August 6, 2020

Dear Smithton Families,

I hope everyone has had a relaxing summer and is ready for a return to school. I regret that our situation with regards to the COVID-19 pandemic is still creating a great deal of stress for our homes and businesses. In the spring of the year we were asked to close our schools and cancel all activities. Throughout the summer we have remained closed to the public and have opened our doors to limited student activity groups in an effort to prepare for a complete reopening this fall. A plan for our reopening was developed over the summer and the Board of Education was given the opportunity to review it and provide input. We are scheduled to return to school this fall on August 26, 2020 and our goal is to start under a traditional campus learning model. However, we have come to realize that this start will be anything but traditional.

The accompanying plan includes a traditional campus learning model, a partial campus learning model, and a distance learning model each of which involves changes to accommodate the safety of our staff, students and families based on guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Pettis County Health Center, the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSSA) and consultation with area school leaders. We believe that the safety measures put forth in each of these plans represent our greatest opportunity of controlling the spread of COVID-19 and preserving the integrity of our educational and extracurricular activities. I also acknowledge that opinions on many of the recommended safety measures vary and I remain very appreciative and mindful of the cooperative effort each home will have to maintain in order for our doors to remain open. Each of our plans includes the need for a home health screening for students each day and the possible requirement of face coverings for all students and staff when social distancing is not possible. Based on the current conditions in Pettis County we would require face covering for all students and staff if our doors were to open today. Face coverings, along with other measures related to social distancing, disinfecting and symptom screening will offer us the greatest opportunity to minimize the number of students who would be quarantined in the event of a positive case in our schools. It is strongly suggested that each family establishes contact with a health care provider, if possible, in order to develop a personal response plan for children in each home who may exhibit symptoms of COVID-19.
I realize due to the inconvenience of these safety measures or health concerns within our most vulnerable households that some families will wish to have a completely virtual option for school at this time. If this is the case, please refer to the information in the plan regarding the Missouri Course Access Program (MOCAP) and contact the appropriate school office. There is a lot of work to do in order to recover from the spring and establish routines and procedures for a safe return and as always I appreciate your interest, support and cooperation with the Smithton R-VI School District. Please watch for more detailed information to follow from buildings and classrooms. If you have any questions about our plan please contact our offices at (660) 343 5316.

Sincerely,

David R. Bray, Ed. S. Superintendent of Schools
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This comprehensive plan for a return to learning in the Smithton R-VI School District (subsequently referred to as the District) represents the collective work of the Smithton R-VI administrative team and a volunteer taskforce composed of staff members of the Smithton R-VI School District. It was developed during the spring and summer of 2020 following the extended closure of the District due to the effects of COVID-19. The plan continues to draw upon guidance from the Center for Disease Control, the Department of Health and Senior Services, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Pettis County Health Department, and ongoing consultation among Pettis County schools and other schools within the state of Missouri. All aspects of this plan were designed to protect the integrity of our mission to serve our community by providing a safe and caring environment where each student, through encouragement and engagement, becomes a responsible citizen and lifelong learner, set forth by the Smithton R-VI Board of Education, families and friends of the District.

The plan is divided into three main topics that most effectively represent the aspects of our programming.

- The **Instruction** section addresses all the relevant information related to teaching and learning in the District.
- The **Building and Classrooms** section addresses the District in terms of the physical spaces that make up the collective campus.
- The **Personnel** section addresses all of the relevant information about the District as an employer.

The information found in each of these sections originated from a list of considerations, each of which were weighed against current guidance from aforementioned sources, survey data from families of the District and the integrity of our educational mission, before any decisive action was taken. In addition, each consideration was advanced to include guidance during a full return to campus for learning, a partial return to campus for learning, or a return to learning at a distance in the event of a full campus closure.

Providing for the safety of the some 600 staff and students of the Smithton R-VI School District will always be the basis for any and all decisions. This is particularly challenging when also considering the specifics of each home and the fears, beliefs and vulnerabilities among the members within. We believe this plan represents the best possible solution to teaching and learning during this uncertain situation. The Smithton R-VI School District has had a long-standing tradition of supportive and engaged patrons and in order to meet the challenges brought on by our current condition we will rely heavily on the continued support and cooperative partnership with our families and friends. If you have any questions or concerns please contact our offices at (660) 343 5316.
Traditional Campus Learning Model

Instruction:

We believe that the best way to access our programming is through a full return to our campus for learning, where every student is in a seat in a classroom. It is our goal to remain in this setting as long as possible. During a full return to campus the following safety guidelines will be in place.

