

Citizen's Guide to Reopening Schools Safely

July 28, 2020

Board Adopted



Dear Parents and Community,

On behalf of all our staff, let me express how much we missed seeing our students every day and learning together in person last spring. *I am so proud* of all of the hard work and dedication that our staff, teachers, health care workers and community have demonstrated in helping us prepare for this year, and I know that this local strength will help us succeed with our intentions for our 2020/21 school year..

Like you, our number one commitment is to the safety of our students, staff, and community. To fulfill this commitment, we've created this Citizen's Guide to Reopening – it represents our best thinking to date on how we intend to open schools this fall. Our plan provides quality in-person and fully online learning options while taking all necessary steps to protect the health of our students, staff, and community. We arrived at our decisions by incorporating guidance from the Colorado Department of Education, the Governor's Office, CDPHE, CHSAA, and our Montezuma County Department of Public Health. Through a close partnership with our local health experts we studied how to best implement all these guidelines on a local level. We also conducted several surveys and held board meetings and town halls, in order to incorporate feedback from teachers, staff, families, and students. This input informed our planning as well.

The district recognizes the importance of our local community COVID context in making these difficult decisions regarding implementation of our health and safety guidance as well as responding to positive cases of COVID in our schools. If COVID cases in our community and schools increase, the district may need to adapt our plan to further reduce risk. We will be meeting regularly with our local health advisory committee (Health Department, Hospital, and Tribal Health Department, and local physicians) to review our local COVID data and risks and consult on the implementation or updating of our plan.

Many aspects to education will look different this year, and many processes may change when it comes to managing our responses to this virus. Transportation, mealtimes, clubs, athletics, extracurriculars, and basic in-building behavior will all need to follow necessary safety protocols. Through a combination of personal protective equipment, social distancing, health screenings, enhanced cleaning, ventilation improvements, facilities modifications, and occasional online learning, we will work to maintain health for all, while supporting our students in reaching their personal and academic goals.

At first glance some elements of this might sound too restricted for happy learning, but I believe we will still be able to provide an engaging education and have a successful year. With rigorous teaching, weekly staff collaborations and assessments, high-quality technology for each student, and continued commitment to equity and social emotional learning, **every student** will be supported, **every day**.

Again, our first commitment is to the health and safety of our staff and students, and I look forward to building even stronger ties with our families throughout this year. We all need to approach this year with flexibility and the ability to adapt as conditions change locally and guidance changes from the state. We all have a role to play in keeping ourselves and each other healthy. Let's continue a strong partnership and help our students reach their full potential!

Thank you,

Lori Haukeness, Superintendent

Citizen’s Guide to Reopening

Table of Contents

	Page #
1. Commitment to Health and Safety	4
2. Operational Safety (Facilities, Busing, Cafeteria, and Food Services)	9
3. Supporting Student Academic Success Through our School Options for 2020-21	11
4. Student Engagement and Activities	16
5. Communications and Parent and Family Engagement	17

1. Commitment to Health and Safety

Montezuma-Cortez School District is committed to providing a healthy and safe work and learning environment and we will continue to collaborate with the Montezuma County Public Health Department to ensure we are in compliance with all state requirements as well as our local health officials guidance. The health and safety guidelines for RE-1 will apply to all staff, students, and any visitors to our district buildings and schools. The following are the health and safety guidelines the district will implement based on current guidance. These guidelines may be updated from time to time based on changes to state requirements, local health guidance, and local health conditions.

1.1. Health screening for staff and students

All staff and students will need to complete a health screening at home using the COVID screening process every day before coming to school. The screening criteria for COVID from the Health Department and CDC are included below.

COVID Health Screening Criteria and Process

Screening process

- Staff should complete a daily health screening at home prior to coming to work including taking their temperature and reviewing the list of criteria to ensure they are not experiencing any of the above symptoms and have not been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID.
- Parents and families are asked to take their children’s temperature and review the list of COVID criteria above to ensure their child is not experiencing any of the above symptoms and have not been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID.
- If no thermometer is available use other symptoms and note if the forehead feels warm to the touch.
- Nurses will provide in-school screening for any staff or students who become ill at school using the above criteria.

Screening criteria:

- Temperature of **100.4 or higher**
- “Close contact” with someone who has tested positive for COVID. Note: “close contact” is defined as having spent 15 minutes or more in close proximity (within 6 feet) of someone who has tested positive for COVID.
- Experiencing any of the following symptoms
 - Dry cough
 - Headache
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Diarrhea or vomiting in the last 12 hours
 - Sore throat
 - **NOTE: Persons with the following symptoms should avoid school and contact a health care provider: shortness of breath, chest pressure, new confusion, blue lips!**

Students or staff that are experiencing any of these symptoms or have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID should not come to school or work.

Staff should notify their supervisor if they are calling in sick due to this screening. Parents keeping their children home due to this screening should report this when they call into the school to report their child's absence. Any staff or students testing positive for COVID need to notify Sue Ciccio, District Director of Health and Nursing.

