

Comment Report

HF 103

A bill for an act relating to school districts and accredited nonpublic schools that deliver coursework using both in-person instruction and instruction using an online learning platform and authorizing parents and guardians to determine which instruction delivery method shall be used to provide instruction to students, and including effective date provisions.(See HF 229.)

Subcommittee Members: Thompson-CH, Gobble, Smith

Date: 01/25/2021

Time: 12:30 PM

Location: RM 15

Name: Jeff Fahrman

Comment: My wife and I have lived in the Ankeny school district for the past 15+ years. We have three kids who were enrolled in the district ages 13, 11, and 9. Last summer as it became clear that the Ankeny school district was moving forward with a hybrid option instead of fulltime inperson instruction, we made the difficult decision to unenroll our three kids. We did not believe the hybrid option would allow for the quality education that our kids deserve. The Ankeny school district refused to seek input from its parents, and instead made decisions based on recommendations from public health authorities and teachers unions. We ultimately enrolled our seventh grader in the Iowa Connections Academy online public school, while my wife homeschooled our fifth and third grader as well as a friends fifth grader. We were fortunate in that my wife has been a fulltime elementary teacher and had been most recently substitute teaching in the Ankeny district. Our younger two have done well with and enjoy being homeschooled by their mom, but our seventh grader would benefit from the social interaction that he would have with inperson school and wanted to go back to Ankeny schools to be with his friends. Once the Ankeny community school district made the decision to return to 100% inperson instruction in January, we reenrolled him in the school district. We saw first hand the negative impact that online schooling can have... at least on some kids. All that we ask is that parents be given a choice as it relates to their childrens instruction. Parents know what is best for their kids and should always have the opportunity to send their kids to school fulltime, 5 days a week. We support this bill that gives parents an option of either fulltime or 100% virtual instruction, which is what schools should have offered to begin with this last fall. Thank you for taking the time to read my email. We appreciate your service and consideration of our comments. Let me know if you have any questions.

Name: Roger White

Comment: Fulltime inperson instruction requires teachers and other school staff members to be present at the school all day, 5 days a week and to interact in person with students and other school employees. When the state has ensured that these vulnerable individuals to Covid19 have been vaccinated and protected, then fine. Until then, it is not save nor healthy to require school staff members to endanger their own health and that of their families by being present all day, every day at the school building. This is particularly crucial for teachers and other school staff who are considered to be high risk for Covid, but applicable for all school employees. Vaccinate and then mandate!

Name: Katherine Craven

Comment: Requiring schools to offer in person instruction without the proper safeguards in

place is irresponsible. This should not be required until all teachers have an opportunity to be vaccinated. Leave decisions up to local districts who know what is best for their students and staff.

Name: Jennifer Barrett

Comment: Is this bill addressing any of the reasons why schools are going hybrid instead of full time? I think everyone wants their kids in school full time but there are reasons why schools made the decision for hybrid...they cant maintain social distance, they dont have enough PPE, they dont have enough staff, etc. If those issues arent addressed then mandating full time will just result in more cases, more quarantines and more kids at home which defeats the purpose.

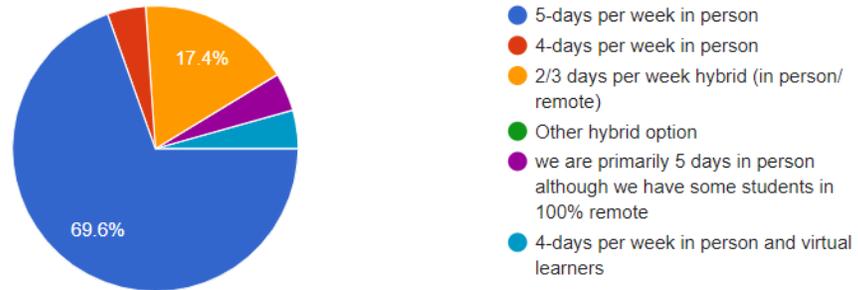
Name: Margaret Buckton

Comment: Survey Data regarding in person, hybrid, and full time instruction from RSAI and UEN, including comments about barriers to 100% in person instruction is attached. UEN is registered as undecided on this bill and requests applicability of the mandated option for parents to chose full time learning when school personnel have the opportunity to be vaccinated, especially given the unknown nature of vaccine availability in both Iowa's rural communities and in urban centers that have so many health care workers first in line.

