

# Todd County School District

## Strong School Plan

---

### SY 2021-22

In consultation with the South Dakota Department of Education (SD DOE), the South Dakota Department of Health (SD DOH), and Todd County School District Health/Safety Committee developed A Return to School Plan, in response to the COVID-19 public health crisis in the Fall of 2020. The purpose of this plan is to review and articulate plans and strategies for reopening schools in the 2021-22 school year. As the District works to implement these recommendations, it is critical to be intentional and prepared for change as the year unfolds in light of public health needs. If a translated document is needed, please contact the district for assistance and one will be provided.

SD DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR REOPENING SCHOOLS SD DOE maintains the below assumptions:

- Schools will provide instruction in the fall and throughout the 2021-22 school year.
- COVID-19 will continue to spread, with or without a vaccine, through the next school year.
- Schools can take practical steps to mitigate spread of the virus while continuing to focus on student learning.
- Each district will make decisions based on scientific information at the time, current status of virus spread in and around the school community, and best interests of staff, students, and families.
- This document does not constitute a legal guide. Decision-making should be based on what we know to be true about COVID-19, knowing that our understanding of the virus will continue to evolve:
- The rate of infection and the mortality rate of COVID-19 is higher than that of influenza.
- Asymptomatic individuals are infectious, though not to the same degree as those displaying symptoms.
- Children are carriers and are susceptible to the virus. Yet there are different levels of susceptibility throughout the population.
- It is not known:
  - Whether seasonality affects COVID-19.
  - How much higher the infection rate of COVID-19 is than influenza.

SD DOE expectations for schools:

- Schools will continue to be a safe environment for students, focusing on both social-emotional and physical health. Local attendance center decisions will be rooted in what is best for students.
- Schools will take reasonable steps within the context of COVID-19 spread in the community to protect the school community. National guidelines, while helpful to provide a context, are only a guide. SD DOE expects school leaders to make reasoned judgments to limit the spread but still provide for continuity of learning.
- Every student will have the opportunity to engage in a full year of learning (in-person, virtual or hybrid), irrespective of the spread of COVID-19 in a community.

## TCSD Strong Schools Plan

This document is built upon the guidance and recommendations of public health officials; it is aligned to the South Dakota Department of Education Starting Well 2020 guidance published on June 10, 2020, recommendations from the RST COVID-19 Task Force and South Dakota Department of Health. It is designed to prioritize the health and safety of students and staff as school buildings are reopened and delivering instruction for the 2021-22 school year. Todd County School District will continue to recognize the recommendations of the RST Tribe.

### ASSUMPTION OF RISK

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 is extremely contagious and is believed to spread mainly from person-to-person contact. As a result, federal, state, and local governments and federal and state health agencies recommend social distancing and have, in many locations, prohibited the congregation of groups of people. The Todd County School District has put in place preventative measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19; however, the district cannot guarantee that individuals will not become infected with COVID-19. Further, school attendance could increase the risk of contracting COVID-19.

Remember that this health crisis is very fluid, and changes can take place very quickly. The Todd County School District will work with the RST COVID-19 Task Force and the South Dakota Department of Health to give you as much information as we are able, as soon as we are able. This plan can change quickly when it is necessary.

The South Dakota Department of Health and Department of Education has tasked each school district with determining which individuals within the school are considered a close contact when a positive case is found in students and staff. The Todd County School Board and school administration have provided safety precautions such as desk shields in some classes, the use of a fogger that neutralizes viruses, and hand sanitization stations in each room. Because of this the district believes it is the safest area to be in a pandemic. The following will be how the district reacts to Covid-19 positive tests and close contact reports.

