COAHOMA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Committed to Caring...Dedicated to Excellence

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

**Approved May 20, 2021**

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**The district will receive comments on this plan through May 26, 2021. Copies of the plan may be picked up at the District Administration Office located on Lee Drive, or downloaded from the district's web page.**

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

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# Introduction

The primary goal of the Coahoma County School District (CCSD) for the 2021-2022 school term is three-pronged: 1) to safely bring back all students to in-person school settings; 2) to maximize learning and student achievement; and 3) to address students' social and emotional needs. Remote learning will only be considered if there is a localized outbreak or emergency. The information provided in this plan will be utilized by the district and schools to guide school operations and decision-making. We know that throughout the school year, we will need be ready to confront significant challenges, and that our collective task will be to find the best way to balance health and safety concerns with our mission as educators to support student learning and educator efficacy in the most effective and efficient ways possible.

# Guiding Principles

The core principles that underlie the plan are straightforward and consistent with our overriding goal of advancing our students' wellbeing and achievement. However, It should be noted that our goals and responsibilities as educators remain unchanged, and that It is our obligation to plan and execute processes that will achieve our goals and objectives despite any unfavorable circumstances we have to confront. Thus, the following guiding principles:

- **Health and safety:** We are committed to protecting our students, staff and families by adhering to the guidelines established by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and other public health agencies, by providing face coverings, upgrading air filters, and maintaining standard operating procedures that ensure adherence to social distancing standards and the implementation of student/staff hygiene best practices.

- **Accelerating student learning:** We will focus on grade-level content as our academic priority, rather than on remediation. All students will benefit from individualized learning paths informed by assessment data and student work, and we will provide targeted supports to English learners, students with disabilities, homeless students and other vulnerable student populations.

- **Prioritizing equity for all communities:** We will be intentional in our determination that the current national health emergency will not be used as an excuse to worsen inequities that may exist between wealthy school districts and high poverty school districts or for vulnerable children. To do this, we will commit to regular practices of monitoring and analysis of decision-making and practices, as they are vital components in ensuring that we always have equity in the forefront of district and school operations.

- **Commitment to stakeholder engagement and support**: As an integral part of our planning and equity processes, we will also engage with stakeholders through use of surveys, in-person and virtual feedback sessions, focus groups, and workgroups to provide updates and gain feedback on a regular basis.

# Maintaining an Environment of Fluidity and Continuity

## Accelerating Student Learning

Most students will enter the 2021-2022 having experienced some learning interruptions during the 2020-21 school term. These interruptions may have created unique academic, social and emotional challenges for some students and families. Therefore, it is the intent of the school district to maintain a focus on accelerating student learning through the use of instructional models and strategies that prioritize the following areas:

- Engaging all students in core grade level content aligned to the Mississippi College and Career Ready PreK-12 Standards and state frameworks for all content areas, starting at the beginning of the school year, and the utilization of scope and sequence documents and pacing guidance that will be developed or revised to assist school leaders and teachers with prioritizing standards aligned to grade level content

- Creating scaffolds to make grade level content accessible for students and to support unfinished learning that is essential for students to master grade level standards

- Eliminating gaps in foundational skills learning and knowledge through differentiated learning

- Utilizing online learning intervention/acceleration platforms that will allow students to engage in personalized learning scenarios that are responsive to students' individual needs

## Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

By effectively leveraging available resources, and strategically monitoring the effectiveness of those resources on student outcomes, school-based professionals will be empowered with the best information necessary to support more effective two-way communication with vulnerable students and their families. MTSS teams will have access to several tools and resources in providing a system of tiered supports for meeting the needs of all learners. These include:

- utilization of classroom engagement trackers to identify varying levels of student academic engagement, at the individual, classroom, and school levels, so as to target groups of students with available supports and to monitor the effectiveness of those supports over time

- Identification of resources to support triangulation of multiple data points for effective data-based decision making

- providing direct coaching support for school leaders and teachers in developing strategies to support small group instruction and individualized supports for vulnerable students, as well as developing systems to monitor the effectiveness of those supports

needs, a seven-period day, and periodic utilization of a modified block schedule. The high school will use seminar classes for tutoring, remediation, interventions and enrichment sessions. The seminar periods will allow teachers to intentionally work with students in Intervention/remediation/enrichment blocks designed to meet individual student needs, from literacy interventions to college and career needs to Advanced Placement small group sessions. All teachers will be actively engaged in supporting student achievement during seminar time and all content teachers will be assigned to a facilitation team and/or use this time to provide additional interventions for students. Before intervention blocks, teachers and instructional coaches will identify students with specific skills and gaps and plan instruction to meet the needs of their learners and small groups during the intervention time, using a tailored approach based on the student, content area, performance to date, etc. Time during intervention blocks may be used for explicit teaching, checking progress, and providing feedback. Teachers will use meaningful, targeted exercises that are aligned to identified standards to engage their students and to provide time to answer clarifying questions. After intervention blocks, will review student data and progress and revise instructional and support plans for students based on key takeaways and insights from analyzing student data. Bell schedules will be informed by transportation times and state guidelines for instructional hours, and will be staggered to adhere to public health guidance. Extended day activities will be based on students' academic, social and emotional needs.

