funding will help support a variety of equitable mental health services to address the physical, mental, and social and emotional needs of our students. This work is vital to their health and well-being.

With ESSER funding, WCSD will be able to recruit and hire mental health experts, and work with staff to provide programs to support our students in a variety of important ways.

The mental health and wellness of students and staff members is a high priority for WCSD, and schools will receive funding to support school social work, counseling, and safe schools professionals who work directly with students and staff.



Our District supports these trained mental health professionals, who assist with mental health concerns, behavioral concerns, positive behavioral support, academic, and classroom support, consultation with teachers, parents, and administrators, and individual and group counseling. These professionals will be integrated and located on school campuses and will be ready to begin working with students in August 2021. We know students are more likely to access services and care if these resources are available at school.

Staff are encouraged to talk with their supervisors and/or utilize the Employee Assistance Program, Guidance Resources, www.guidanceresources.com, through the District health insurance.

In the 2021-22 school year, students and staff members will use best practices in ways of learning, teaching, and working following the pandemic. WCSD will continue to emphasize Social and Emotional Learning in its classrooms, where students learn and practice important skills including:

- **Self-awareness:** The ability to accurately recognize your emotions and thoughts and know how they influence behavior.
- **Self-management:** The ability to regulate your emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating yourself, and setting and working toward personal and academic goals.
- **Social awareness:** The ability to adopt the perspective of other people and to empathize with other people from diverse backgrounds and cultures.
- **Relationship skills:** These skills enable a person to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups.
- **Responsible decision-making:** A person who makes responsible decisions can make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions.





Attendance/ Distance Education – Online Learning Option

Student Attendance

Consistent and meaningful student attendance is crucial to academic success. The more often students are present in school, the faster they can recover academically, socially, and emotionally from the pandemic.

WCSD encourages families to send their students to school and to limit absences due to illness and emergencies. When possible, try not to schedule dental or medical appointments during the school day.



Distance Education

For the upcoming 2021-22 school year, the Washoe County School District distance education model will change from individual delivery of instruction by zoned schools to a central provider: North Star Online School. This is an accredited WCSD school and there is no tuition for students.

North Star Online School students work independently on their schoolwork. The curriculum is administered through the Pearson platform and is supported by highly qualified District teachers. Students will receive devices and hotspots to support their distance education.

All students can access and participate in distance education. Additionally, any student who has documentation from a medical professional related to a condition that would be compromised by attending school in person, or is quarantined on the advice of local public health officials will receive access to distance education.

North Star Online School also provides appropriate education for English Learners, students with Individualized Education Programs, and students with 504 plans. Students also will receive access to nutrition services.

For North Star Online School, 5-day breakfast and lunch boxes will be available to all online students. These meals can be picked up once a week at the Nutrition Services Center located at 585 Spice Island Drive. Families can find the details and sign-up at www.washoeschools.net/Domain/69

For more information about registration, or to view the Frequently Asked Questions about North Star Online School, please visit: www.washoeschools.net/northstar or call 775-353-6900





The WCSD Department of Nutrition Services provides delicious, nutritious meals to students and staff members throughout the year and works in partnership with area agencies including the Food Bank of Northern Nevada to provide meals to children during the summer months, school breaks, and to students who are engaged in online learning.

Thanks to federal funding support during the 2021-22 school year, all students will receive free meals and snacks at school regardless of family income.

For more information visit www.washoeschools.net/Page/15053.

While maintaining a safe environment for our students and staff, WCSD Nutrition Services is excited to return to regular operations with increased menu variety and breakfast and lunch meals served in the cafeteria. Only Community Eligible Provisions (CEP) approved schools will offer breakfast in the classroom. Students can still bring their own lunch; however, any child under the age of 18 will qualify to receive free breakfast and lunch. There will be no meals-to-go service.





Our school bus drivers and aides play a pivotal role in student success by ensuring students arrive to and from school safely. They also help to extend the positive school climate beyond the classroom.

Based on staffing levels, school bus drivers may need to make more trips to accommodate the students who need transportation to and from school. In some circumstances, the District will need to schedule staggered pick-up and drop-off times. In this situation, some students may need to be delivered to school early so the driver can pick up another group of students and/or may need to wait at school at the end of the school day while the driver delivers other students to their bus stop before returning for the second group. If this situation occurs at your school, information will be sent out to the impacted families.

It is important to note that face coverings will be required for all passengers at all times on the school bus. Buses will be cleaned and disinfected before and after each route. In addition, bus drivers will disinfect high-touch areas such as handles, doors, and seats in between each group of students during the day. Windows, roof hatches, and air vents will be opened to provide enhanced flow of fresh air.

Students at all grade levels will be assigned seats due to occupancy requirements and to minimize student contact during loading, unloading, and riding the bus. It is required that families register their students for transportation so that an assigned seat can be provided for them on the bus for their first day of school. The registration form is available on the WCSD Transportation page under "School Bus Registration" at www.washoeschools.net/Domain/73.



Contingency Plans/School Closures



If a school day must be canceled in the event of inclement weather or another extenuating circumstance, families will be contacted via the Connect Ed call system. The cancellation will also be posted on the WCSD website and social media and shared with local media partners. No classes will occur in person or via distance learning, and the lost learning day must be made up at the end of the school year. Contingency days reserved for the 2021-22 school year are June 6, 7, and 8, 2022.