- Adults will always have the option of wearing masks and may be required to do so when their role brings them within six feet of a student or another adult.
- Students will always have the option of wearing a mask, and may be required to do so, especially when social distancing is a challenge or conditions in the community warrant it.
- All classrooms will include Google Classroom into daily instruction (K-12).
- Visitors/Volunteers to the District will be limited and scheduled meetings will include safety regulations commensurate with state and local guidelines.
- Social distancing will be implemented in the classrooms and buildings whenever feasible or whenever the integrity of instruction is not compromised.
- Teachers will continue to use the most effective, research-based instructional practices to improve student learning.
Building and Classroom:

We believe that our classrooms and buildings are a safe place to learn and we have made changes to our facilities and procedures to improve both classroom and building sanitation. During this full return to learning there will be additional guidelines followed to ensure greater safety.

- Social distancing will be followed with a distance of 3 to 6 feet whenever possible.
- There will be increased opportunities for students and staff to practice good hygiene.
- Student bathrooms have been converted to touchless amenities and easy clean surfaces and water fountains will be used for bottle fill only (K-12).
- Meal service will continue with social distancing whenever possible and alternative spaces will be explored (K-12).
- Student groups will remain together as much as possible and disinfecting will occur between the use of shared spaces when feasible.
- Students will always have the option of wearing a mask, and may be required to do so, especially when social distancing is a challenge or conditions in the community warrant it.
Personnel

We believe that our staff is prepared for a full return to campus and remain to be a highly dedicated and caring staff. During this full return there will be additional guidelines followed to ensure greater safety.

- Staff will always have the option to wear masks and may be required to do so whenever they cannot maintain social distancing between students or other staff members.
- Staff will self-monitor prior to work each day using a health screening tool.
- Staff will have ample supplies to maintain clean classrooms throughout the day.
- Teachers will remain in their classrooms and maintain procedures to improve cleaning between usage groups.
- Staff are given an additional 60 minutes of COVID-19 training prior to the beginning of the school year.
Instruction:

We believe that in the event that we would need to place fewer students on campus due to a safety risk associated with COVID-19 or another similar situation, that we can still provide quality access to our programming. During this partial return to campus there will be additional guidelines followed to ensure greater safety. While we acknowledge that a partial return to campus is not ideal we do feel it is an option that maintains some of the integrity of our instruction and services while allowing us to maintain many of the programs that exist outside the school day.

- Social distancing will increase to 6 feet and all staff and students will wear masks whenever they cannot maintain adequate distance.
- Instructional practices will change to accommodate this need for greater social distancing.
- Student groups in all grades will attend school every other day allowing group sizes to be further reduced (K-12).
- Students not in attendance will maintain connection with their courses through Google Classroom (K-12).
- Visitors/Volunteers to the District will be limited and scheduled meetings will include safety regulations commensurate with state and local guidelines.
• Students will always have the option of wearing a mask, and may be required to do so, especially when social distancing is a challenge or conditions in the community warrant it.

Partial Campus Learning Model

Building and Classroom:

We believe that our classrooms and buildings are a safe place to learn and we have made changes to our facilities and procedures to improve both classroom and building sanitation. During this partial return to campus the facilities will undergo additional and even more intense cleaning and disinfecting with a greater emphasis on limiting exposure in common spaces.

• Social distancing will increase to 6 feet and all staff and students will wear masks whenever they cannot maintain adequate distance.
• There will be greater opportunities for students and staff to practice good hygiene and well-checks will be performed throughout each day.
• Student bathrooms have been converted to touchless amenities and easy clean surfaces and deep cleaning will occur throughout the day with water fountains used for bottle fill only (K-12).
• Meal service will continue with social distancing of 6 feet or more maintained as well as the use of alternative spaces (K-12).
Student groups will remain together exclusively in the elementary grades and as much as possible in our junior high and high school and disinfecting will occur between the use of shared spaces when feasible.

**Partial Campus Learning Model**

**Personnel**

Although our staff would prefer a full return to campus, we know that they will be able to maintain a flexible work schedule allowing us to preserve the integrity of our educational and extracurricular programming. During this partial return there will be additional guidelines followed to ensure greater safety.