1.2 Personal Protective Equipment/Masks

- **Staff** – All staff will be required to wear masks while indoors in district buildings and schools. The district will provide high-quality masks to staff and will also have face shields available to protect staff and students.
- **Students** – Students who are in 5th grade and older will be required to wear masks in district buildings and schools per state requirements for schools. Students younger than 5th grade are encouraged to wear masks in school but it will not be required. All students riding district buses will be required to wear masks on buses. If students who are required to wear masks arrive at a bus stop or school building without a mask, the bus driver or school may provide a loaner mask for the day. If a student attempts to board the bus or enter school without a mask multiple times, parents may be called to come and provide a mask before the student is allowed to board the bus or enter class. Students will be expected to wear masks properly throughout the day and bullying related to masks will not be tolerated (mask guidance coming soon).
- **Requesting an exception to mask requirements** – Staff or students who believe they have a condition that prevents them from wearing a mask can request an exemption for a medical reason with appropriate documentation (mask guidance coming soon).

1.3 Educating students on health and hygiene

- **Educating students on staying healthy** – We will be educating students on how to stay healthy and prevent the spread of germs.
- **Signage** – The district will post signage in all schools and buildings on how to stop the spread of COVID-19, properly wash hands, and promote everyday protective measures including face coverings.
- **Hand washing/sanitizing** – Schools will create consistent scheduled times and procedures for younger students throughout the day for hand hygiene and promoting hand washing. Older students will be reminded to practice hand washing and good hygiene through education efforts and signage. Hand sanitizer will be available in classrooms as well.

1.4 Social distancing

State guidelines do not provide limits on class sizes but state that schools should try to maintain 3–6 feet between people wherever practical. This section may change from time to time with new state guidance and will be updated accordingly.

- **Large groups and assemblies** – Based on state guidelines, the district will not be permitting groups larger than 25 to gather indoors in any district building. This may change throughout the year based on updated guidelines from the state. More information on how this impacts indoor sports, choir, theatre, and student assemblies will be addressed under section 4, “Student Engagement.”

- **School supplies and sharing** – Schools will not be allowing students to share classroom supplies without properly sanitizing them between use (based on state guidelines). This means that many classroom supplies may not be available for sharing this year.
- **Plexiglass partitions** – Plexiglass partitions will be available for small group work tables and teacher desks to allow for small group work and individual teacher-to-student consultation.
- **Cohort-based scheduling** – The state guidance recommends that students learn in cohorts where possible to minimize the chances of wider spread of COVID in the event that there is a confirmed case of COVID in a school. The district will work with schools to support cohort-based learning wherever practical.
- **Class sizes** – The state guidance does not currently place any restrictions on class sizes for grades K-8. For students in high school, the state guidance is that class sizes be determined based on local conditions and ability to implement social distancing (3–6 feet where practical) and ability to fully comply with other guidelines such as mask wearing and ventilation.
- **Procedures for arrival, dismissal, recess, and hallways** – All schools will have procedures for arrival, dismissal, recess, and hallways to minimize the number of students who are grouping in halls and near the entrances and exits of our buildings and to promote social distancing. Each school will communicate their procedures to families and students. Please contact your school’s principal for more information.

1.6 Health services and nursing

- **Health clinic services** – The district school health clinic is planning to operate as usual and will continue to provide a variety of non-COVID related health services to our staff, students, and families. COVID related health services will be available through qualified community health providers and the hospital.
- **School nursing** – The district will continue to provide school nurses to support students in each building. The school nurses will be available to support overall student health needs and school COVID prevention efforts.
- **In-school health screenings** – Our school nurses will conduct in-school health screenings for any staff or students who become ill at school, including conducting the COVID screening with any individuals who become ill at school. In the event that a student is ill at school, they will be screened and provided with a separate, private space to wait for their parents to pick them up in order to minimize chance of additional contact with other staff or students. School nurses will continue to provide some preventive health screenings in a different format than usual.
- **Responding to non-COVID related illnesses** – We recognize that students will still get sick with a variety of common colds and flus that may mimic some of the symptoms of COVID. We will screen students for COVID symptoms using a protocol developed with our local health partners and will continue to follow the CDC Guidance on “How Sick is Too Sick” in decisions to send students home or to request that parents keep students at home. This guidance is found on our website (LINK coming soon).
- **Immunization requirements** – Students will require the same immunization requirements for school registration and attendance as they have in prior years.

1.7 Medically vulnerable staff and students

The district is committed to providing a safe and healthy learning and working environment for all our staff and students. For students who may be medically vulnerable or at increased risk for COVID, the district will work with the family on what accommodations can be reasonably made in the in-person learning environment and will also offer a fully online schooling program as an option. The district also recognizes that there are employees who may meet various criteria associated with

higher risk for COVID as defined by the CDC. The district is committed to providing personal protective equipment for these staff including high-quality masks, face shields, and plexiglass partitions in the work environment. Employees who wish to request an accommodation due to their personal risk should contact HR directly. Requests for accommodations will be reviewed and processed using the established ADA criteria and process.