Urban Education Network: Survey of Instructional Models as of Jan. 21, 2021

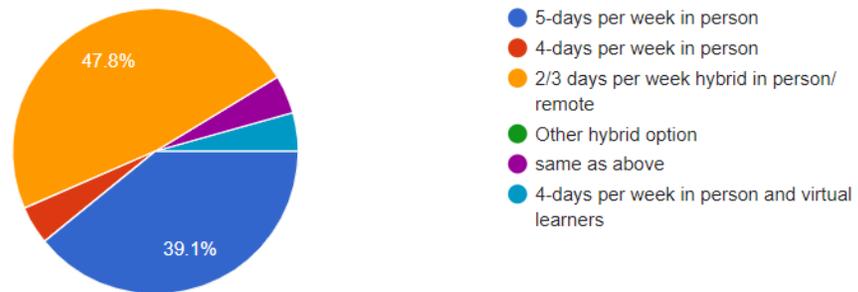
What is your current status of learning plan for Elementary?

23 responses



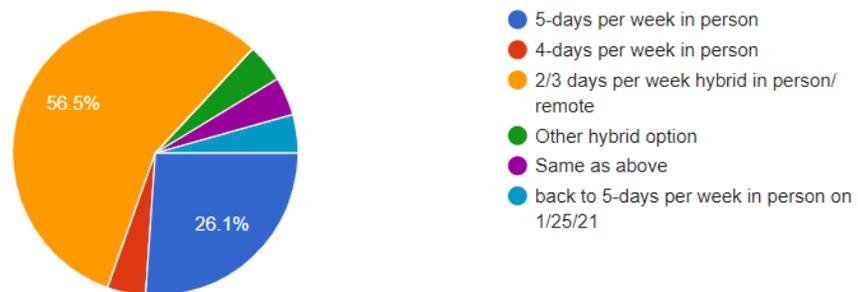
What is your current status of learning plan for Middle School?

23 responses



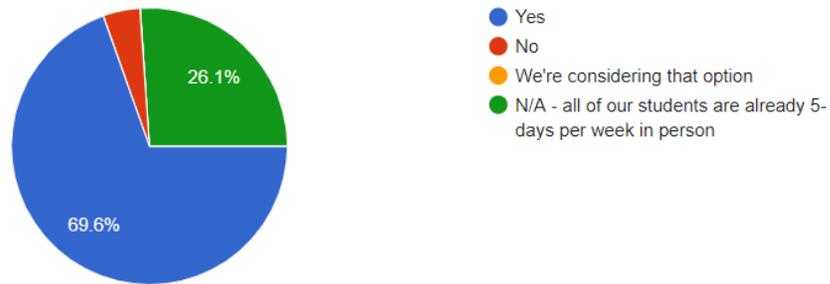
What is your current status of learning plan for High School?

23 responses



Are some students receiving instruction 5-days a week based on need?

