

Citizen's Guide to Reopening

Updated October 13, 2021



This is a living document. At any time upon the recommendation of Montezuma County Public Health, Colorado Department of Education, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and state mandates we could change the content to better meet the health and safety of those we serve.



**EVERY STUDENT.
EVERY DAY.**

P.O. Box R
400 North Elm Street
Cortez, Colorado 81321
Phone: (970) 565-7282
Fax: (970) 565-2161
www.cortez.k12.co.us

July 1, 2021

Hello Staff, Students, and Community Members,

Governor Polis has rescinded the stringent Executive Orders that were in effect for the 2020-2021 due to the Coronavirus 19 pandemic. The original Citizen's Guide was developed in coordination with Governor Polis's Office, Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Department of Public Health, Colorado High School Athletic Association and Montezuma County Department of Public Health.

On behalf of the Board of Educators and the Montezuma Cortez School District RE-1 the following Citizen's Guide has been revised for the 2021-2022 school year with the primary goal to provide a healthy and safe environment for in person instruction for our students. As you read this document, please be aware that the Citizen's Guide will be adapted and modified as needed based on public health recommendations. Montezuma Cortez School District RE-1 highly recommends the use of multiple and varied strategies in order to combat Coronavirus-19 variants. Montezuma Cortez School District RE-1 recommends masking, constant use of sanitizer, social distancing and frequent hand washing. The positive Coronavirus-19 virus cases have dramatically declined due to personal safety precautions and vaccinations. Montezuma Cortez School District RE-1 is excited to open our doors to staff, students, parents and community members with the Citizen's Guide as a document to serve as a framework for our operational procedures for re-opening our schools.

Be Kind, Be Safe, Be Healthy

Dr. Risha VanderWey
Superintendent
Montezuma-Cortez School District RE-1

Citizen’s Guide to Reopening

2021-22

Table of Contents

<i>1. Commitment to Health and Safety</i>	3
<i>2. Operational Safety (Facilities, Busing, Cafeteria and Food Services)</i>	8
<i>3. Supporting Student Academic Success Through Our School Options for 21-22</i>	10
<i>4. Student Engagement and Activities</i>	14
<i>5. Communications and Parent and Family Engagement</i>	15

1. Commitment to Health and Safety

Montezuma-Cortez School District RE-1 is committed to providing a healthy and safe work and learning environment. We will continue to collaborate with our local health officials and Montezuma County Public Health Department to ensure we are following all state requirements. The health and safety guidelines for Montezuma Cortez School District 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 should complete a health screening at home using the Coronavirus-19 screening process every day before coming to school. The screening criteria for Coronavirus-19 from the Health Department and CDC are included below.

Coronavirus-19 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 symptoms and have not been exposed to someone who has tested positive for Coronavirus-19.
- Parents and families are asked to take their children's temperature and review the list of Coronavirus-19 criteria to ensure their child is not experiencing any symptoms and have not been exposed to someone who has tested positive for Coronavirus-19.
- 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 Coronavirus-19. Note: "close contact" is defined as having spent 15 minutes or more in proximity (within 6 feet) of someone who has tested positive for Coronavirus-19.
- 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 have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for Coronavirus-19 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 Coronavirus-19 need to notify Jaclyn Hall, District Director of Health and Nursing.

Preface: Montezuma Cortez School District RE-1 highly recommends the use of multiple strategies in order to combat Coronavirus-19 and variants. We recommend masking, consistent use of sanitizer, social distancing, and frequently washing hands.

1.2 Personal Protective Equipment/Masks

- o **Staff** – All staff are to wear a mask. Any staff with a medical exemption for mask-wearing should see that the exemption is on file with the Human Resources Department in the district administration building.
- o **Students** – Students are not currently required to wear face coverings or masks; however, we highly recommend them.
- o **For more information on mask requirements**, please click the following link: [Colorado Mask Guidance](#)

1.3 Educating students on health and hygiene

- o **Educating students on staying healthy** – We will be educating students on how to stay healthy and prevent the spread of germs.
- o **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.