- Staff will wear masks whenever they cannot maintain social distancing between students or other staff members.
- Staff will self-monitor prior to work each day using a health screening tool.
- Staff will have ample supplies to maintain clean classrooms throughout the day.
- Teachers will move to classrooms allowing student groups to remain intact throughout the day whenever possible.
- Staff are given an additional 60 minutes of COVID-19 training prior to the beginning of the school year.
- Staff will maintain a presence on Google Classroom throughout the day (K-12).
- Staff will have instructional devices and hotspot devices available when they are not in attendance.
Distance Learning Model

Instruction:

We believe that in the event that we would need to close our campus due to a safety risk associated with COVID-19 or another similar situation, that we can provide quality access to our educational programming. While we acknowledge that learning from a distance is not ideal we do feel it is an option that allows us to continue to provide instruction allowing for more continuity during a return to partial or full campus learning.

- All instruction will take place at a distance.
- Student will have access to Chrome Books and mobile hotspot devices when necessary.
- Students will maintain connection with their courses through Google Classroom and instruction will be asynchronous (K-12).
- Campus will be closed to all visitors.
- Employees of the District will have access to the building with different restrictions depending on current health and safety guidelines.
In the event that we would need to close our campus due to a safety risk associated with COVID-19 or another similar situation, campus will be closed and all events cancelled.

- We will continue to provide meal service for families who wish to receive meals.
- Extensive cleaning of our campus facilities will occur.
Personnel

Although our staff acknowledge that our educational programming is more effective when delivered on campus, we know that they will be able to maintain a connection to all students and families. During this campus closure there will be additional guidelines followed to ensure greater safety.

- Staff will wear masks whenever they cannot maintain social distancing between other staff members
- Employee presence on campus will be limited to ensure proper social distancing
- Wellness checks for staff on campus will be more extensive
- Staff will self-monitor prior to coming to campus using a health screening tool
- Staff will maintain a presence on Google Classroom and through Zoom Meetings throughout the day (K-12)
- Staff will communicate with students and families through multiple means including, but not limited to phone calls, emails, text messages, SISK12 Bulletins or school website
Transportation:

We recognize that transportation to and from school is one of the more challenging times to create opportunities for social distancing and to limit exposure to diverse groups. We also recognize that as a caregiver you may wish to not take advantage of transportation services during this time. Please watch for opportunities to update transportation information for the 2020-21 school year. Transportation services will be provided through our partnership with Apple Bus Company. The Apple Bus Company Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19 offers the best guidance on transportation for students in the Smithton R-VI School District. Additionally, through our collaboration with Apple Bus Company the following guidelines will be followed:

- Students seated from back to front in assigned seats
- Students seated in household groups observing social distancing as feasible
- Students recommended to wear face covering when social distancing is challenging
- Available during both full campus return and partial campus return
- Available during travel to scheduled activities and events away from campus
At Home:

In order for us to remain in a full return to campus setting it will be necessary for homes to conduct a screening for their children each day. A tool for screening is available under the health tab on our website and through our app that will aid in this step. Please keep members of your household home when they are not feeling well, especially if they are experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19.

Due to the fluid nature of this pandemic and the health risk it poses on our community, especially among our most vulnerable members, we ask for your cooperation with any changes that may occur at a moment's notice. We regret the impending inconvenience this situation poses to our staff, students and families and will do everything we can to keep everyone safe. Please understand that your child’s presence at school creates a risk of exposure that, through cooperation between home and school can be mitigated with adherence to the safety measures set forth in this plan.

MOCAP:

We realize that each household is affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in a different way and that each family is making difficult decisions based on this. As a result, the Smithton R-VI School District will continue to offer virtual learning through Missouri Course Access Program (MOCAP). Please see the information on our website on MOCAP options. We will be using a program called Launch. It is taught by Missouri certified teachers and follows Missouri Curriculum standards. This option is a semester long basis only. Visit www.fueledbylaunch.com for details on our district sponsored virtual instruction. If you would like to take advantage of this option please contact the appropriate building office by August 14, 2020.
Of course families of the District always have the option to homeschool their children at any time during the academic year.

**Extracurricular Activities:**

All sports and activities that fall under the governance of the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) will follow guidelines adopted by MSHSAA, unless they are determined unsafe for activities scheduled based on the most current local health and safety guidelines. Students who have opted for full time distance learning will not be able to participate in extracurricular activities. Students must be in seat for at least two consecutive hours to be eligible (MSHSAA). If the district has moved to the Learning at a Distance Model at any point all activities will be postponed or cancelled.

