

Plentywood School District #20

Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

Date of Adoption: June 21, 2021

Revision Dates: Dec. 13, 2021; June 9, 2022; Dec. 12, 2022; May 8, 2023 (Plentywood School District #20 will review its Plan every 6 (six) months throughout the 2021-2024 school years.)

HISTORY

Following the lifting of the Stay-at-Home Order and subsequent reopening of the state on April 22, 2020, Plentywood School District #20 utilized the Montana Public Education Center *Roadmap for Safely Reopening Montana's Public Schools Using Emergency School District Policies* (see Appendix) and accompanying MTSBA Model Emergency Policies. Utilizing these resources supported our district's continued service to students with transparency and accountability while ensuring the operations of the school district reflected the circumstances in our community.

The policies ensured our Board of Trustees and school leaders honored the following priorities: quality instruction to students; a healthy and safe setting for students, staff, and the community; needed support of teachers and staff; and responsible financial and operational procedures. The policies provided an actionable plan for completing the 2020-2021 school fiscal year in a manner that met these priorities and secured district funding while providing an operational platform for considering long term innovations in the delivery of education services.

Plentywood School District #20 implemented policy options that facilitated collaboration between the Board of Trustees, administrative team, employees, parents, students, health officials, and community as we established protocols aligned with CDC guidance addressing how instruction was to be delivered to students; how gatherings and events would take place on school property; how the health and safety of staff and students would be protected and preserved while schools were open; and how financial and operational functions of the school district would continue during the period of public health emergency.

Plentywood School District #20 reviewed, considered, and addressed numerous areas of operation in our reopening process. On the topic of school district policy and procedures, the district considered emergency policies and procedures, adoption and amendment of policies, suspension of policies, and administrative procedures. To support students' academic, mental, social and emotional success, the district considered alternative grading, counseling, extended school year, student instruction proficiency determinations and declarations, support for particularly vulnerable students, transportation services, access to internet for students, food preparation and service, summer school and additional student instruction resources. To ensure the health and safety of students, teachers, and staff, the district considered cleaning and disinfection, community use of facilities, county board of health orders, diagnosis and confidentiality, hand washing and related hygiene protocols, telework, school closure orders, stay at home orders, symptom monitoring and isolation, travel quarantines, visitors, volunteers, vulnerable individuals, masks and personal protective equipment, and physical distancing.

Following the *Roadmap for Safely Reopening Montana's Public Schools Using Emergency School District Policies* (see Appendix) ensured Plentywood School District #20 has remained in compliance with guidance and best practices provided by federal, state, or local health officials. Our school district has continued to adapt and adjust our policies as new and updated guidance and best practices have become available.

Further, the policies provide options for consideration through input from our board of trustees, administrative team, employees, parents, students, health officials, and community as collaborative partners as we have worked our way through ever evolving changes due to the pandemic. By considering all possible perspectives and factors when making the decisions to adopt or adjust a policy, or to implement a policy, we focused on the health and safety of our students, staff, and community for delivery of learning and services to our students. The policies have enabled us to adjust our procedures and practices during different phases in compliance with guidance and best practices provided by federal, state, and local agencies.

Plentywood School District #20 will continue to follow the policies noted below while engaging in a reevaluation process every 6 (six) months to continue to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of our students, teachers, staff, and community through 2024.

UPDATED COMPLIANCE FOR THE DISTRICT'S PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED PLAN FOR THE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES

Section 2001(i) (3) of the ARP Act states that a school district that developed a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services prior to the date of enactment of the ARP Act will be deemed to have met the requirement to develop a plan under section 2001(i) (1) as long as the plan meets the statutory requirements (*i.e.*, is publicly available on the LEA's website and was developed after the LEA sought and took into account public comment).

The School District's plan meets the requirements of Section 2001(i) (1) and (i) (2) of the ARP Act. The School District's plan is available on our website and, as noted above, was developed through a process that included extensive public comment. Further, we have, as part of the organization of the School District's plan for purposes of the ARP Act, revised the School District's plan at a meeting held on June 21, 2021 that included not just a notice of opportunity for public input but which specifically invited meaningful consultation with and input from: students; families; school and district administrators (including special education administrators); teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions; and stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

We have considered the input of all affected parties and have carefully deliberated regarding the best possible means by which our district can provide safe effective learning environments for each of our students.

SAFETY MEASURES

The District is taking the following measures to safely provide in-person instruction, including consideration of guidance by the CDC and state and local health officials as follows:

Universal and correct wearing of masks

Upon the lifting of the mask mandates at the state and local level and coupled with staff being offered their second doses, including boosters, of the COVID-19 vaccine, Plentywood School District #20 moved to masks being optional for wear for staff, students, and public on its school grounds on April 7, 2021. Masks being required of persons on school grounds will only be reinstated upon mandates from the state of Montana or the Sheridan County Health Department.