1.8 Responding to positive cases of COVID in our schools

The district is working closely with the Montezuma County Health Department and our local hospital on guidance for responding to cases of COVID in our school communities (staff, students, families).

The district recognizes the importance of local community COVID context in making these difficult decisions regarding implementation of our health and safety guidance as well as responding to positive cases of COVID in our schools. If COVID cases in our community and schools increase, the district may need to adapt our plan to further reduce risk. We will be meeting regularly with our local health advisory committee (Health Department, Hospital, and Tribal Health Department, and local physicians) to review our local COVID data and risks and consult on the implementation and/or updating of our plan. At this time, we are planning on implementing the following procedures for communication, quarantine, school closures, and return to school.

- **Notification and communication** – The district is committed to notifying staff and families as soon as practical when there is a confirmed case of COVID in our school community that would trigger a temporary class or school closure. The district and health department are also committed to maintaining and respecting individual medical privacy through this process.
 - **Notification** – The Montezuma County Health Department receives all results for COVID testing in our community and is responsible for contacting individuals who have tested positive for COVID and then completing the “contact tracing” process. Contact tracing on the Ute Mountain Ute reservation is completed by the Ute Mountain Ute Public Health Department. The “contact tracing” process involves the Health Department contacting individuals who have had “close contact” with an individual who tested positive for COVID. “Close contact” is defined as being within 6 feet of the individual with COVID for more than 15 minutes. District staff who test positive for COVID will be required stay home from work and to notify HR and their supervisor within 24 hours of receiving notification from the Health Department. In the case of students or staff who test positive for COVID, the Health Department has agreed to share information with the district for the purposes of implementing the temporary class or school closure in alignment with the quarantine protocol. The district will utilize this information to initiate our procedures as outlined in this plan, while respecting individual health privacy.
 - **Communication** – Upon learning of one or more individuals testing positive for COVID in our school community the district will issue a letter to parents and staff with the following information:
 - The school or bus that the individual(s) who tested positive was involved in prior to testing positive.
 - Any actions that the Health Department will be taking (e.g. directly notifying individuals who may have had “close contact” with that individual and advising them of any medical next steps, recommending/offering testing, etc.)
 - The actions that the district is taking in response (e.g. deep cleaning protocols, moving one or more classes to temporary online learning to comply with the quarantine protocol, and/or initiating a temporary school closure with temporary online learning at one or more schools)

- Educational material from the Health Department on COVID symptoms and when to seek health care or testing.
 - The additional communications that staff and families can expect from the district regarding temporary online learning and return to school
- **Quarantine and isolation procedures** – The district will follow the Montezuma County Health Department guidelines for *quarantine* (individuals who are not COVID positive but have had “close contact” with someone who is COVID positive) and *isolation* (individuals who have tested positive for COVID) in deciding to implement a temporary class or school closure and/or in determining when to return a class or school back to in-person learning. More information on the Montezuma County Health Department guidelines can be found on their website at (LINK coming soon).
- **Temporary class, bus, or school closures** – The district will initiate temporary class or school closures in the event that an individual in one of our schools tests positive for COVID.
 - Temporary class closure – In the event that an individual staff or student involved in a class tests positive for COVID that class will be moved to online learning for a period of 14 days in alignment with the Montezuma County Health Departments guidelines for quarantining individuals who have had “close contact” with someone who has tested positive for COVID.
 - Temporary bus route suspension – In the event that an individual staff or student involved in a particular bus route tests positive for COVID that bus route will be suspended for a period of 14 days in alignment with the Montezuma County Health Departments guidelines for quarantining individuals who have had “close contact” with someone who has tested positive for COVID. Other students who rode that bus will be moved to temporary online learning during this period but their respective classmates who do not ride the bus will not be impacted unless additional students test positive (as described above).
 - Temporary school closure – The district will follow state guidelines and consult with the local health advisory committee on decisions regarding implementing a temporary school closure. In the instance of a temporary school closure, the district would move all staff and students to temporary online learning.
 - Temporary district closure – In the event that the district receives guidance from the local health department and/or the state requiring a district-level closure, the district will implement a district closure in alignment with that guidance and move all staff and students to temporary online learning.
- **Temporary online learning** – the district will offer temporary online learning to students who are at home due to an individual quarantine, temporary bus route suspension, temporary class closure, or temporary school closure. A description of our temporary online learning is available in Section 3 of this document.
- **Return to school and work procedures** – The district will follow the Montezuma County Health Department guidelines for *quarantine* (individuals who are not COVID positive but have had “close contact” with someone who is COVID positive) and *isolation* (individuals who have tested positive for COVID) in determining individual’s eligibility to return to school and work and in determining timeline and criteria for reopening classes, bus routes, or schools on temporary closure. More information on the Montezuma County Health Department guidelines can be found on their website at (LINK coming soon).