- **Advanced Placement (AP) Acceleration Structure**: AP students will engage in study groups aligned to their coursework. AP study groups will function as small study group spaces for students to use the AP Tutorial model, where students come prepared to engage with questions, texts, and a deeper inquiry process. Cross-school collaboration will be used to leverage best practices and content experts.

- **College and Career Readiness (CCR) Intervention and Support Structure**: This space allows for CTE students to work on related projects, and receive coursework support.

- **Dual Enrollment:** The district will continue to move forward with dual enrollment opportunities for both fall and spring semesters. Students enrolled in dual enrollment programs will also receive check-ins and support during seminar time.

Staff and students will also use seminar time for a variety of CCR-related activities, such as On Track to Graduate programming, college virtual visits, school counseling sessions, small and large groups sessions, career and guest speakers, career and college fairs, and work-based learning check-ins. In addition to CTE teachers, other content teachers can be used to provide support for CTE students during this time.

### Extended School Year Program

The proposed summer learning experience has been designed to support our elementary, middle and high school students who may have experienced learning loss due to the pandemic. The goal will be to help students get a head start on next year's learning. If feasible, the district will offer the 2021 summer extended year programs to all grades. Programs will be focused on helping students engage in unfinished learning following this unprecedented school year, with a focus on mathematics, literacy, science, writing, enrichment activities, SEL issues, and preparing for the next grade level. Programs will –

## Monitoring Student Progress

The district understands that as a result of COVID-19, many students will be entering a new academic school year with preexisting gaps coupled with unfinished teaching and learning from prior years. The district's assessment strategy will be to support student's acceleration in learning with assessments that can be used as tools to identify students' learning deficits, as well as their progress, in mastering grade-level standards. Thus, the district plans to administer assessments to diagnose student understanding, to identify gaps in foundational skills, and to develop a plan to overcome those gaps. Doing so will enable staff to answer key questions about our students: where are they, where do they need to go, and how do we get them there? This approach is consistent with the purpose and use of assessments in prior years.

Teachers and service providers will collect data, whether in-person or remotely, and use the data to monitor each student's academic progress and to develop progress reports. The district and schools will continue to issue progress reports and report cards for the purpose of communicating to caretakers the progress of their children.

## Monitoring

High-quality diagnostic assessments in ELA and mathematics will be administered at least three times a year to measure students' core skills progress during set amounts of time

- The first set of diagnostic assessments will be administered in late September/early October to supports schools' focus to create welcoming and supportive learning environments for students and adults

- Data from these assessments will also be used to support the monitoring of trends in learning gaps, growth of students, and identify foundational skill gaps that need to be addressed during intervention and individualized learning blocks

- Short-cycle, formative assessments in ELA and mathematics will be embedded in the curriculum to monitor student learning of the content and to allow teachers to tailor their instruction to meet the needs of the students. Data from these assessments are used to assess student knowledge and application of delivered content, scope and sequence pacing, and instructional scaffolding

- Summative assessments will be quarterly assessments used to gauge students' mastery of the content delivered based on the adapted scope and sequence pacing guides

    - They will occur in all content areas at the end of units to assess student knowledge and pacing

    - Data from these assessments are used to assess scope and sequence pacing and student knowledge and application of the content

- Instructional technology staff will be sought after to collaborate with and/or provide direct support to special education staff and students when it is necessary to use virtual classrooms to ensure accessibility and utilization of technology tools, which will further accelerate student learning.

- Implementation of effective instructional strategies in Special Education will provide student access to the general education curriculum and help to develop independent learners who are able to think critically and fully engage within the world around them. The district will also provide professional development to teachers that encompasses utilization of high leverage practices.

## Grading

The district is committed to providing a student-centered educational program, focusing on grade level standards. To support these efforts and to establish a system where daily instruction and assessments inform instructional decisions and programmatic needs of all learners, the district will provide a fair and equitable process for evaluating and reporting student progress that is understandable to students and their parents/ guardians. The district will return to a variation of its pre-pandemic grading policy, though some adjustments to the weights of different components (formative and summative assessments) may be made. Student classroom participation, homework, and classwork routines and procedures will be reviewed for reliability and validity as tools for awarding grades.