Physical Distancing

Plentywood School District #20 will continue to follow suggested guidelines from the Centers on Disease Control (CDC) with a minimum of 3 (three) feet physical distancing between persons in its buildings. Physical barriers will be made available as needed and requested to support this guidance.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

Plentywood School District #20 will continue to promote proper handwashing techniques and personal sanitation following coughing and sneezing as suggested by the Centers on Disease Control (CDC). Education will continue to be given by staff to students on this subject.

Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities (including improving ventilation)

Plentywood School District #20 will continue to follow suggested means and methods on the cleaning, sanitation, and disinfection of its facilities as per guidance from the Centers on Disease Control (CDC).

Contact Tracing

Plentywood School District #20 will continue to coordinate with the Sheridan County Health Department and perform contact tracing when requested.

Diagnostic and Screening Testing

Testing for the COVID-19 virus will be performed through local health facilities in Sheridan County, including the Sheridan County Health Department and the Sheridan Memorial Hospital.

Vaccinations

The District will act in accordance with state and federal law with respect to vaccinations for its staff and eligible students. Any students or staff requesting time to receive vaccinations will be granted excused leave if requested. The District will permit county health officials to perform vaccinations of staff on school facilities if requested.

The District will not refuse, withhold from, or deny a person any services, goods, facilities, advantages, privileges, licensing, educational opportunities, health care access, or employment opportunities based on the person's vaccination status.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

The District will provide accommodations to its policies for students with disabilities as determined appropriate based upon the individual student needs and in accordance with an individual accommodation plan or individualized education plan. Students requiring accommodations should contact Mr. Rob Pedersen, Superintendent, to request information on plans for students with disabilities.

CONTINUITY OF SERVICES

The District will provide for continuity of services as follows:

Student Academic Needs

Plentywood School District #20 will measure the students' academic progress and collect data for possible learning loss through screening programs such as Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) testing, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) progress monitoring, easyCBM mathematics screener, the STAR Reading Assessment, and the Smarter Balanced Assessment. Our school will respond to learning loss with reading or math intervention programs that are research-based, Title I identification, tutoring services, peer mentoring, and an offering of an After-School Program.

Student Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

Plentywood School District #20 will identify social, emotional, and mental health needs through staff referrals and recommendations. We will also look to include more education in these areas through our guidance counseling curriculum and our health enhancement curriculum. Guest speakers will also be researched and contracted as needed. Plentywood School District #20 employs a certified guidance counselor and also contracts a certified school psychologist through the Sheridan-Daniels Special Education Cooperative that are available for specific student needs.

Students shall receive services in accordance with the applicable Individualized Education Plan or Section 504 Plan based on methods and locations agreed upon and documented by the applicable team to meet the student's needs and goals. Students shall have access to regular school counseling services whether their instruction is provided in an onsite, offsite or online setting. Staff shall promptly report any suspected student distress or concern to their supervisor for review and referral. Students receiving instruction in an offsite setting are governed by the staff obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect. This policy in no way limits or adjusts the School District's obligations to homeless students or students in foster care. Applicable District policies serving these students, or this population of students remain in full effect.

Other Student Needs (which may include student health and food services)

Plentywood School District #20 utilizes a Summer Food Program that offers meals during the summer months and also during the school year for those who are learning remotely.

Staff Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

Plentywood School District #20 will look to assist staff with specific needs in this area which includes excused leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act.

PUBLIC INPUT

Plentywood School District #20 values comment from its public. The draft of this plan will be posted on its school website and copies will be available at the district office upon request.

The District will review this Plan at least once every six months and will provide an opportunity for public input in association with any review of the Plan.

Consideration of this Safe Return to Schools and Continuity of Services Plan shall be added as a standing agenda item on each regular and special meeting of the board of trustees throughout the 2021-24 school years on a six-month review basis. The agenda item shall, at a minimum, include notice of any changes to the plan recommended by the administration with an invitation for input, notice of opportunity for public input, and consultation with: students; families; school and district administrators (including special education administrators); teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions; and stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

Please contact Superintendent, Rob Pedersen, for any input or questions at (406)765-1803 or by email at pederr@plentywood.k12.mt.us .

APPENDIX:

Plentywood School District #20's Plan for Re-opening of School and Co-Curricular Plans for the 2020-21 School Year:



COVID-19 -



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[MT-PEC](#) A Roadmap for Safely Reopening Montana's Public Schools Using Emergency School District Policies.