2. Operational Safety (Facilities, Busing, Cafeteria and Food Services)

2.1 Enhanced facilities health and safety protocols

The Facilities Department prioritizes the health, safety, and education of all MCSD students and staff within the educational environment. In alignment with guidance from public health guidelines, the facilities division will continue with necessary construction and maintenance, as well as the following:

- **General Cleaning Protocol**
 - All custodians and other applicable staff will be trained in the approved protocols for COVID cleaning and disinfecting.
 - All classrooms will be provided with hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray and microfiber cloths. (For classrooms without access to water, water pails will be provided for wet cloth wipe down.) Classrooms with sinks will also have hand soap and paper towels.
 - To the extent possible, students and staff will limit the sharing of all supplies, utensils, devices, toys, books, etc. and will clean all tools after use.
 - Each school office and department will have access to spray disinfectant, wipes and/or hand sanitizer, hand soap and paper towels.
 - Each school will be furnished with a mobile hand sanitizer station(s) for their main entry.
- **Cleaning Scope for Custodians**
 - **Nightly Cleaning** – In addition to normal/current cleaning, a thorough disinfection of each school will take place each evening after students and staff are gone. Nightly disinfection will include:
 - Vacuuming and mopping of floors
 - Surface disinfecting to include high touch areas – doors and handles, desks, chairs, countertops, main office check-in windows
 - Cleaning restrooms
 - Emptying all trash cans, replace liners daily
 - Cleaning exterior entry doors and handles/push bars
 - **Daily Cleaning** – Disinfection will occur throughout the day while school in session:
 - Cleaning all restrooms - may need to be temporarily closed to allow for cleaning and disinfecting during the school day.
 - Cleaning all school entry points, check-in windows
 - Cleaning sneeze guards (teachers will clean throughout the day as necessary).
 - Cleaning classrooms – desks and chairs, tables, countertops, faucets, etc. will need to be disinfected at least twice per day. Spot cleaning may be needed following meals. Additional disinfection if/when student groups rotate in and out. Teacher’s touch spots should be disinfected if they will be switching classrooms instead of students. This will likely be done by the classroom teacher or other staff when students aren’t in the room, out to recess, etc.
 - Completing a surface disinfecting of doors and handles, light switches, countertops, keyboards
 - Disinfecting playground equipment as applicable
 - A full description of our district facilities cleaning plan and protocol is available here ([LINK coming soon](#)).

- **Ventilation**
 - Staff and teachers will increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors as much as possible
 - Schools may decide to hold some classes, activities, and meals outdoors if deemed practical.
 - Many of our schools have been equipped with New HVAC systems, as the CDC has seen improved air quality and less airborne disease.
- **Visitors**
 - No volunteers, visitors, or non-employees should access the building during the school day. The district and schools will be happy to make alternative arrangements to meet with parents to ensure we maintain a high level of parent and family engagement. Please contact your school or district offices to make these arrangements.
 - Delivery drivers can be met at the door or designated drop off/pick up space. If they are entering the building, they should have their temperatures taken.
 - Drop-off spaces will be set up outside of the main doors for parents to place items to be delivered to students. Systems for checking students in and out of school during the day may need to be modified to meet public health guidelines.

2.2 Busing and transportation

The Transportation Department will support students by providing safe and timely transport services for eligible riders attending in-person learning. We will continue to serve special education needs. Transportation will follow state and local public health guidelines.

- We will put signage on our buses reminding families and students of our district COVID safety protocols to help with our district education effort on preventing the spread of COVID.
- We will provide personal protective equipment for our bus drivers.
- We will reduce the risk of transmission by having household and classroom units sit together, where practical. Students will have assigned seats and must stay in their seats and not change seats. We will also open bus windows to increase ventilation whenever practical based on weather.
- When students enter the school bus, whenever possible, they will load the bus from the rear to the front of the bus and unload the school bus from the front of the bus to the back.
- The state guidance says that *“if physical distancing is not feasible on a bus, all students must wear cloth face coverings over the nose and mouth, unless the student has a health reason for not wearing a mask or if a child is unable to wear a mask safely without supervision.”*. In order to continue to provide bus service to our students we will be requiring students riding the bus to wear masks.
- Cleaning and disinfecting protocols will be implemented following student pick up and drop-offs in compliance with state guidance on cleaning. All applicable staff will be provided training on the approved COVID cleaning protocols.

2.3 Nutrition services and cafeterias

- **Plans for meal service at start of school** – In accordance with guidelines given by national, state, and local health experts, mealtimes will look different than previous years. But it will still be delicious and fun! Our dedicated and hardworking nutrition staff will continue to follow rigorous cleaning and sanitizing practices, including sanitizing equipment, serving trays and utensils, and touch surfaces in between classes or periods. Staff will wear face masks, gloves, etc. during work hours. Like all MCSD staff, they will screen themselves before work for symptoms of illness.

