

Polson School District #23, 111 4th Ave East. Polson, MT 59860 406-883-6355

Federal DUNS # 177985967 ID LE #0477 Elem, HS 0478

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

Date of Adoption: 6-14-21

Notice of Information and Public Input: Added to Website for Information and Public Input June 15, 2021

Plan Review and Public Input Opportunities since February, 2021

- **February 22, 2021 School Board Meeting Review and Public Input**
- **April 12, 2021 School Board Meeting Review and Public Input**
- **May 10, 2021 School Board Meeting Plan Review, E.S.S.E.R. II Input and Review**
- **June 15, 2021, Plan Approved by Board with Public Input and Survey Review**
- **January 10, 2022, Plan Approved by Board with Public Input**

November 16, 2024 -completed

Revision Scheduled Dates: 11-16-21, 4-19-22, 10-18-22, 4-18-23, 10-17-23

March 2020 - June 2021

1. The Polson 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.

a. 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.

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- classroom teaching at the discretion of local school boards.
 - a. Our school district finished the 2020-21 school year through remote instruction. During the 2020-21 school year, our means of operation have included:
 - i. In person 4 Days a Week and Fridays all students were remote and remote students were asked to attend if they chose to for additional support and assessment. (See Phase 2 on our Educational Plan) (Phase 2 2020-2021)
 - ii. Hybrid / Remote 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
4. model policies aligned with CDC guidance regarding mitigation strategies to limit exposure to and transmission of COVID-19 in school settings.
5. Our district is finishing the 2020-21 school year strong, having provided high quality learning opportunities to the students in our community in safe and effective learning environments.
6. 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 14-15 months.

Safe Return to Schools and Continuity

Safe Return to Schools and Continuity of Services Plan Contents: March 2020-June 2021

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

Plan Review and Public Input Opportunities since March, 2021

- **March 16, 2021 School Board Meeting Review and Public Input**
- **April 20, 2021 School Board Meeting Review and Public Input**
- **May 18, 2021 School Board Meeting Plan Review, E.S.S.E.R. II Input and Review**
- **June 14, 2021, Plan Approved by Board with Public Input and Survey Review**

- **January 10, 2022, Plan Approved by Board with Public Input**

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:

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; and

2. Tribes April 19, 2021 Indian Education Committee, civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, 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 Polson School District #23, 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.

Polson School District #23 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.

Polson School District #23 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 Polson School District #23 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. (See School Plan)

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.

Polson School District #23 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. (See Phase 3 for Most Recent Plan Implementation)

SAFETY MEASURES

The District is taking the following measures to safely provide in-person instruction, including consideration of guidance by the CDC and state and local health officials as follows:

Universal and correct wearing of masks

The School District has adopted the protocols outlined in this policy 1905 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 Policy 1905, and a safe workplace when staff are present on school property in accordance with Policy 1905, 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 1905 established regulations for face coverings as personal protective equipment.

Physical Distancing

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 in accordance with Policy 1906, and a safe workplace when staff are present on school property in accordance with Policy 1906, 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 students, staff, volunteers, and visitors will maintain a three-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. Staff members will arrange classrooms and restructure courses, transportation services, and food service to meet this standard.

The administrative team of the School District has adopted these procedures regarding symptoms of illness, physical distancing and work areas, physical barriers and guides, and ventilation in accordance with Policy 7055 in order to implement Policy 7060 during the term of the declared public health emergency to ensure a safe and healthy work and instructional setting. These procedures were developed in accordance with the latest available guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and in coordination with applicable state, tribal, and local health officials. These procedures supplement Policy 7060.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

Polson School Plan Phase 0-3: 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 in accordance with Policy 7060, and a safe workplace when staff are present on school property in accordance with Policy 7060, 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 healthy hand hygiene behavior and symptoms of illness.

7055, 7060 and Polson School Plan 0-3: The administrative team and our transportation and maintenance directors of the School District has adopted these procedures regarding personnel cleaning and disinfecting, symptoms of illness, and water systems in accordance with order to implement Policy 7060 during the term of the declared public health emergency to ensure a safe and healthy work and instructional setting. These procedures were developed in accordance with the latest available guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and in coordination with applicable state, tribal, and local health officials. These procedures supplement Policy 7060.

Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities (including improving ventilation)

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 in accordance with Policy 1906, and a safe workplace when staff are present on school property in accordance with Policy 1905, 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 symptoms of illness, cleaning and disinfecting, temperature screening, vulnerable individuals, food preparation and meal service, and transportation services. The administrative team of the School District has adopted these procedures regarding personnel cleaning and disinfecting, symptoms of illness, and ventilation in accordance with Policy in order to implement Policy 1905 during the term of the declared public health emergency to ensure a safe and healthy work and instructional setting. These procedures were developed in accordance with the latest available guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and in coordination with applicable state, tribal, and local health officials.

Contact Tracing

The School District has adopted the protocols outlined in the policy during the terms 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 Policy 1905, and a safe workplace when staff are present on school property in accordance with this policy. 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 symptoms of illness, temperature screening, public awareness, and confidentiality. School District #23 utilized our three full time nurses to assist with our Tribal and Lake County Health Departments contact trace and keep staff and students safe.