The Todd County School District and its administration will work to the best of their ability to help the Department of Health and RST COVID-19 Task Force with this determination. During the investigation, the district will consider a variety of factors including but not limited to: Student Positive Case

- Any student who receives a laboratory confirmed test of COVID-19 must remain in isolation for 5 days as per the CDC, RST COVID-19 Task Force and SD-DOH guidelines. The school district is bound by SDCL 13-28-7.3 in regards to the exclusion of a student for risk of infectious disease or communicable parasite for readmission. If student participates in extracurricular activities, the student must complete the Return to Activities Protocol.
- Any student who is positive for COVID-19 cannot be identified as a positive case, nor will they be considered a close contact for 90 days from the time they received a positive diagnosis
- Household or Community Identified Close Contacts
- Any student who permanently lives or resides with a parent/guardian in a household that is the student's primary caregiver is expected to follow all isolation or quarantine guidance from the CDC, RST COVID-19 Task Force and SD-DOH. If during a close contact investigation, the POC (TCSD Point of Contact) determines that a student is not considered a close contact, that student may return to school.
- Based on evolving knowledge of COVID-19, CDC was able to provide alternatives that use additional information, specifically a close contact's development of symptoms and testing for COVID-19, to decrease the length of quarantine.

If symptoms develop within the 5-day quarantine period, the student will be excluded and must isolate at home. Student will follow isolation instructions, including notifying their healthcare provider and school.

### Mission Statement

**During the coronavirus-impacted 2020-21 school year, the Todd County School district will provide for the physical, academic, and social-emotional health and wellness of all students and staff. Our plan is committed to putting the needs of our most vulnerable school-community members *first*.**

## Goals (Aspirations)

### I. Health and Safety

- a. Every TCSD school will provide meals for students.
- b. Every TCSD school will weigh the risks of contracting coronavirus with the risk of losing education/learning opportunities when designing health and safety plans.
- c. Every TCSD school will have protocols for the safe and healthy daily operation of school during the pandemic.
- d. Every TCSD school will monitor staff and students' health and make recommendations to the superintendent for local school building closure.

### II. Academic Wellness

- a. Every TCSD school will provide daily face-to-face instruction, either in person or virtually, along with work packets when applicable.
- b. Every TCSD school will provide standards-based, equitable learning opportunities for all General Education and Exceptional Education students, regardless of online access.
- c. Every TCSD school will have a plan for transition to flex learning upon immediate lockdown or building closure.
- d. Every TCSD school will have a plan for holding students accountable for learning, attendance, and meeting IEP goals during face-to-face sessions and flex learning.

### III. Social and Emotional Wellness

- a. Every TCSD school will consider the education of the whole child – music, PE, electives – when developing their pandemic plan.
- b. Every TCSD school will design opportunities that maximize interaction between teachers and peers.
- c. Every TCSD school will develop a plan for delivering counseling services during periods of flex learning and/or building closures.

### IV. Communication

- a. Every TCSD school will invite input from community stakeholders and do their best to respond to needs.
- b. Every TCSD school will communicate the initial plan, ongoing progress, and changes to the plan for schooling during the pandemic.
- c. Every TCSD school will remain in close communication with area health providers regarding observed illnesses.

- d. Every TCSd school will develop expectations for *all staff* in response to the pandemic, such as responsibilities for cleaning, assignments, and duties during flex learning and/or building closure.

## Actions

### I. Health and Safety

- a. Schools will provide meals with the best nutrition possible, in the safest possible setting.

Considerations:

- Outdoor settings can be used, when possible
- Staggered lunchtimes
- Eating in classrooms, if necessary, to maintain social distancing
- Establish clear and well-marked traffic patterns to minimize face to face contact and maintain social distancing.
- All persons will follow guidelines established regarding social distancing and masks/face shields.

- b. All persons will follow guidelines concerning respiratory etiquette:

Principles of respiratory/hygiene etiquette:

- Cover your nose or mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Throw tissue in the trash when finished.
- Wash your hands immediately after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- To help not spread germs, wash your hands frequently.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who is sick.
- <https://www.tcsdk12.org/page/coughingandsneezing>

- c. Accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies: Please note that accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. Please communicate directly with your students' building principal. The principal will work as the communication hub as we work with recommendations from medical professionals and the child's IEP team or 504 team of which the parent is a member.