- **Plan for meal service for in-person learners**
 - Our plan is to serve breakfast and lunch in the cafeteria with a plan for socially distanced lining up and socially distanced seating. Students will be allowed to remove their masks in the cafeteria during meals but will be required to wear them when they are not seated at the tables.
 - We will have a hand sanitizing dispenser available at the door leading into serving area and cafeteria.
 - Each student will stand 4-6 ft away from each other in line, possibly with red x's on floor to help students know where to stand in line.
 - All meals will be plated with all menu items and handed to each student to minimize contact and help us create an efficient process. If we are able to offer choices to students again in the future and still maintain a safe and efficient process we will do so.
 - The kitchen manager will input the student name into the computer as they come through the line so students will not have to touch the keypad. We will have a plexi-glass shield around the computer, similar to what is in place in grocery stores and banks, will be in place to provide extra safety for each kitchen manager who is doing the payment process.
 - The cafeteria tables will have red X's six feet apart on the tabletop to promote social distancing during meals. All tables would have to be in use and spread around the gym.
 - All surfaces in serving line will be sanitized after each class has gone through the line
 - The students would be responsible for dumping their leftover food in trash and putting their tray in dish return to minimize the custodian having to touch all trays. The district will explore disposable trays if necessary.
 - Students would use disposable spoons to minimize touching of silverware, there would not be any napkin holders as the spoons would be prewrapped with a napkin.

- **Plan for meal service for our online learners:** MCSD will continue to provide school breakfast and lunch to all online learners who would benefit. Our normal payment structure will apply. A variety of packaged meal options will be available for pick-up. The district will communicate more information about the process for signing up for meals, ordering, and pick-up processes to parents and families involved in the full-time online school program. Students involved in temporary online learning due to quarantine will also have access to this meal service.

3.Supporting Student Academic Success Through Our School Options for 20-21

The Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) are essential in ensuring that students have a strong command of the skills and understandings associated with the critical areas. These skills and understandings are critical to building the foundational knowledge needed for the success of students. While all the CAS are important to educating the whole student, the current health crisis and the manner in which instruction must continue, necessitates the need for schools to examine which standards have been taught and where the learning gaps exist due to the extended school closures.

In order to deliver a quality educational experience during these challenging times, students' social/emotional needs, special accommodations, and individual will be considered. The general

education standards should be considered when amending, as appropriate, a student's IEP goal(s)/ objective(s) outside of an IEP team meeting, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Any amendment(s) made to a student's IEP should be agreed upon by the student's parent(s), documented, and changes provided to the parent and other members of the amended IEP team.

The district is committed to providing a safe and engaging learning environment for all our students for the 2020-21 school year. The district also recognizes the importance of parent choice in determining the best option for their children and families for this year. The district is committed to providing two schooling options for the year to provide parents with a choice of safe and engaging learning programs. As schools are reopened and consideration is made to meet the needs of social distancing, the district will offer in person learning. As part of the in person learning design, schools will create schedules and spaces that promote social distancing and cohort-based models. In addition, school teams will be designing curriculum to include blended learning. All students will have one-to-one computers for in class and at home blended learning instruction. Parents may choose to enroll their child in fully online learning in place of in person learning. Students enrolled in online learning will remain in online classes for each semester that they register. A description of both schooling options is included below:

3.1 In-person learning with enhanced health and safety guidelines

- **Schedules and cohort-based learning** – School schedules will be modified to create student cohorts (groups of students who take the majority of their classes together) wherever possible. All elementary English Language Learners, Special Education, and resource teachers will work with small groups of students or support students in classroom cohorts. Elective teachers be included in the rotations at every level.
- **Curriculum and Instruction** – The in-person learning will utilize the district-adopted curriculum for grades K-12 taught by our teachers. All teachers are planning for the possibility that some students, classes, or schools may need to transition to temporary online learning. Therefore, in person instruction would include blended learning models which include use of technology within our everyday in-person instruction. In person learning would continue unless there is a COVID outbreak at which time a cohort of students would continuing their learning at home for a temporary amount of time (i.e. 2 weeks).
- **Electives and activities** – the district will continue to offer electives and activities to the degree we can do so safely and as allowed by state guidance including guidance from the State Health Department, State Department of Education, Colorado High School Sports and Athletics Association, and Colorado Band Association. We anticipate that this guidance will change and will provide updates to parents, families, and students as quickly as practical.
- **Teacher support** – Our teachers will provide the instruction for our in-person learning and will facilitate temporary online learning using our district curriculum and programs when a class or school is moved to temporary online learning. In the event that individual students are ill or in quarantine and require temporary online learning but their regular class is still meeting, the school will designate someone from the school to support the student in accessing and completing their classwork.
- **Technology** – All K-12 students will receive a district-issued computer to use in their in-person and at-home learning.
- **Enhanced safety and health** – The district will implement enhanced health and safety guidelines in alignment with state guidance and local guidance from our county health department and local health advisory committee. The safety and health guidance is outlined in Section 1 of this document.

