

**Yaak School District  
Safe Return to School and Continuity of Services Plan**

**Date of Adoption: August 18, 2021**

**Updated: 12/22/2021**

**March 2020 - June 2021**

1. The Yaak School District was ordered to close to in person instruction on March 15, 2020, under an executive order issued by then-Governor Bullock. Districts were provided a two-week period during which they could remain fully closed to instruction of any kind while developing a plan for remote instruction required by the Governor.
2. On April 22, 2020, then-Governor Bullock lifted his Stay-at-Home Order, and Announced a Plan to Begin Phased Reopening of Montana. As part of that plan, effective May 7, 2020, all schools were provided the option to return to in-class teaching at the discretion of local school boards.
  - a. Our school district finished the 2020-21 school year through in person instruction. During the 2020-21 school year, our means of operation have included:
    - i. In person
    - ii. Distance-learning
3. Our district developed a plan for reopening to in person instruction, with contingencies, and we implemented that plan for the 2020-21 school year. The reopening plan, details regarding which are provided below, included adoption of various model policies provided by the Montana School Boards Association under its 1900 Series, including model policies aligned with CDC guidance regarding mitigation strategies to limit exposure to and transmission of COVID-19 in school settings.
4. Our district finished the 2020-21 school year strong, having provided high quality learning opportunities to the students in our community in safe and effective learning environments.
5. We embraced a fundamental principle of providing extensive transparency to our community throughout the above timeframe. We publicly noticed, held meetings regarding, and provided opportunities for our community to provide us with feedback regarding the School District's plans and we carefully considered such feedback in developing and refining the School District's plans throughout the last 14-15 months.

**Safe Return to Schools and Continuity of Services Plan Contents:**

**Part I: Documentation of Meaningful Consultation in Developing and Refining the School District's plan from March 2020 Through June 2021:**

We placed notices regarding our reentry policies that would be discussed at school board meetings, ed, held, and invited public comment on our evolving plans for a safe return to

school and continuity of services. This topic will be on our agenda at regularly scheduled board meetings. (Third Wednesday of each month)

Our invitation via public postings for public input included a general opportunity for the public to provide input during public comments and was provided to everyone interested, including:

1. Students; families; special education administrators; the Head teacher, school leaders, school staff and community members.
2. Stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

## **Part II: Contents of The School District's plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services:**

1. A description of how the district will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff:

Following the lifting of the Stay-at-Home Order and subsequent reopening of the state on April 22, 2020, Yaak School District utilized the Montana Public Education Center Roadmap *for Safely Reopening Montana's Public Schools Using Emergency School District Policies* 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.

Yaak School District implemented policy options that facilitated collaboration between the Board of Trustees, 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.

Yaak School District 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, student instruction proficiency determinations and declarations, support for particularly vulnerable students, access to the internet for students, 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* ensured Yaak School District 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, 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.

Yaak School District will continue to follow the policies noted below while engaging in a reevaluation process to continue to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of our students, teacher, staff, and community through 2024.

2. The extent to which the district has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC, Roadmap for Safely Reopening Montana's Public Schools Using Emergency School District Policies, Yaak School District COVID-19 Emergency Measures 1905.

### **Student, Staff, and Community Health and Safety**

The School District has adopted the protocols outlined in policy during the term of the declared public health emergency to ensure the safe and healthy delivery of education services provided to students on school property in accordance with District Policy, and a safe workplace when staff are present on school property in accordance with Policy and the safety, health and well-being of parents and community members. The head teacher, school board, or other designated representative are authorized to implement the protocols in coordination with state and local health officials.

### **Symptoms of Illness**

Students and staff who are ill, feeling ill, diagnosed as ill, or otherwise demonstrating symptoms of illness must not come to school or work. Students who have a fever or are exhibiting other signs of illness must be isolated in a designated area until such time as parents or caregiver may arrive at the school to retrieve the ill student. All surfaces and areas should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected once the student has vacated the area by staff utilizing safety measures in accordance with

state and/or local health standards as applicable. Students may engage in alternative delivery of education services during the period of illness or be permitted to make up work in accordance with District Policy. Staff members will be provided access to leave in accordance with District Policy or the applicable Master Contract or Memorandum of Understanding.

Parents, guardians, or caregivers of students who are ill, feeling ill, diagnosed as ill, or otherwise demonstrating symptoms of illness must not be present at the school for any reason including but not limited to events or gatherings or to drop off or pick up students excepted as provided by this policy. To avoid exposing others to illness, parents or caregivers who are ill must make arrangements with others to transport students to school or events, if at all practicable. If not practicable, parents, guardians or caregivers must not leave their vehicle during pickup or drop off and must arrange with District staff to supervise students in accordance with physical distancing guidelines in this Policy.

