**Ramsay School District**

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

Date of Original Adoption: 5/4/2020

Date Plan was Last Revised: 6/01/2023

Next Regularly Scheduled Month for Consideration (At least quarterly): September 2023

**March 2020 – June 2023**

1. The Ramsay 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 of time during which they could remain fully closed to instruction of any kind while developing a plan for remote instruction required by the Governor.

Although our district was authorized to remain closed, we quickly mobilized and began remote instruction during the timeframe when we were authorized to remain closed. Thereafter, our district continued pursuant to a reopening plan approved by the Governor beginning March 30, 2020.

1. 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-classroom teaching at the discretion of local school boards.

Our school district finished the 2019-20 school year through remote instruction.

During the 2020-21 school year, our means of operation included:

* + 1. In person
    2. Hybrid – shortened days and remote learning on Fridays
    3. Offsite

During the 2021-22 school year our school remained open for in person instruction.

During the 2022-2023 school year our school has remained opened for in person instruction.

1. 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. During the 2021-2022 school year we amended many of our standard policies to prepare for future emergencies in preparation for terminating the temporary policies. During the 2022-2023 school year we terminated the temporary policies that were replaced by permanent policies.
2. Our district finished the 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 school years strong, having provided high quality learning opportunities to the students in our community in safe and effective learning environments.
3. We embraced a fundamental principle of providing extensive transparency to our community throughout the above timeframe. We publicly noticed, held meetings regarding, and provided extensive 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 36 months.

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

**March 2020-August 2022**

**Part I: Documentation of Meaningful Consultation in Developing and Refining the School District’s plan from March 2020 Through July 2023:**

We noticed, held, and invited public comment on our evolving plans for a safe return to school and continuity of services on the following dates since March 2020:

1. April 27, 2020
2. May 4, 2020
3. May 20, 2020
4. July 15, 2020
5. July 22,2020
6. July 29, 2020
7. August 3, 2020
8. August 19, 2020
9. March 29, 2021
10. May 19, 2021
11. June 16,2021
12. July 20,2021
13. August 12,2021
14. September 15, 2021
15. October 20, 2021
16. November 16, 2021
17. January 19, 2022
18. March 22, 2022
19. April 21, 2022
20. July 25, 2022
21. October 19, 2022
22. March 8, 2023
23. April 19, 2023

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

1. Students; families; school and district administrators (including special education administrators); teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions

**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, Ramsay 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.

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

Ramsay 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, extended school year, student instruction proficiency determinations and declarations, support for particularly vulnerable students, transportation services, access to internet for students, food preparation and service, summer school and additional student instruction resources. To ensure the health and safety of students, teachers, and staff, the district considered cleaning and disinfection, community use of facilities, county board of health orders, diagnosis and confidentiality, hand washing and related hygiene protocols, telework, school closure orders, stay at home orders, symptom monitoring and isolation, travel quarantines, visitors, volunteers, vulnerable individuals, masks and personal protective equipment, and physical distancing.

Following the *Roadmap for Safely Reopening Montana’s Public Schools Using Emergency School District Policies* ensured Ramsay 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, administrative team, employees, parents, students, health officials, and community as collaborative partners as we have worked our way through ever evolving changes due to the pandemic. By considering all possible perspectives and factors when making the decisions to adopt or adjust a policy, or to implement a policy, we focused on the health and safety of our students, staff, and community for delivery of learning and services to our students. The policies have enabled us to adjust our procedures and practices during different phases in compliance with guidance and best practices provided by federal, state, and local agencies.