- **Planning for temporary online learning** – All teachers are planning for the possibility of temporary online learning for individuals, classes, or the whole school. Based on health and safety guidelines we are planning for temporary online learning of up to two weeks in the event of a confirmed COVID case in one or more of our classes or schools. Temporary online learning will be facilitated by our teachers using a mix of real-time online instruction, computer supported educational programs, assignments, and individual and small group support. Teachers will be using the computer programs that will be used for temporary online learning as part of the day-to-day in person instruction so that students are familiar with these programs and are ready to use them in their learning at home (this is called blended learning).

3.2 Fully online schooling (CDLS)

- **Colorado Digital Learning Solutions (CDLS)** – The district will be offering a fully online school option using CDLS, which is a state approved and supported online learning program.
- **Cost** – The district will be paying the fees for this option so this program will be free to any students enrolled through our district.
- **Quality K-12 classes** – CDLS provides a full set of K-12 classes and courses using a state curriculum aligned to state standards. High school courses include AP courses and courses needed for students to meet state and local graduation requirements.
- **Teacher and district support** – Students enrolled in the CDLS online school program will receive online instruction and support from qualified teachers across the state and will be taking classes with other students from across the state. The district will also provide local district support from district staff who will work with individual students and families to support their success in the CDLS program.
- **Technology** – All K-12 students will receive a district-issued computer to use in their online learning program.
- **Access to district services, electives, and activities** – The district will make every effort to support students enrolled in the district CDLS online schooling program who wish to have access to district services (e.g. school meals, health center, etc) and electives (including CTE) and activities (including sports). The ability to participate in electives, sports, and activities will be subject to health guidance from the state and local health advisory team. Parents and families who would like their student to participate in these should contact the district for more information.
- **Enrollment and transferring** – Students who enroll in CDLS through the district will be considered to be enrolled in RE-1 and will still be linked to their home school. This means that they can access activities and electives at their home school and can request to transfer back to their home school at semester or the end of the year (cases to transfer at other times will be considered on an individual basis). Families who have enrolled their students in the home school through open enrollment and choose CDLS online school for this year will not lose their open enrollment seat at their home school.
- **For more information on our online school program CDLS see our website** (LINK coming soon)

3.3. Assessments

- **Diagnostic assessments** – Teachers will be using diagnostics from high-quality adopted materials as often as possible to diagnose gaps that students might have in their learning. Teachers will prioritize and teach unfinished learning in the appropriate pacing of the curriculum for all core classes and electives.

- **English Language Arts** – Teachers will diagnose students’ reading foundational skills (using an assessment like DIBELS or Lexia). Additionally, teachers will diagnose for reading comprehension and writing skills using Lexia, and weekly formative assessments aligned to standards and the scope and sequence of instruction.
- **Mathematics**– Rather than giving one significant diagnostic assessment up front, teachers will use resources from CDE’s Office of Mathematics, Zearn Math, district weekly formative assessments and curriculum embedded assessments. Teachers will prioritize and teach unfinished learning in the appropriate pacing of the curriculum.
- **Other Assessments**
 - **Interim Assessments** – Staff will continue to use the District Interim assessments to assess student’s mastery to grade level standards.
 - **CMAS, PSAT and SAT** – Guidance will be forthcoming from the Colorado Department of Education on State Assessments

3.4 Supports for students with disabilities (IEPs and 504s)

While the extended school closures have a significant impact on the education of students statewide, it is recognized that students with disabilities, English language learners, and our gifted and talented students may experience increased challenges due to the changes in instructional method and environment.

The provision of special education and related services operates within the broader context of the general education curriculum and instruction continues to be a driver. It is important that a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) continues to be the touchstone for the IEP process, including special education eligibility and services during the extended school closures through the return to school and instructional programming.

The District will continue to collaborate with the San Juan BOCES and Colorado Department of Education for guidance addressing special education and related services during the extended school closures. District special education teachers will also provide services to support our online students who have IEPs. Following are general considerations for students with disabilities (IEPs and 504 plans).

- **Role of the family in the teaching/learning process.** Parents of students with disabilities have always had a decision-making voice and required participation at the IEP or 504 Team. It will be important to continue to collaborate collectively with parents and instructional staff.
- **Integration of technology.** During this period of continuity of learning technology has presented new uncharted opportunities for educators, school administrators, and families to leverage the benefits of technology to support learning and meaningful parent participation for students with disabilities.
- **Maintain a focus on social/emotional wellbeing.** Schools will be focusing on the social/emotional impact of the temporary online learning in the spring and building systems in the schools to support students. Considerations for students with special needs, those who have a history of trauma, are broad and overarching and will be individualized in the students’ IEP or 504 plan.

3.5 Support for English language learners

- The district will continue to provide support for our English language learners by providing additional support from teachers and other support staff, monitoring student progress in learning English using ACCESS testing, and providing additional support through Lexia (which can be utilized in school and during temporary online learning).

3.6 Support for Gifted and Talented (GT) students

- The district will continue to provide support for our gifted and talented students through the development of advanced learning plans (ALPs) and providing multiple opportunities for extended learning. Teachers will continue to work with GT students to provide accelerated learning assignments in class and for at home learning. The district will continue to offer Knowledge Bowl, Spelling Bee, and other enrichment activities as we are able to safely or as allowed by state guidelines.

