

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

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

**Updated: 10/19/2023**

**Board Approved November 15, 2023**

**Final Review March 20, 2024 no  
changes needed Board approved.**

**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:
    - In person
    - 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, 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 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 continuous 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, and Yaak School District Policies.

According to the Policy 1900 Emergency Policy Framework, within the Back to School – Roadmap for Safely Reopening Montana's Public Schools Using Emergency School District Policies, the term of School District Policies Numbered 1900-1999 shall run until terminated by a vote of the board of trustees. On August 17, 2022, Yaak School Board of Trustees voted unanimously to rescind the School District Policies Numbered 1900-1999.

### **Symptoms of Illness**

**YS 3417** The District may deny attendance to a child with suppressed immunity in order to protect the welfare of that child when others in a school have an infectious disease, which, although not normally life threatening, could be life threatening to a child with suppressed immunity.

Students who complain of illness at school may be referred to a school nurse or other responsible person designated by the Board and may be sent home as soon as a parent or person designated on a student's Authorization for Transportation and Release of Students has been notified. The district reserves the right to require a statement from a student's primary care provider authorizing a student's return to school.

Students that are ill, feeling ill, diagnosed as ill, or otherwise demonstrating symptoms of illness **must not come to school**. Students who begin having a fever or are exhibiting other signs of illness while in school must be isolated. The parents/guardians of the ill student will be notified to come pick up their child. The child may not return until they have been fevering free for 24 hours and/or until the illness is over. Should a child be returned to school when they are still sick, the parents will be notified that the child then will not be allowed to return to school without the release of a physician. If a person in the school exhibits covid-like symptoms, a covid test can be made available but not required.

### **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 caregivers 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.

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 drop off or pick up students accepted as provided by this policy. To avoid exposing others to illness, parents, or caregivers who are ill must decide 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.

### **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.

### **Cleaning and Disinfecting**

School district personnel will continue to routinely 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 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 and other communicable diseases 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/Visitor Arrival**

Upon entrance of the school building, hands will be washed 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 and students **may wear** a mask while present in any school building. The School District **does not require** the use of masks. However, they will provide masks if a student, staff member, or visitor requests one. The Board of Trustees' decision to not require masks is based on a review of the circumstances in the community, CDC guidelines and consultation with local health officials on issues including but not limited to the possibility of exposure and the current county Covid case rate.

Allegations of harassment of any person wearing or not wearing a face covering, mask, or face shield will be promptly investigated in accordance with District policy.

### **Physical Distancing**

Students, staff, volunteers, and visitors are not required to 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. Recess will

continue as scheduled without physical distancing guidance with the use of playground equipment.

### **Visitors**

**YS 4301** The District encourages visits by Board members, parents, and citizens to the school. All visitors shall report to the clerk's office on entering the school building and comply with all applicable school safety and security policy, procedure, or protocol.

Classroom visits must be scheduled through the Head Teacher. School visitors shall not interfere with school operations or delivery of educational services to students. Conferences with teachers should be held outside school hours.

### **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.* [MT-PEC Back to School Roadmap for Safely Reopening Schools Using Emergency School District Policies 6.17.20.pdf \(memberclicks.net\)](#)**

**Yaak School District Policies [Policy Listing \(eboardsolutions.com\)](#)**

**\*\*I added links to the websites, I hope you can open them.**