### **Cleaning and Disinfecting**

School district personnel will routinely both clean by removing germs, dirt and impurities and disinfect by using chemicals to kill germs on all surfaces and objects in any school building and on school property that are frequently touched. This process shall include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily.

Personnel will clean with the cleaners typically used and will use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label. Personnel will disinfect with common EPA-registered household disinfectants. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available from the supervising teacher or administrator. Personnel will follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.

The District will provide EPA-registered disposable wipes to teachers, staff, and secondary students so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks, remote controls) can be wiped down before use. The Head Teacher is required to ensure adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfection practices.

### **Student Arrival**

A District employee will greet children outside the school as they arrive to ensure orderly compliance with the provisions of this policy. Upon entrance of any school building, children will have their temperatures taken, given a mask to put on, and then they will put their items down and immediately wash their hands at the sink, prior to entering any other part of the building. If a sink with soap and water is not available, the School District will provide hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizer will be kept out of elementary students' reach and student use will be supervised by staff.

## **Face Coverings**

Staff, students, and visitors will wear a face covering, mask, or face shield while present in any school building. When students and members of the public are not present, staff may remove their face covering, mask, or face shield if they are at their individual workstation and six feet of distance is strictly maintained between individuals. Students and teacher may remove masks if at desks and maintaining six-foot distance. If students are working in small groups, the students must be wearing face covering, mask, or face shield. The School District will provide masks as required by this policy or at the discretion of the administration.

Allegations of harassment of any person wearing or not wearing a face covering, mask, or face shield requirement will be promptly investigated in accordance with District policy. A student, staff member, or visitor who, after an investigation, is found to have engaged in behavior that violates District policy is subject to redirection or discipline.

## **Physical Distancing**

Unless a waiver is signed by the parent, opting out of the distancing requirement, the following will apply:

Students, staff, volunteers, and visitors will maintain a six-foot distance between themselves and their colleagues and peers throughout the school day inside any school building, on school provided transportation, and on school property before and after school. The Head Teacher will arrange classrooms and restructure courses, transportation services, and food service to meet this standard.

Recess will continue as scheduled in accordance with physical distancing guidance with the use of playground equipment. Any other use of school playgrounds is strictly prohibited.

Drop off and pick up of students will be completed in a manner that limits direct contact between parents and staff members and adheres to social distancing expectations around the exterior of the school building while on school property.

Visitors to the school authorized by District Policy 1903 will maintain a six-foot distance between themselves and others. This distancing requirement does not apply to individuals who are a part of the visitor's regular household isolation group when the group is authorized to present at the school facility.

## **Temperature Screening**

Designated School District staff are authorized to test the temperature of students with an approved non-contact or touchless temperature reader. Students who have a fever or are exhibiting other signs of illness must be isolated in a designated area until such time as parents or caregiver may arrive at the

school to retrieve the ill student. All surfaces and areas should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected once the student has vacated the area by staff utilizing safety measures in accordance with state and/or local health standards as applicable.

When administering a temperature check on a possibly ill student, designated staff members will utilize available physical barriers and personal protective equipment to eliminate or minimize exposures due to close contact to a child who has symptoms during screening.

### **Healthy Hand Hygiene Behavior**

All students, staff, and others present in the any school building will engage in hand hygiene at the following times, which include but are not limited to:

- Arrival to the facility and after breaks
- Before and after preparing, eating, or handling food or drinks
- Before and after administering medication or screening temperature
- After coming in contact with bodily fluid
- After recess
- After handling garbage
- After assisting students with handwashing
- After use of the restroom

Hand hygiene includes but is not limited to washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not readily available.

Staff members will supervise children when they use hand sanitizer and soap to prevent ingestion. Staff members will place grade level appropriate posters describing handwashing steps near sinks.

### **Public Awareness**

The School District will communicate with parents, citizens, and other necessary stakeholders about the protocols established in this policy and the steps taken to implement the protocols through all available and reasonable means.

### **Confidentiality**

This policy in no way limits or adjusts the School District's obligations to honor staff and student privacy rights. All applicable district policies and handbook provision governing confidentiality of student and staff medical information remain in full effect.

**June 2021**

**Part III – 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 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 August 18, 2021, that included not just a notice of opportunity for public input, but which specifically invited meaningful consultation with and input from:

1. Students; families; special education administrators; the Head teacher, school leaders, school staff and community members.
2. Stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, 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.

**June 2021 - September 30, 2024**

**Part IV – Schedule for Future Review and Updates:**

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 meetings of the board of trustees throughout the 2021-24 school years. 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:

1. Students; families; special education administrators; the Head teacher, school leaders, school staff and community members.
2. Stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

## Appendix

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

**Yaak School District - COVID-19 Emergency Measures 1905**