3.7 Professional development and support for teachers

- **Blended learning** – Blended learning is relatively new and all staff involved will be trained and supported in on how to deliver instruction via digital learning platforms. Through additional professional learning opportunities including online pedagogy, educators will be able to transfer their high-quality teaching practices to the virtual environment. Professional learning will be provided to teachers on designing equitable blended instruction regardless of whether it is delivered in a virtual or a pen and pencil environment.
- **Equity** – The district will be offering professional development on equity to our teachers this year to ensure we are able to meet the needs of all our diverse families and students and close any achievement gaps our students may be experiencing.

3.8 Detailed education and instructional plans

- **Teacher planning teams** – teacher teams have been meeting over the summer to prepare detailed plans for our educational programs for 2020-21 so we can provide the best educational opportunities for all of our students.
- **Elementary, middle, and high school plans** – the detailed plans that teachers developed for instruction at elementary, middle and high school are available on our website (LINK coming soon).
- **School-based plans** – Each school develops a 90 day plan every year with school-based academic and school culture priorities for the year. In addition, each school will have specific plans for scheduling, activities, and implementing the district safety guidance. Please visit your school's website to see a copy of your school's plan and contact your principal with questions.

4. Student Engagement and Activities

4.1 Sports and activities

- **Sports** – the district follows guidelines governing high school sports as outlined by the Colorado High School Athletics Association (CHSAA). CHSAA is working to align guidance for sports with state health and safety guidelines. The district intends to follow CHSAA guidelines for all MCHS and MCMS sports activities. We anticipate this guidance will be updated regularly and may apply differently to different types of sports or at different times of the year depending on the risk. The district will notify families and students of the latest guidance prior to school starting and

will update families and students as new updates become available. Updates will go out on the website, Facebook, and via email or phone to families and students.

- **Marching Band** – the district follows the Colorado Band Association (CBA) guidelines governing high school marching bands. The district intends to follow CBA guidelines for all MCHS and MCMS band activities. We anticipate this guidance will be updated regularly and may apply differently at different times of the year depending on the risk. The district will notify families and students of the latest guidance prior to school starting and will update families and students as new updates become available. Updates will go out on the website, Facebook, and via email or phone to families and students.
- **Student Performances (Choir, Band, Theater, etc)** – the district will follow state guidelines on indoor gatherings in determining whether or how we can safely offer student performances to audiences. In the event that we cannot offer live performances we will do our best to offer alternative ways for parents and the community to view these performances.
- **Electives** – The district will follow state guidance and/or the guidance from our local health advisory committee in determining whether and how we can offer some electives, such as band, choir, and PE safely. The availability of these types of electives may change from time to time during the year based on changes in state guidance or our local community COVID cases.
- **After school activities** – After school activities offered by our schools and staff will be subject to the same health and safety guidelines outlined in this plan. Any after school activities previously offered by community partners must submit an application to the district along with a safety plan demonstrating compliance with the district health and safety guidelines. These applications will be reviewed and approved or denied on a case-by-case basis.
- **Field trips** – At this time the district anticipates limited or no field trips that involve busing, travel out of the community, or overnight travel.
- **Recess** – Students will likely go to recess in staggered shifts to limited groupings outside at once. Schools may stagger the use of the playground equipment and will disinfect it as applicable. Students will need to wash or sanitize their hands before going outside and before coming back inside. Students should bring water bottles from home or be provided water bottles to use at school. Face coverings do not need to be worn outside.

4.2 Social emotional support

- **Maintaining a positive school culture and building student skills** – All district schools will continue to implement efforts to maintain positive school cultures for our students through Positive Behavioral Supports, school-wide values, student recognition, community circles, and other programs to help students address stress, build conflict resolution skills, and more.
- **Counseling supports** – The district will continue to provide counseling services in all our schools. These services will be available to students in need during in-person and temporary online learning.
- **Suicide prevention** – The district remains committed to our suicide prevention efforts and recognizes that some students and families may be under additional stress during this time. The district will continue to train staff on recognizing signs of depression and suicide in students and how to refer students for help. Any students expressing concerning thoughts or ideas in this area will go through a screening with the school-based suicide prevention and threat assessment team to determine if the student is at risk and if the student needs additional supports. CMS and MCHS will continue to provide Sources of Strength to support students in developing their own personal sources of strength, build networks of support, and seek help for themselves or their peers who may be at risk.
- **Commitment to anti-bullying** – The district and all our schools will not tolerate bullying of any kind including online bullying or bullying related to mask wearing or other COVID related issues.

The district will continue to implement bullying prevention supports in our schools and implement the district anti-bullying policy. For more information on bullying please see your student handbook or district policy.