Students will be graded in the 2021-2022 school year using the traditional grading and promotion policy which was temporarily suspended during the spring school closure.

Grading will be broken up as follows:

- Assessments-Triweekly and Benchmark (66%)

    - **Formative Assessments:** Built into the curriculum, are more frequent, and are used to monitor a student's mastery based on the scope and sequence of curriculum and individualized learning

    - **Summative Assessments**: Assess mastery of the complete set of grade-level standards

- Classwork, Participation, and Homework (34%)

    - Classwork: The written or oral work done in a classroom by a student (distinguished from homework

    - Participation: The active engagement of students expressing their ideas in a way that others can understand and demonstrating their understanding of a topic

    - Homework: An assignment given to a student to be completed outside the regular class period

    - Virtual and hybrid considerations

• If a staff member presents any symptoms, s/he should notify the building administrator (using digital or physically distanced communication) and leave after consulting with the building administrator and ensuring alternative supervision for any students in his/her classes

• Students, staff or visitors who answer yes to any of the health screening questions must go home (for students, only if the parent is still there) or report to the wellness room to await pick up

• If a student has an existing health condition on the COVID-19 symptoms list, screen for new symptoms only. For a more thorough consultation, the student can be referred to the school nurse

• If a student is in the Wellness Room due to COVID-19 symptoms, parents must be called to pick up the child ASAP. The school nurse should communicate testing options to the family and provide the family with guidance around social distancing while test results are pending. The student and supervising staff are to continue wearing face coverings while the student is in the Wellness Room.

• If a student, staff or visitor has symptoms consistent with a COVID-19 like illness (as defined by guidance from the Mississippi Department of Health), the student or staff must stay home at least 10 days after the symptoms first appeared AND until s/he has no fever for at least 24 hours without medication AND there is improvement of other symptoms.

• Any staff, student or visitor with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or a COVID-19 like illness must report their case to the school administrator who will report to the office of the superintendent.

• Each school is to identify a Wellness Room to use for isolation. The Wellness Room will be used as a safe place for students who have answered YES to the screening questions or who feel sick during the day to wait for their parents.

• After the student in question is picked up, custodians should clean and disinfect the Wellness Room while wearing gloves and a face covering.

## Vaccinations

The district is encouraging all staff to be vaccinated. Communications have also been forwarded to parents on steps they can take to get their child(ren) vaccinated. The district is currently working with the Aaron Henry Medical Center located in Clarksdale to make vaccine available to staff, parents and students. The medical center has a satellite clinic in the district located on the high school campus.

## Extracurricular Activities and Athletics

Safety remains our top priority as we return to extracurricular activities this fall. The district will provide professional development and training to athletic personnel, extracurricular activity sponsors, parents, and students in "best practices" regarding the safe return to participation in extracurricular activities in the schools

## Bus Transportation

When considering the logistics of school reopening during COVID-19, school districts must make it a priority to plan for the safe transportation of students. Transportation provides unique challenges for social distancing; therefore, parents and staff will need to work together to ensure a safe environment for riding the bus. Examples of the guidance follows:

- Parents should provide guidance to their children on appropriate social distancing at bus stops.
- Students are expected to wear masks while on the bus - with the exception of students with documented medical or sensory conditions that would be adversely impacted by wearing a mask.
- Students will use hand sanitizer upon entering and exiting the bus, or upon entrance into the school or classroom after departing the bus.
- Students will be given an assigned seat. Students must sit in their assigned seats.
- Siblings, and those sharing a household, will be seated together.
- Students should allow appropriate distance between each other when entering and exiting the bus.
- Seats will be wiped down between routes.
- Windows will be open when the weather permits.
- Misconduct on the bus will result in disciplinary action that may include suspension from the bus.

## General Cleaning Protocols

• Surfaces frequently touched by multiple people (e.g. door handles, phones, light switches, faucets, toilets, urinals, fixtures, dispensers, handrails, walls that are 6 feet high, other surfaces and objects that students and staff frequently touch) should be cleaned and disinfected daily. More frequent cleaning and disinfecting may be required based on level of use.