- o **Large groups and assemblies** – The district will follow the state guidelines for the different size groups. There are no limitations on outdoor gatherings.
- o **School supplies and sharing** – Schools will not be allowing students to share classroom supplies to the extent possible without properly sanitizing them between use (based on state guidelines).
- o **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

- o **Health clinic services** – The district school health clinic is planning to operate as usual and will continue to provide a variety of non-Coronavirus-19 related health services to our staff, students, and families. Coronavirus-19 related health services will be available through qualified community health providers and the hospital.
- o **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 Coronavirus-19 prevention efforts.

- o **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 Coronavirus-19 screening with any individuals who become ill at school. If 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 to minimize chances of additional contact with other staff or students. School nurses will continue to provide some preventive health screenings in a different format than usual.
- o **Responding to non-Coronavirus-19 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 Coronavirus-19. We will screen students for Coronavirus-19 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.
- o **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 Coronavirus-19, the district will work with the family on what accommodations can be reasonably made in the in-person learning environment. If remaining on campus is not an option, the individual schools will work with families to make appropriate arrangements. Full remote learning will be decided on a case-by-case basis. The district also recognizes that there are employees who may meet various criteria associated with higher risk for Coronavirus-19 as defined by the CDC. We recommend that these employees get the Coronavirus-19 vaccination and do their part to take necessary precautions. Employees who wish to request an accommodation due to their personal risk should contact Human Resources directly. Requests for accommodations will be reviewed and processed using the established Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) criteria and process.

1.8 Responding to positive cases of Coronavirus-19 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 Coronavirus-19 in our school communities (staff, students, families). We will be meeting regularly with our local health advisory committee (Health Department, Hospital, Tribal Health Department, and local physicians) to review our local Coronavirus-19 data and risks and consult on the implementation and/or updating of our plan. Currently, we are planning on implementing the following procedures for communication, quarantine, school closures, and return to school.

- o **Notification and communication** – The district is committed to notifying staff and families as soon as practical when there is a confirmed case of Coronavirus-19 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 Coronavirus-19 testing in our community and is responsible for contacting individuals who have tested positive for Coronavirus-19 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 Coronavirus-19. “Close contact” is defined as being within 6 feet of the individual with Coronavirus-19 for more than 15 minutes. District staff who test positive for Coronavirus will be required to stay home from work and to notify Human Resources and their supervisor within 24 hours of receiving notification from the Health Department. In the case of students or staff who test positive for Coronavirus-19, the Health Department has agreed to share information with the district for the purposes of implementing the necessary communications and precautions. 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 Coronavirus-19 in our school community or the district, we will issue a letter to parents and staff with the following information:
 - 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 Coronavirus-19 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 recommend quarantines of a minimum of 10 days for any individuals who are deemed a “close contact” of a Coronavirus-19 positive person. We will continue to follow the Montezuma County Health Department guidelines for *quarantine* (individuals who are not Coronavirus-19 positive but have had “close contact” with someone who is Coronavirus-19 positive and *were not wearing a mask*) and *isolation* (individuals who have tested positive for Coronavirus-19) 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.
- **Temporary class, bus, or school closures** – The district may initiate temporary class or school closures if an individual in one of our schools tests positive for Coronavirus-19.
 - **Temporary class closure** – In the event that an individual staff or student involved in a class, test positive for Coronavirus-19 those in close proximity may be moved to online learning for a period of 10 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 Coronavirus-19. There are exceptions to this if students in the class were wearing masks. Only the positive student will need to quarantine.
 - **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.
- **Return to school and work procedures** – The district will follow the Montezuma County Health Department guidelines for *quarantine* (individuals who are not Coronavirus-19 positive but have had “close contact” with someone who is Coronavirus-19 positive) and *isolation* (individuals who have tested positive for Coronavirus-19) 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.

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 Montezuma Cortez School District RE-1 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 are trained in the approved protocols for Coronavirus-19 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
 - 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.
- **Ventilation**
 - Staff and teachers will increase circulation of outdoor air 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.
- **Visitors**
 - Volunteers, visitors, or non-employees will be screened by the building secretary or nurse. Whether individuals are vaccinated or not, masks will be available for their use.
 - 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.