4.3 Attendance and attendance policies

- **CDE guidance and board policies** – Our schools will continue to take attendance in accordance with CDE reporting requirements and board policies. Traditional attendance will be taken for in-person learning and modified attendance procedures will be used for students in temporary online learning or in the full-time online school program. Families with students enrolled in the full-time online school program will receive additional information about attendance procedures.
- **Supports for students who miss school** – The district will partner with our community partners and schools to provide supports for students missing school. For students who are missing school due to being quarantined the school will provide support for temporary online learning as described in this plan. For students missing school for reasons not related to illness, the district will continue to work with community partners such as the Ute Mountain Ute Education Department, Pinion Project, and others to reach out to families and students and provide supports to improve attendance.

4.4 Parent-teacher conferences – the district will provide opportunities for parent-teacher conferences that comply with the current health and safety guidance. Parents and families will be notified of the format and guidelines for parent-teacher conferences prior to the scheduled date. Our district and schools welcome parent and family involvement and will ensure we can make arrangements for meetings with parents and families in ways that comply with our health and safety guidance.

5. Communications and Parent and Family Engagement

In order to protect and support our amazing students and our beloved community as a whole, we are dedicated to establishing comprehensive and timely communications strategies across multiple channels. This upcoming school year will hold more communication complexity than usual. We know that each family has its own preferred communication tools, and we know that families that choose in-school teaching will relate to schools differently than semester-long remote learners. In addition, when in-school learning switches to short-term distance learning as needed, educators and families will need to draw on a great deal of organization and flexibility. On top of that, changing health guidelines from state and local experts as well as changes in the health of the community will also affect how we operate, and that will require swift messaging.

In order to reach multiple audiences during a fluctuating health crisis and simultaneously interface with two learning tracks, clear and timely communications must reach everyone as soon as possible. To succeed at this, what follows is our multi-pronged approach:

5.1 Types of communications

- **District and School Websites** – As you know, the Montezuma County District website (and the accompanying school websites) was updated recently and holds a wealth of information, including in-person and remote learning plans, health protocols, schedules, Board of Education information, tech support, meal distribution, FAQs, community resources, etc. The district website will be updated on a weekly basis, or daily if need be, to give all students and families the info and tools they need to stay informed and resourced.

- **School Newsletters** – In order for us to navigate the start of the school year together, principals will continue to issue a weekly newsletter with updates, successes, and progress reports. Specific information for each school will be highlighted as needed.
- **Facebook and Social Media** – Each school, as well as the district, have Facebook pages is a great source of inspirational and celebratory content, but we will also use it an up-to-the-minute method of alerting the community of high-impact news, such as closings, transportation changes, new health regulations, improved school processes, outbreaks, etc. Social media will work in tandem with other media to get you the info you need, as soon as you need it.
- **Voice, Text and Email** – The district and all schools will provide important updates and crisis alerts via an auto-dialer tool, as well as email and a variety of texting platforms. We anticipate fluctuating schedules and plans throughout the year, so these immediate contact tools become increasingly important.
- **Video** – The district will hold the customary monthly Board of Education meetings, with additional time allotted to addressing COVID-related issues. Informational “Town Halls” will also be held via Zoom or in person when possible on a regular basis, so parents and the community can hear all updates and developments, and ask any questions they have.
- **Traditional Media** – Radio, newspapers, and public television will be used as well, when those tools serve best.
- **Publications** – Our Staff Handbook, Student Handbook, and this Citizen’s Guide will be the primary resources for most of the details you’ll need, such as specific information about health insurance, education guidelines, and health protocols.

5.2 Community and Parent Engagement

We are so proud of the teamwork that has taken place in our community since March, and we will strive to continue our healthy engagement with all parents and the county as a whole. We will distribute surveys throughout the year to see what works best, and Superintendent Harkness actively welcomes emails with any comments or concerns. Parents and families: don’t forget to set up your Parent Portal account online – you can track your student’s progress from this account at any time.

5.3 Urgent communications

The success and safety of MCSD’s students and staff, whether in an in-person or remote learning environment, is our top priority. The primary focus of our Communication plan is to ensure timely, accurate information gets to staff, families, students, community in a thorough and reliable way, so everyone is empowered to make informed decisions and actions.

We will have prepared messages to send out when illness is confirmed in the school, when a significant number of students are found ill, and when schools need to close due to the illness. Communication will go out via multiple methods: television, social media, email, letters home, text, and voicemail. See Section 1 for details about what protocols and communications will take place during outbreaks in our schools.

We will continue a close relationship with our local health department, so any change in community wellness will be shared and broadcast a soon as possible. This relationship will help both schools and hospital keep you updated with timely information about the virus and how to remain healthy.

Both schools and the district will continue to convey key urgent communication about snow days, threats, etc. to families and the community.

5.4 Our Ute Mountain Ute Community

MCS D leadership will meet regularly with the Ute Mountain Ute Education Department in order to stay closely connected on all needs, updates, and processes during this unique school year. In addition to all the communications mechanisms outlined above, MCS D will also utilize tribal bulletin boards, public television, the community radio station (KSUT) now broadcasting in Towaoc, and any other tools as is needed.