• EPA approved disinfectants must be used for cleaning of all surfaces in accordance with product instructions

• Products must not be used near children, must be used with adequate ventilation to prevent inhaling of fumes, and must be stored securely away from children

• Desks, chairs, counters, file cabinets, and computers should be cleaned and disinfected before staff and students arrive each morning

- Hands are to be washed with soap and water frequently for at least 20 seconds
- Common touch points (e.g. workspaces, devices, objects, and surfaces including tools) are to be clean and disinfected frequently
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue into the trash
- Wear a face covering in the presence of others and when navigating the building

### Gathering and Meeting Spaces

Auditoriums, gyms, or other internal gathering spaces. These areas, both due to COVID and due to general food handling safety practices, must be frequently disinfected.

- These spaces will be used on a case-by-case basis, per Mississippi guidelines (MDH, governor, etc.)
- Limiting access to such spaces will also ensure that the regular disinfecting of such rooms is able to be limited so that custodial staff can focus on common areas and classrooms
- Spaces may be used take movement breaks at a safe distance; students should keep their face coverings on for movement breaks
- Spaces may be used for one cohort at a time
- Spaces should be used to support food service operations, meal site distribution efforts, or for specified student learning activities.

### Entry and Exit, Hallways, Transitions, and Common Spaces

While use of common spaces should be minimized to reduce opportunities for germs to spread between those in the building, such areas are common and so will receive more traffic than individual classrooms or offices. Schools will implement tight procedures to minimize person-to-person contact in hallways and restrooms.

### Entrance and Exit Points

Schools should identify, if possible, one main point of entry and exit and limit access to other points of entry unless a specific group needs such access. To ensure individuals are aware of staff, students, or visitors coming and going from the site, the number of entry and exit points from the school should be limited.

- Restrooms should be cleaned at least twice daily as well as each evening prior to closing the building
- Daily clean high touch surfaces using appropriate disinfectant
- Daily check restrooms routinely to ensure all soap, paper towel, and toilet paper dispensers are stocked

## Meal Service and Food Distribution

Access to healthy meals supports students' ability to learn and thrive, regardless of whether they are in the school building or learning virtually. The district recognizes the fundamental importance of child nutrition through the district's board adopted Wellness Policy, and in alignment with the CDC's Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model.

### Meal and Food Strategies

Ensuring student access to adequate nutrition is extremely important – whether students are learning in the school building or in a virtual environment.

For in-school environments, the food service department will 1) prepare meal service layouts that maximize on-site meal service based on CDC health and safety guidance; 2) develop and implement safety protocols and trainings for all Food Services staff; 3) conduct building, kitchen and equipment checks to ensure readiness; and 4) reconfigure kitchen space to maximize staff distancing during preparation.

- Students will go to the cafeteria by cohorts
- Students will rotate through the cafeteria, eating meals at tables marked for social distancing; meals may also be served in classroom, in public places such as the gym, or outdoors as weather permits
- Students eat meals while in schools and take meals home when leaving school

Students and staff will be reminded, through signage, trainings, and/or regular reinforcements, of the importance of following proper health and safety protocols before, during, and after all meal services.
If the district has to revert to using a virtual platform for serving students academically, the food service department will provide students with a "Bagged to Go" meal via meal routes serviced by school busses and food service staff.

## Teacher and Staff Professional Development

social emotional development, mental health and trauma at the start of school. School leaders may also receive training on systems and practices that support staff wellness.

**Academic Support -** Teachers and school leaders will participate in professional learning aligned to the instructional frameworks, strategies to support implementation of instructional expectations for both face-to-face and digital learning environments. This content of the training will support teachers and leaders in ensuring equity and access to quality grade-level instruction for all students.

## Formal Observations for Teachers and Support Staff

Two formal observations are required as part of the evaluation process for educators. In-school observations will follow guidelines provided by the Mississippi Department of Education. However, in the event that the in-person staff evaluation model must be converted for use with a virtual model, the evaluation process will capture performance behavior via remote access to lessons, lesson plans, etc. The district will develop (prior to the beginning of the 2021-2022 term) an observation and evaluation framework that outlines "Look-Fors" for on-line instruction. Training on the protocol will be provided to all staff during pre-service PD. This framework will serve as a guide for qualified observers, mentors, and instructional coaches in helping to provide informal feedback throughout any periods of virtual instruction.