23 responses



Comments regarding hybrid or virtual learning options:

Staff are concerned about health risks without a vaccine
Classes sizes will be too large to allow for CDC recommended social distancing, Contact tracing & quarantine requirements with more students in person at the same time, Time for secondary staff to adjust instruction/planning for daily instruction. Schedule changes are complicated at the secondary level.
Insufficient teaching staff to cover both previously selected virtual & 5-days in person, Staff are concerned about health risks without a vaccine, Staff will resign if required to be in school with full classes 5-days a week, Classes sizes will be too large to allow for CDC recommended social distancing, Contact tracing & quarantine requirements with more students in person at the same time, Not enough substitutes to cover classes 5-days per week in person
Insufficient teaching staff to cover both previously selected virtual & 5-days in person, Staff are concerned about health risks without a vaccine, Classes sizes will be too large to allow for CDC recommended social distancing
Staff are concerned about health risks without a vaccine, Classes sizes will be too large to allow for CDC recommended social distancing
Staff are concerned about health risks without a vaccine, Most of our teachers are responsible for both in-person and continuous learning. We provide 1 day a week to do both.
Staff are concerned about health risks without a vaccine, Bus driver shortages to run full routes 5-days a week, Classes sizes will be too large to allow for CDC recommended social distancing, Contact tracing & quarantine requirements with more students in person at the same time, Not enough substitutes to cover classes 5-days per week in person

Staff are concerned about health risks without a vaccine, Classes sizes will be too large to allow for CDC recommended social distancing

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Staff are concerned about health risks without a vaccine, Classes sizes will be too large to allow for CDC recommended social distancing

We have had more positive cases with high school students and they are involved in more outside of school activities.

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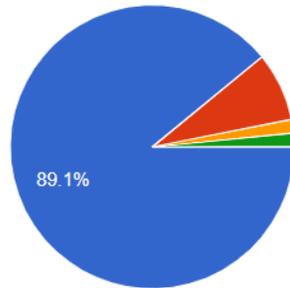
Name: Margaret Buckton

Comment: See attached survey results from RSAI members about current delivery models of instruction in rural schools, many full time instruction and quite a few still in a hybrid or modified model to allow staff who are simultaneously teaching in person, hybrid, and virtual. RSAI would request an opportunity to have staff vaccinated before a mandate for full inperson learning is required. Please don't hesitate to ask any additional questions.

Rural School Advocates of Iowa: Survey of Instructional Models as of Jan. 21, 2021

What is your current status of learning plan for Elementary?

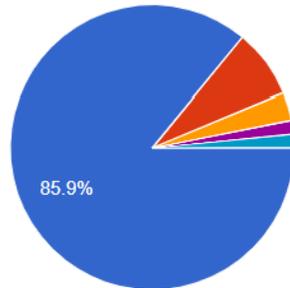
64 responses



- 5-days per week in person
- 4-days per week in person
- 2/3 days per week hybrid (in person/remote)
- Other hybrid option

What is your current status of learning plan for Middle School?

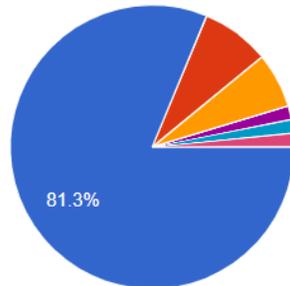
64 responses



- 5-days per week in person
- 4-days per week in person
- 2/3 days per week hybrid in person/remote
- Other hybrid option
- 5 day in person, early dismissal Wednesday afternoon as hybrid learning
- 4-days per week in person, Wednesday distance learning day

What is your current status of learning plan for High School?

64 responses

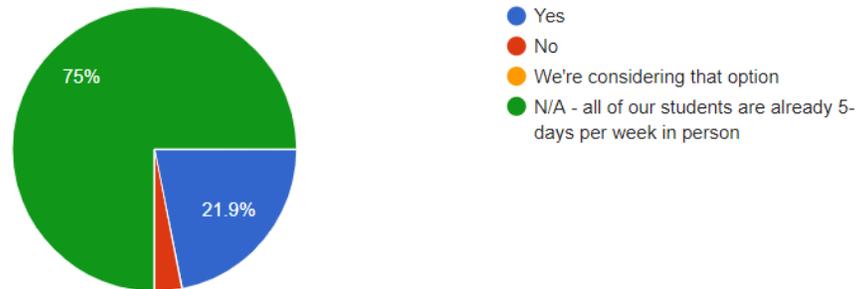


- 5-days per week in person
- 4-days per week in person
- 2/3 days per week hybrid in person/remote
- Other hybrid option
- Kids come everyday for a half day of f2f, half day online learning
- 5 day in person, early dismissal Wednesday afternoon as hybrid learning
- 4-days per week in person, Wednesd...