2.2 Busing and transportation

The Transportation Department will support students by providing safe and timely transport services for eligible riders. 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 Coronavirus-19 safety protocols to help with our district education effort on preventing the spread of Coronavirus-19.
- We will provide personal protective equipment for our bus drivers if they desire.
- Cleaning and disinfecting protocols will be followed.
- Passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses, including on buses operated by public and private school systems, subject to the exclusions and exemptions in the CDC Order issued on Jan. 21, 2021.
- School transportation systems are essential. Not only to ensure schools can operate but also for families who depend on their services.
- During school transportation: [CDC's Order](#) applies to all public transportation conveyances including school buses. Regardless of the mask policy at school, passengers and drivers must wear a mask on school buses, including on buses operated by public and private school systems, subject to the exclusions and exemptions in CDC's Order. For example, if a student attends a school where mask use is not required due to vaccination status (e.g., a high school with a high rate of vaccination), the student is still required to wear a mask on the school bus.

- o Schools should provide masks to those students who need them (including on buses), such as students who forgot to bring their mask or whose families are unable to afford them. No disciplinary action should be taken against a student who does not have a mask as described in the U.S. Department of Education [COVID-19 Handbook, Volume 1](#).
- o Bus operators should use best efforts to ensure that anyone entering or on the bus wears a mask, e.g. adequate signs, allowing entry only to those who wear a mask, monitoring, etc.

Note: These requirements were retrieved on August 5, 2021 from: [Colorado Department of Education Guidelines for Reopening](#)

2.3 Nutrition services and cafeterias

- o **Plans for meal service at start of school** – In accordance with guidelines given by national, state, and local health experts, mealtimes will continue to look different. 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 and gloves during work hours. Staff will screen themselves before work for symptoms of illness.
- o **Plan for meal service**
 - Breakfast and lunch will be served in accordance with guidelines provided.
 - There will be hand sanitizing dispensers available at the door leading into the serving area and cafeteria.
 - 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 can 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. This practice could change during the school year.
 - All surfaces in the serving line will be sanitized after each class has gone through the line.
 - The students will be responsible for putting their leftover food in trash and putting their tray in the dish return containers to minimize the custodian having to touch all trays.
 - Students will use disposable cutlery wrapped in a napkin.
- o **Plan for meal service for temporary online learners due to quarantine:** Montezuma Cortez School District RE-1 will provide school breakfast and lunch to all online learners who would benefit. A variety of packaged meal options will be available for pick up. All students will eat for free this school year.

3.Supporting Student Academic Success Through Our School Options for 21-22

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 way 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.

To deliver a quality educational experience during these challenging times, students' social/emotional needs and special accommodations 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 Coronavirus-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 2021-22 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 a safe in person schooling option for the year to provide parents with safe and engaging learning programs. As schools are opened in August, and consideration is made to meet the needs of social distancing, the district will offer in person learning. Families who need another learning model, will arrange with the building principal or secretary. Online learning options will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

3.1 In-person learning with enhanced health and safety guidelines

- o **Schedules and cohort-based learning** – School schedules will be modified to create student cohorts (groups of students who take most 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 are included in the rotations at every level.
- o **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 Coronavirus-19 outbreak at which time a cohort of students would continue their learning at home for a temporary amount of time (i.e., 2 weeks).
- o **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.
- o **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. If 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.
- o **Technology** – Secondary students will receive a district-issued computer. Elementary students will have access to computers in their classrooms. Students who are remote learning will be issued a district computer. Families may be asked to pay a small fee to cover insurance for the device that will be provided to their student. Technology fees may be waived for students in need.

- o **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 are outlined in Section 1 of this document.
- o **Planning for temporary online learning** – All teachers are planning for the possibility of temporary online learning for individuals, classes, or the whole school. 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

- o **Case-by-case:** The district is encouraging in person learning. The governor has strongly recommended that learning take place in the classroom. There is an anticipated gap in student achievement from 2019 - 2021 due to the pandemic-imposed restrictions.
 - Montezuma Cortez School District RE-1 is committed to a safe learning environment. We recognize that some families will be uncomfortable with an in-person option; therefore, we are willing to make accommodation on an individual basis. Parents will coordinate with building leaders to arrange for their child.
- o **Technology** – Secondary students will receive a district-issued computer. Elementary students will have access to computers in their classrooms. Students who are remote learning will be issued a district computer. Families may be asked to pay a small fee to cover insurance for the device that will be provided to their student. Technology fees may be waived for students in need.
- o **Access to district services, electives, and activities** – The district will make every effort to support students enrolled in remote schooling 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.