- d. Schools will establish class sizes to maintain social distancing.

Considerations:

- ½ day scheduling / alternate days
- Physical distancing within the classrooms- desks, dividers
- Teachers moving classroom to classroom versus students moving
- Scheduling recess times and areas to maintain social distancing

- e. Schools will establish a protocol involving all staff and students for cleaning common areas and learning spaces as scheduled throughout the day.

Considerations:

- Wipe down high touch areas, such as doorknobs and desks, as needed.
- Windows and doors left open for ventilation, when possible
- Toilets and sinks are cleaned 2-4 times/day.
- Tablets and computers wiped after each use.
- Shared materials are discouraged, but, when used, they must be cleaned before being used by other students. If they can't be cleaned, they can't be used.

- Individual sets of student materials are preferable.
  - Books may be used if students wash their hands first.
  - Establish a regular handwashing schedule. All staff and students will receive instruction on proper handwashing and hygiene techniques.
- f. All persons will follow guidelines concerning handwashing etiquette.  
All individuals in the school building should wash their hands with soap and water whenever possible rather than using hand sanitizer.
- For concerns related to the use of hand sanitizer, the option to use soap and water for hand washing will be provided.
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/wash-your-hands-poster-english-508.pdf>
- g. Schools will establish protocols for arrival and dismissal, transitions, quarantine, and minimizing contact with staff or students exhibiting fever or other signs of coronavirus following district guidelines.
- Considerations:
- Screening students who are dropped off separately from those who arrive on the bus
  - Protocol for screening staff and visitors
  - Establish a quarantine location
  - Protocol for reporting potential cases, following HIPA/FERPA guidelines
  - Designate a specific COVID contact person (nurse, med aide)

## II. Academic Wellness

- a. Schools will prioritize student learning objectives from the South Dakota content standard and participate in grade-level workgroups.
- b. Schools will provide parent and community training on the platforms (Schoology) used for instruction during flex and at-home learning.
- Considerations:
- Expectations – including attendance, completion of assignments, and assessment
  - Pros and cons of social learning opportunities versus paper and pencil packet opportunities
  - Logging into and accessing the Learning Management System (LMS) system to monitor their child's progress
  - Plan a learning environment that moves fluidly from in-school, in-person instruction to at-home flex learning instruction.
  - TCSD will work to provide devices and internet access to families and communities.
  - Plan for early, periodic, in-person formative assessment to deliver instruction the students need when they need it.
  - Concerning the flex learning aspects of our curriculum, consideration will be made for district-wide learning opportunities. For example, creating virtual classrooms for ALL kindergartners in the district versus just those from a specific attendance center.

**III. Social-Emotional Wellness**

- a. Schools will plan school days to include specials/electives to support social-emotional wellness. Plans will include both in-person and flex learning solutions.
- b. Schools will design online opportunities that maximize interaction with teachers and peers.
- c. Schools will have plans for delivering school counseling both in person and via distance technology.
- d. Schools will investigate expanding opportunities for outside sources to provide one-on-one counseling to students. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/telehealth.html>)

**IV. Communication**

- a. Schools will develop methods of gathering input from the community and families.
- b. Schools will develop a communication plan that addresses each area, including mission and vision through the pandemic, physical wellness, academic wellness, and social-emotional wellness that meets the minimum standard.
- c. Family and Community Engagement Coordinator will attend tribal and community meetings regularly to relay and gather info.
- d. Communication will be frequent, regular, and redundant (appear via multiple modes).
  - TCSD App
  - PSA
  - Phone Calls (Individual/Group)
  - Infinite Campus (Automated phone call, email, text)
  - Email (Individual/Group)
  - Local Radio Stations
  - Schools' Facebook Pages

Board Approval: August 3, 2020

Review Date: June 14, 2021

Updated: December 13, 2021

Updated: May 23, 2022

Contact Person: Carol Galbraith