Are some students receiving instruction 5-days a week based on need?



64 responses



Comments regarding hybrid or virtual learning options:

We just moved to this model (5 days a week) this week. Prior to this, we were in a Hybrid model for the first semester.

Albia has been pretty adamant in trying to provide full in-person learning this school year. Because of Covid numbers, we did have to go hybrid at the 7-12 level for approximately 6 weeks this year. However, PK-6 has gone full in-person every day this school year. We are working hard to continue full in-person as we believe that is the best learning option for our students.

We plan to go 5 days per week for all students by the end of February. We are coordinating this with the vaccinations.

We did have 1:10 dismissal every other week for pd. We know have 1:10 early dismissal every week. Every other week is PD and the other weeks are for PD work and mitigation completion for our staff.

Plan to go to 5 days for all students by mid-February at end of 2nd trimester, and in conjunction with vaccine administration.

We offer an on-line option for families. We currently have about 5% of our students on-line.

We have roughly 150 students who are online virtually all the time, however more parents are having their students return as we have excellent strategies in place to reduce the spread of the virus. Basically K-8 are cohort groups with plexi glass and mandatory masks. We have hired extra long-term subs to cover as needed daily. 9-12 on a A/B schedule. Hoping to bring them back by March 13 unless a vaccine comes sooner.

Our staff are providing instruction to in person, remote quarantined and online students at the same time.

Our 4 day a week model, with virtual learning on Wednesdays is working! We need to keep this consistency for our families!

We have spread out our K-8 students through all of our buildings including our HS to allow for social distancing. That meant we had to find spaces in the community to allow for social distancing for HS. We do not have the space to spread kids out and teach HS all day long. Once our staff are vaccinated, we plan to bring back HS students and offer more space but right now, that hasn't been a safe option. About 70% of our families working at a packing plant in town, we have a lot of positive COVID activity - we created this plan to get kids IN school and keep them in school. We made a plan that would work until vaccines could get here and it's frustrating to think that our teachers may be forced to be in spaces not distanced when we worked so hard to create safe spaces to teach kids. We turned our district upside down to offer safe options.

We attend 5 days a week, however we had a late start every Wednesday, and this year we extended that late start by 2 hours to allow for teachers to plan/prepare for online learning for families that opted for that.

I hope that any bill would not open a window for parents in our district to choose to go face to face or online. We have passed our deadlines for parents to select these options.

Prek-5th has been 5 days the entire year. 6-12 has moved into Hybrid twice based on our numbers. We used a 4-day week schedule with 2 cohorts. We just moved back F2F January 18th grades 6-12 and are hoping to finish the year F2F PK-12 unless numbers change. We use a 2 hour early release every Wednesday for PD. We are moving our TQ day to the end of the year in order to use those hours for instruction.

COVID Update as of 7:30 AM today: Community positivity is 12.0% for Cherokee County. CCSD has 1 student positive and in quarantine and 77 recovered positive and out of quarantine. CCSD has 1 staff member positive and in quarantine and 38 recovered positive and out of quarantine.

If we were mandated to offer 100% option, we would like to have some transition time to prepare for lesson planning and to literally move furniture.

We started the year with five weeks of hybrid model learning. We provide full remote learning the week after Thanksgiving, and December 21 and 22. Neither week required approval from the DE because we remained within the 50% in-person requirement. We will continue to monitor conditions and will adjust our model if necessary and if it remains legal.

Our high school was in a hybrid model the majority of the first semester. We have no plan to use that model again at any level of our school district.

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