All aspects of this plan are subject to change and any time based on the conditions within our school and community as well as guidance from Federal, State, and local health officials.

**References:**

DESE/DHSS Missouri School Reopening Guidance  
The Importance of Reopening America's Schools this Fall  
Proposed Management of COVID - rev.docx  
American Academy of Pediatrics
July 17, 2020

Dear Smithton R-VI Parents, Staff and Community:

We hope everyone is having a safe summer and are ready for the start of another school year. This week a task force made up of staff members met for a second time in order to develop plans to reopen the Smithton R-VI Schools. We appreciate your feedback and look forward to cooperating with everyone to serve our community safely and effectively. Please watch for additional opportunities to provide input during this process.

As we develop this comprehensive plan for reopening our schools and a return to learning in our community, we are in frequent communication with local health officials and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Our challenge is to take all this guidance and put it into a plan that works the best for our students and offers the least compromise to learning while keeping staff, students and families safe.

Our final task force meeting will be held on July 30. Our goal will be to share the complete plan following that meeting. The following is a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that attempts to summarize this group’s interpretation of this guidance as it relates to education at Smithton R-VI:

**How will sanitation look different in the Smithton R-VI Schools during the 2020-21 school year?**
Specific cleaning schedules will be followed for both custodians and teachers including increased frequency and intensity of sanitation. There will be ample cleaning supplies available for classroom and building use. Note: There will be a plan in place in case of a COVID-19 case within the school.

**How will social distancing be addressed during school hours?**
We will maintain social distancing standards as feasible, encouraging 3-6 feet of spacing and increased personal hygiene and hand sanitation. Work areas will be regularly sanitized following each use. Masks will be encouraged in times where social distancing is challenging. Students will be allowed to carry backpacks to limit locker usage and practice social distancing.

**What learning platforms will be utilized for the 2020-21 school year?**
While students are in attendance, we will continue to use the most effective educational strategies. In the event that learning will have to occur at a distance, we will utilize Google Classroom as our primary digital platform. Please take the opportunity to familiarize yourself with Google Classroom and the applicable passwords.
Will there be any change in our school calendar?
No, there will be no change to our school calendar. First day of school will be August 26.

What staff safety measures will be in place? Staff are encouraged to wear masks, when working closely with children and other staff, however they are not required. Staff will be trained on signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and encouraged to remain at home when not feeling well, or when their personal risk level is high.

How will students be held accountable for work?
Regardless of the setting (in class or distance), student performance will be measured the same as in past years. Modifications and accommodations will be utilized on a case by case basis.

What reasons could cause us to shift to distance learning?
A shift to distance learning could be a result of a drastic decrease in staff and/or student attendance, recommended quarantine of students and/or staff as well as State and local requirements.

Will the school provide transportation services?
We will continue to provide morning and afternoon bus service through our partnership with Apple Bus Company. There will be an emphasis on sanitation, personal hygiene, and limited exposure. Boys and Girls Club will still be available after school to provide childcare and they are partnering with us to keep our students safe.

How can parents assist us in our plan to return to learn?
● As we know, information and data about COVID-19 is continually changing. Please begin to think of the possibility that we may need to shift to distance learning. This shift could be short or long term and parents may not always have ample notice. As each family’s situation is different, you may need to think about having an alternate plan readily available.
● Be aware of and monitor your child/children’s possible symptoms and do not send them to school if they exhibit any signs of illness.
● Once school begins, make sure we have the most up-to-date contact information on file so that, if needed, we can reach you.
● Please continue to respond to any future district communications in a prompt manner.

As always, we appreciate your interest in Smithton R-VI Schools and your continued support as we face this challenging time. Please understand that these decisions are based on guidance from the Center for Disease Control, Pettis County Health Department, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, local school leaders and this task force, and are subject to change based on updated information from any or all of these groups.

Sincerely,

Smithton R-VI Administration Reopening Taskforce
June 26, 2020

Dear Smithton R-VI Parents, Staff and Community:

We hope everyone is having a safe summer and are ready for the start of another school year. This week a task force made up of staff members met in order to begin developing plans to reopen the Smithton R-VI Schools. We encourage you to look for opportunities to provide necessary input during this process. Much of the information will be gathered through surveys and we ask that you continue to watch for and respond to them when possible.