If air quality worsens due to nearby wildfires, in-person learning will continue. When the air quality is poor, bus windows will be closed and all students will be moved indoors. Students will remain indoors, and outdoor activities will be prohibited while adverse conditions persist. Student Health Services and Emergency Management will provide schools with direction.



Appendix: Resources for Families



The Family Resource Center (FRC) is a safe and friendly place to go for different types of resources when families need help. For information, go to www.washoeschools.net/Page/13927.

The FRC serves anyone who lives in the surrounding community, including children, teens, parents, single adults, and seniors. There are no income qualifications to use the Center, although some referrals to other services may be limited according to income guidelines.

Anticipated/expected ESSER funding will allow the FRC to purchase emergency basic needs, as well as to support emergency housing assistance for families at immediate risk of being evicted or homeless.

These are the services that the Family Resource Center offers:

Resources / Referrals: Individuals may call the FRC for information and referrals to resources in the community which may be able to help meet basic needs, housing resources, application assistance, and other services. Staff is available to assist families with identifying needs and to help them locate the resources to potentially meet those needs.

Family Success Program: This is a voluntary program that includes an initial assessment to determine the needs of the family, and then links the family with appropriate community and government resources. A plan is made with the family to help set goals and actions steps necessary to meet those goals. The plan is tailored to address the unique needs of the family. Families who are acting and making progress towards attaining their goals may be eligible for additional services.

Ongoing Support: Staff members of the FRC provide ongoing support to families. They are available to help with budgeting, goal setting, and problem solving. They can also aid in obtaining services through advocacy and interventions with other community agencies.



There are three locations that serve specific areas in our community:

Central and South Reno
1950 Villanova Dr.
Reno, NV 89502
775-321-3185

Sparks/Northeast & Northwest Reno
921 12th St.
Sparks, NV 89431
775-353-5733

Sun Valley/North Valleys/Spanish Springs
115 West 6th Ave.
Sun Valley, NV 89433
775-327-1511

The WCSD **Department of Family-School Partnerships** staff members work with families on behalf of all children. The department provides resources to support family involvement in student learning and academic progress, literacy, online learning, Social-Emotional Learning, attendance, seeking financial aid for higher education, and much more. The Department also maintains a virtual library of resources for families who wish to learn more about how to support their students on their academic journeys. For information, go to www.washoeschools.net/Domain/161#calendar425/20210729/month.

In addition, the Department sponsors free Parent University events where families can learn more on a variety of topics to help their students succeed in school.

The Department may be reached at 775-789-4680.

To learn more about the resources and services available for our families to support learning and the mental well-being of our children, review the following list:

- **Parent U** – Learning Resources page – Information on how to support your student's education, community resources for basic needs as well as information about adult learning. www.washoeschools.net/Page/6106
- **Parent U** – Family Learning Library – Videos organized by grade level and topic for social and emotional learning, attendance, digital citizenship (safety and balancing your student's media use) and literacy. www.washoeschools.net/Page/13892
- **Video Library** – YouTube channel – Webinar recordings and video tutorials on college access, high school Career & Technical Education programs, technology tips, family wellness, and other learning supports. <https://bit.ly/36ichIE>
- **Washoe County Library System** – Brainfuse – Free live, virtual tutoring, writing lab and test preparation (SATs, ACTs). <https://washoecountylibrary.us/downloads/brainfuse.php>



- **Washoe County Library System** – Libby – Digital magazines for younger children and teens that can be checked out virtually. <https://washoecounty.overdrive.com/collection/1164267>
- **Washoe County Library System** – Overdrive – e-books and audiobooks for children to download on their computer, tablet, or phone. <https://washoecounty.overdrive.com/library/kids/>
- **Washoe County Library System** – Tumblebooks – e-books and read alongs for elementary children available in different languages and include games, puzzles, chapter books and picture books. <https://washoecountylibrary.us/downloads/tumblebooks.php>
- **Attendance Works Video** – A short video to understand why attendance is so important for your student’s education and includes practical, everyday steps parents can take to help their children attend school. <https://vimeo.com/101425388>
- **Video Tip – Monitoring your Child’s Grades & Assignments -**
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/kvFU-a-9THc%22>
- **Video Tip – Supporting your Child to Stay Organized and On-track -**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUcNSv0pJYc>
- **Video Tip – Discussing your Child’s Progress with them Directly and Encouraging them to do their Best -** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dx7c_K9ez5c
- **Video Tip – Supporting your Student to Advocate for Themselves -**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJ5dTVHMRvg>
- **NBC Toolkit for Families on Social & Emotional Learning (SEL)** – Age-appropriate tips and resources for families aligned with WCSD’s competencies for SEL -
<https://www.today.com/parenting-guides/social-skills>
- **WCSD Family Resource Centers** – Support for housing, food, SNAP, and energy assistance as well as more resources. www.washoeschools.net/Page/13927
- **Asking for Help and Emailing Teachers** – Follow this link to see the examples: <https://www.washoeschools.net/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=217&ModuleInstanceId=28556&ViewID=6446EE88-D30C-497E-9316-3F8874B3E108&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=54164&PageID=724>
- **Family Wellness** – Local and national resources for mental health, emergency services, and behavioral support. www.washoeschools.net/Page/14383