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

1. 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:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Topic** | **School District Policy Reference** | **Description of Policy**  (All referenced polices can be found at the end of this document.) | **Policy Adopted and Revised Date(s)** |
| Universal and correct wearing of masks. | 1905 | **1905:** The School District has adopted the protocols outlined in this 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, and a safe workplace when staff are present on school property, and the safety, health and well-being of parents and community members. The supervising teacher, principal, superintendent or designated personnel are authorized to implement the protocols in coordination with state and local health officials. The policy establishes regulations making optional face coverings as personal protective equipment. | 1. 5/4/2020 2. 8/19/2020 3. 3/29/2021 4. 8/12/2021 5. 10/20/2021 6. Terminated 4/19/2023 |
| Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding). | 1905 | **1905:** The School District has adopted the protocols outlined in this 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, and a safe workplace when staff are present on school property, and the safety, health and well-being of parents and community members. The supervising teacher, principal, superintendent or designated personnel are authorized to implement the protocols in coordination with state and local health officials. The policy establishes regulations regarding physical distancing by requiring to the extent possible, elementary school courses will be delivered to the same group of students each day. If physical distancing is not possible during meal service and courses delivered in a separate area such as the library, gymnasium, and music room, the service or course will be delivered in the designated classroom for each group of students. Secondary school courses will be delivered using a restructured bell system to minimize student interaction in common areas. | 1. 5/4/2020 2. 8/19/2020 3. 3/29/2021 4. 8/12/2021 5. 10/20/2021 6. Terminated   4/19/2023 |
| Handwashing and respiratory etiquette. | 3417  5230 | **3417 and 5230:** The School District has adopted the protocols outlined in these policies The policy establishes regulations regarding healthy hand hygiene behavior and symptoms of illness. | 1. 5/4/2020 2. 8/19/2020 3. 3/29/2021 4. 6/16/2021 5. 8/12/2021 6. 10/20/2021 |
| Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation. | 8410 | **8410:** The School District has adopted the protocols outlined in this policy. The policy establishes regulations regarding cleaning and disinfecting. |  |
| Diagnostic and screening testing. | 3417 | **3417:** The School District has adopted the protocols outlined in this policy to ensure the safe and healthy delivery of education services provided to students on school property, and a safe workplace when staff are present on school property, and the safety, health and well-being of parents and community members. The policy establishes regulations regarding symptoms of illness. | 1. 6/16/2021 |
| Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities | 3413 | Please note that House Bill 702 passed the 2021 Legislature and was signed into law effective May 14, 2021. New Section 1 of that law provides that it is an unlawful discriminatory practice for a governmental entity to refuse, withhold from, or deny to a person any local or state services, goods, facilities, advantages, privileges, licensing, educational opportunities, health care access, or employment opportunities based on the person's vaccination status. The law also provides it is unlawful for an employer to refuse employment to a person, to bar a person from employment, or to discriminate against a person in compensation or in a term, condition, or privilege of employment based on the person's vaccination status. Finally, House Bill 702 provides it is unlawful for a public accommodation to exclude, limit, segregate, refuse to serve, or otherwise discriminate against a person based on the person's vaccination status.  **3413:** Upon initial enrollment, an immunization status form shall be completed by the student’s parent or guardian. The certificate shall be made a part of the student’s permanent record. | 1. 7/1/1999 2. 11/19/2012 3. 6/16/2021 4. 7/20/2021 |
| Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies. | 2162; 2162P | **2162:** It is the intent of the District to ensure that students who are disabled within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are identified, evaluated, and provided with appropriate educational services. For those students who need or are believed to need special instruction and/or related services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the District shall establish and implement a system of procedural safeguards.  **2162P:** If the parent or legal guardian of a student who qualifies under Section 504 for special instruction or related services disagrees with a decision of the District with respect to: (1) the identification of the child as qualifying for Section 504; (2) the District’s evaluation of the child; and/or (3) the educational placement of the child, the parents of the student are entitled to certain procedural safeguards. The student shall remain in his/her current placement until the matter has been resolved through the process set in the policy. |  |
| Coordination with State and local health officials. | 2221; 3417 | **2221:** The Board of Trustees is authorized to declare that a state of emergency exists within the community. A declaration issued by the Board of Trustees is distinct from any declaration in effect or previously issued by local, state or federal authorities. An emergency declaration issued by the Board of Trustees authorizes the School District to take extraordinary measures to protect students and staff while delivering education services in a manner authorized by law  **3417:** The District will manage common communicable diseases in accordance with Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services guidelines and communicable diseases control rules. When information is received by a staff member or a volunteer that a student is afflicted with a serious communicable disease, the staff member or volunteer will promptly notify a school nurse or other responsible person designated by the Board to determine appropriate measures to be taken to protect student and staff health and safety. A school nurse or other responsible person designated by the Board, after consultation with and on advice of public health officials, will determine which additional staff members, if any, have need to know of the affected student’s condition. | 1. 7/1/1999 2. 10/17/2012 3. 5/19/2021 4. 7/1/1999 5. 11/192012 6. 6/16/2021 |

**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 extensive public comment. Further, we have, as part of the organization of the School District’s plan for purposes of the ARP Act, revised the School District’s plan at a meeting held on 1/19/2022 that included not just a notice of opportunity for public input but which specifically invited meaningful consultation with and input from:

1. Students; families; school and district administrators (including special education administrators); teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions

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 meeting 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; school and district administrators (including special education administrators); teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions

**Appendix**

[**https://www.mtsba.org/sdpolicymanuals**](https://www.mtsba.org/sdpolicymanuals)

[**MT-PEC**](https://issuu.com/montanaschoolboardsassociation/docs/mt-pec_emergency_public_school_district_policiesfi/1?ff) **A *Roadmap for Safely Reopening Montana’s Public Schools Using Emergency School District Policies.***