Policy 2020: In all proceedings related to this policy, the District will respect a student's right to privacy.

Although the District is required to provide educational services to all school-age children who reside within its boundaries, it may deny attendance at school to any child diagnosed as having a communicable disease that could make a child's attendance harmful to the welfare of other students. The District will rely on advice of the public health and medical communities in assessing the risk of transmission of various communicable diseases to determine how best to protect the health of both students and staff. The District will manage common communicable diseases in accordance with Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services guidelines and communicable diseases control rules. The District may temporarily exclude from school attendance a student who exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease that is readily transmitted in a school setting. The District may notify parents of other children attending a school that their children have been exposed to a communicable disease without identifying the particular student who has the disease.

Diagnostic and Screening Testing

7060: 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 in accordance with Policy 7055, and a safe workplace when staff are present on school property in accordance with Policy 7060, 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 symptoms of illness, and temperature screening.

Vaccinations

District will act in accordance with state and federal law with respect to vaccinations for its staff and eligible students.

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 that 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 that 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. **3010:** 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.

The District will not refuse, withhold from, or deny a person any services, goods, facilities, advantages, privileges, licensing, educational opportunities, health care access, or employment opportunities based on the person's vaccination status.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

The District will provide accommodations to its policies for students with disabilities as determined appropriate based upon the individual student needs and in accordance with an individual accommodation plan or individualized education plan. Students requiring accommodations should contact Tim Berg , Director of Special Education to request information on plans for students with disabilities. Policy 2040 and 2045

CONTINUITY OF SERVICES

The District will provide for continuity of services as follows:

Student Academic Needs, Student Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs, Other Student Needs, Staff Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs, Other Staff Needs

The School District has adopted the protocols outlined in this policy to govern during the term of the declared public health emergency to ensure the delivery of education services to students onsite at the school, offsite at other locations using available resources including but not limited to online methods. The supervising teacher, principal, superintendent or designated personnel are authorized to implement

this policy. The Board of Trustees may revise the school calendar to adjust the completion of the school year for particular grade levels and groups once students have satisfied the required number of applicable aggregate hours. The Board of Trustees authorizes instruction of students at the school facility in a manner that satisfies the aggregate number of instructional hours outlined in the School District's adopted or revised calendar for a school year affected by a public health emergency. The Board of Trustees authorizes proficiency-based ANB calculation in situations when a student demonstrates proficiency in a course area as determined by the Board of Trustees using district assessments consistent with the School District's adopted Plan of Action, District Policy 1905, or other measures approved by the Board of Trustees during the course of a school year affected by a public health emergency. The Board of Trustees authorizes a summer program of instructional offerings for the purpose of remediation of credit, maintenance of skills, and enrichment. All classes offered for credit must meet minimum state requirements for accreditation and may be delivered at the school or at another offsite location. Remediation credit courses shall be offered, grades K-12, in accordance with District advancement requirements. Credit course offerings must be approved by the Board of Trustees. In accordance with District Policy 7055,7060, Section 20-1-301, MCA, and any applicable collective bargaining agreement covering the employment of affected employees, the Board of Trustees may establish a school calendar with an earlier start date and a later end date from non-emergency school years to ensure students receive the minimum number of aggregate instructional hours. Students shall receive services in accordance with the applicable Individualized Education Plan or Section 504 Plan based on methods and locations agreed upon and documented by the applicable team to meet the student's needs and goals. Students shall have access to regular school counseling services whether their instruction is provided in an onsite, offsite or online setting. Staff shall promptly report any suspected student distress or concern to their supervisor for review and referral. Students receiving instruction in an offsite setting are governed by the staff obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect. This policy in no way limits or adjusts the School District's obligations to homeless students or students in foster care. Applicable District policies serving these students, or this population of students remain in full effect. Proficiency or satisfying aggregate hours of instruction can be achieved through an on-site, off- site, or blended learning model as outlined in Policy 1906. Best practices will assist districts in facilitating quality learning for each student regardless of background or circumstance. Best practices include but are not limited to, planning and communication, clear expectations, differentiated instruction and learning models, and flexible demonstrations of learning. The School District has adopted the protocols outlined in this policy to ensure the delivery of education services to students onsite at the school, offsite at other locations using available resources. The District administration or designated personnel are authorized to implement this policy.

PUBLIC INPUT

The Plan will be posted to the website with input survey attached to the web site with the plan for public input. Public input to the plan will be available to the board of trustees monthly starting in June, 2021.

The District will review this Plan at least once every six months and will provide an opportunity for public input in association with any review of the Plan.

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 June 15, 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; school and district administrators (including special education administrators); teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions; and
2. Tribes; civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students. Indian Education Committee and Tribal Education were both informed on June 7, 2021 of our plans and do have the opportunity for input on or before the Board Meeting scheduled for June 14, 2021.

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; and
2. Tribes; civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations); stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migratory students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.

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

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