The task force has begun to develop three potential plans for the return of school in the fall. The first plan is dedicated to the full return of students and staff with safety guidelines that least compromise effective teaching strategies. The second plan is dedicated to distance learning for all staff and students with increased monitoring and continuous communication with Federal, State, and local health officials. The third plan is dedicated to a combination of distance and a full return to school, with both safety guidelines for those in attendance and increased monitoring and communication with health officials.

We appreciate your cooperation and patience as we work through this difficult time for our community. Thank you for your interest in the Smithton R-VI Schools.

Sincerely,

Smithton R-VI Administration
Reopening Task Force

June 24, 2020

Dear Smithton R-VI Parents, Staff and Community:

We hope everyone is enjoying their summer and ready for a return to school in the fall. A task force composed of staff members of Smithton R-VI is currently working on plans to determine just how that return to school will look. This task force will meet over the summer several times with the sole purpose of planning for the reopening of the Smithton R-VI Schools. Please watch for information regarding this work over the next several weeks. Regardless of how it looks we wanted to express our deep appreciation for your cooperation and patience as we work through the guidance and suggestions from Federal, State and local health experts and area school leaders to determine the most sensible plan for returning to school.

Over the next several weeks we ask that you watch for opportunities to provide us with input regarding a return to school in the fall. It will be important for us to respond to the needs of our community in whatever we do. We anticipate a wide range of thoughts on this subject as everyone’s understanding and experiences with COVID-19 over the past few months are undoubtedly different. We also acknowledge that the health risks associated with this virus are different in each home and will work to develop plans that protect the most vulnerable among us.
Our goal is to return to school in the fall and we look forward to cooperating with each child and each home to create a stronger and healthier school community. Many activities at Smithton R-VI have begun to use our facilities under specific health and safety guidelines. We acknowledge that quality health, just like a quality education, begins in the home and we ask that if your child is involved in any of these activities they remain at home when not feeling well.

Thank you for your interest in Smithton R-VI Schools and have a great day.

Sincerely,

Smithton R-VI Administrative Team

May 28, 2020

The Smithton R-VI Schools are currently exploring how reopening for the 2020-21 school year will look. Like many of us we are preparing for the unknown and reviewing information from multiple sources. Our goal is to open school on August 26 with a multitude of considerations. Over the summer months we will be developing plans that reflect the different possibilities for reopening based on our consultation with local health officials, area superintendents and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Mr. Werner will be sending information out regarding the opening of our campus to limited groups for summer workouts beginning June 15. We are excited to open our campus, but are obligated to comply with current national, state, and local guidance.

We recognize that each family has had a different experience regarding the pandemic and that each family's feelings on the pandemic reflect those differences. We as a District have appreciated the cooperation from our families as we finished the 2019-20 school year and look forward to working together to ensure continuity of our programs regardless of the conditions.

The following are some answers to potential questions we anticipate from our community:

Will the Smithton R-VI Schools follow the calendar adopted by the board in February? Yes. At this time, we have no intention to file for a waiver to begin the school year prior to August 26, 2020.

Will there be a registration day prior to the start of school? Yes. Our plan right now is to have open registration on August 4th and 5th with some possible online options to be shared over the summer.

What additional precautions will the school take regarding the current pandemic? The school will respond to all state and local health guidelines and provide additional opportunities to teach and practice self-care among students and staff of the Smithton R-VI Schools. This includes enhanced sanitation of buildings and commons areas and frequently touched surfaces.
**Will families be required to transport students to school?** No. We are including Apple Bus Company in our plans and they will be following all state and local health guidelines regarding the transportation of students to and from school.

**Will there be changes to the food service program?** The food service program will continue providing 2 meals each day to students in attendance and food service workers will follow all state and local health guidelines regarding preparation and handling of food. We encourage all families to complete the Free and Reduced Meal Application when they become available during and after registration.

**Will sports and activity schedules change?** Mr. Werner is working closely with the Kaysinger Conference and the Missouri State High School Activities Association and will respond to state and local health guidance, including any travel restrictions and occupancy limits. We know that there are many other questions that are difficult to answer at this time and encourage everyone to watch for updates throughout the summer from the District.

Thank you again for your cooperation, support and understanding during these difficult times.

Sincerely,

Smithton R-VI Administration