## Engaging with our Families, Communities, Students, and Partners

Engaging families and communities will involve developing and implementing a variety of communication activities and tools:

- **Family University**: Launch Family University to provide training and learning opportunities for parents, teachers, principals, and staff to get well connected on best practices to support learning in a variety of learning environments. Through in-person and virtual workshops, online resources, and videos the district aims to meet the unique needs of all families to support learning at home. The focus areas of trainings and supports will be:
    - o best practices in virtual learning for parents and families (e.g. understanding academic content, accessing technology, two-way communications, etc.)
    - o building and sustaining family-teacher partnerships in virtual learning environments, family health, and wellness
- **Trainings and supports**: A variety of resources will made accessible including toolkits, at-home learning materials, webinars, in-person, and live trainings. In addition, to ensure that our most vulnerable families have access to information, the district will create digital media cards with tips and guidance on the digital learning environment for distribution at meal sites and in-person home visits.
- **School leader and school-based team trainings and supports**: Provide training and professional development for principals, teachers, and school-based teams on leveraging family input and feedback

- Technology support hotline: The district will offer a hotline for technology support to help address questions, issues, and concerns for parents and families.

## Virtual Back-to-School Events

The district/schools will host a virtual district-wide back-to-school event. This family learning opportunity will include information about academic, at-home learning supports, family literacy, social and emotional and family wholeness, and community-based resources.

- **Back-to-School Learning Materials:** The district will develop and distribute a "Back-to-School" packet for families that orients them to district and school level information. The packet will include literacy materials, information on how parents can access academic and learning supports, community-based resources, how to stay engaged and connected during a virtual learning period, and beyond. Packets will be available to all families across the district's meal sites and will also be mailed to families that cannot access meal sites. A digital version of the kit will be made available on the district's website and social media platforms for all families to access.

- **School-Based Back-to-School Events:** All schools will host an annual meeting/back-to-school event to welcome families and share important information about academic priorities. To ensure targeted supports are offered at the school-level; schools will provide webinars, guidance, trainings on use of standard operating procedures, and technical assistance for school-level virtual and in-person Back-to-School Nights, Open Houses, and family academic activities. Focus areas will include policy overviews on topics such as: attendance and grading, targeted programming for special education, multilingual supports, programming for early learners, training on curricular programs, etc.

## Building Community Connections

The district's partnership strategy will enable district and school staff to meet the diverse needs of students by leveraging external resources and supports and by ensuring partners have what they need to effectively connect their resources and supports to the district and schools to benefit students, schools, and communities. District staff will work with key community stakeholders to build awareness of district and school level priorities and to hear ideas and/or gather feedback from the community through the use of P-16 councils, PTAs, Table talks, etc.

• Automated phone calls, employee emails, Town Halls (as needed): To share regular updates to all employees,

• School Leader Updates email: Daily communications with principals to share updates and resources

**Examples of how the district/schools will communicate with students and families:**

• **Webpage**: Dedicated webpages for our students, parents / guardians, and families to share updates and resources

• **Automated phone calls and emails:** Weekly communications to families with key updates, including high priority or time-sensitive items

• **Mobile Application**: Encourage the use of mobile applications as tools to access information on the-go, which will be relaunched this fall and updated regularly

• **Virtual events:** Host regular events to share important updates and get feedback

- Multilingual families will continue to receive support, updated information, and resources in the most frequently spoken home languages.

**Examples of how the district will communicate with stakeholders:**

• **Newsletter:** Newsletters sent to vital stakeholder groups with current updates

• **Media highlights:** Regular media pitching of positive coverage and informational opportunities

• **Student highlights:** Publication of student achievements and events

## Technology

The district recognizes that many of our students may require access to computers and internet to participate fully in teaching and learning activities, and has worked diligently to provide all students access to devices, connectivity, and platforms that enable them to build the capacity to be able to shift between in-person instruction and virtual learning models as needed.

**Devices:** As we head into the school year, the district will leverage school sites as places where students and families can secure technology, such as Chromebooks, tablets and hotspots, to support student access to a variety of learning environments for the fall.

Through school-based distribution of devices, the district has distributed over 1100 Chromebooks and tablets to traditional school students. As the start of the new school year approaches, the district will resume school-based distribution of devices to ensure that every student who needs a device can access one.

The district will prepare staff to facilitate virtual (in-person or remote) learning by:

- providing devices to support teachers who require a device to deliver virtual instruction and who are not interested in utilizing their own device. Instructional staff should reach out to their principals if they need a device.

- Providing training and professional development, both before the start of the school year, and during the school year on key topics such as technology platforms, best practices in virtual learning, etc.

The district will provide increased supports for families by:

- Helping parents and students navigate virtual spaces and learning environments
- Providing training on new equipment, technology platforms, etc.
- Helping to troubleshoot and solve technical difficulties critical to the success of our students

**NOTE:**

The following supporting resources are available for review on the district web site:

- Student Handbooks
- Technology Handbook
- Cybersecurity Handbook
- Restart Plan, 2020-2021