3.3. Assessments

- o **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.
- o **English Language Arts** – Elementary 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. Secondary teachers will use diagnostics and assessments throughout the school year both formative and summative to ensure students are progressing. Teachers will prioritize and teach unfinished learning in the appropriate pacing of the curriculum.
- o **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.

o **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).

- o **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.
- o **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.
- o **Maintain a focus on social/emotional wellbeing.** Schools will be focusing on the social/emotional impact of the temporary online learning 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

- o 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

- o 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 enrichment activities as we are able to safely or as allowed by state guidelines.

3.7 Professional development and support for teachers

- o **Blended learning** – Additional professional learning opportunities including online pedagogy enable educators to transfer their high-quality teaching practices to the virtual environment. Professional learning is provided to teachers on designing equitable blended instruction regardless of whether it is delivered in a virtual or a pen and pencil environment.
- o **Equity** – The district is offering professional development on equity in order to address the diverse needs of our students and their families in the community they serve.

3.8 Detailed education and instructional plans

- o **School-based plans** – A 90-day plan is developed every year with school-based academic and school culture priorities. Each school has a specific plan 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

- o **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.
- o **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.
- o **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. If we cannot offer live performances, we will do our best to offer

- alternative ways for parents and the community to view these performances.
- o **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.
 - o **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 apply 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.
 - o **Field trips** – At this time, the district anticipates limited field trips that involve busing, travel out of the community, or overnight travel.
 - o **Recess** – 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.

4.2 Social emotional support

- o **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.
- o **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.
- o **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. MCMS 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.
- o **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 Coronavirus-19 related issues. The district will continue to implement bullying prevention support 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

- o **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 full-time online. Families with students enrolled in the full-time online school program will receive additional information about attendance procedures.

- o **Support for students who miss school** – The district will partner with our community partners and schools to provide support 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 support 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 decide for meetings with parents and families in ways that comply with our health and safety guidance.

5. Communications and Parent and Family Engagement

To protect and support our amazing students and our beloved community, we are dedicated to establishing comprehensive and timely communications strategies across multiple channels. This upcoming school year will continue to hold more communication complexity than usual.

To reach multiple audiences during a fluctuating health crisis and simultaneously interface with different learning modes, 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

- o **District and School Websites** – As you know, the Montezuma Cortez School District RE-1 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, community resources, etc. The district website will be updated on a regular basis giving all students and families the information and tools they need to stay informed and resourced.
- o **District App** – The district is anticipating a new app this year. It can be downloaded for free on Google Play or the Apple Store. More details are forthcoming. This will be used to regularly notify stakeholders of vital information as well as link to our current website.
- o **School Newsletters (Elementary) or Announcements (Secondary)** – 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.
- o **Facebook and social media** – Each school, as well as the district, have Facebook pages. It is a great source of inspirational and celebratory content. We will also use it as 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 information you need.
- o **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.

- o **Video** – The district will hold the customary monthly Board of Education meetings. Informational “Town Halls” will also be held via Zoom or in person, when possible, so parents and the community can hear all updates and developments and ask any questions they have.
- o **Traditional Media** – Radio, newspapers, and public television will be used as well, when those tools serve best.
- o **Publications** – Our Staff Handbook, Student Handbook, and this Citizen’s Guide will be the primary resources for most of the details you will 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, and we will strive to continue our healthy engagement with all parents and the county. We will distribute surveys throughout the year to see what works best, and Superintendent VanderWey actively welcomes emails with any comments or concerns. Parents and families: do not 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 Montezuma Cortez School District RE-1’s students and staff, whether in an in-person or temporary 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, and the 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 (Towaoc), radio, 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 broadcasted as soon as possible. This relationship will help both schools and the hospital and 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

Montezuma Cortez School District RE-1 leadership will meet regularly with the Ute Mountain Ute Education Department to stay closely connected on all needs, updates, and processes during the year. In addition to all the communications mechanisms outlined above, Montezuma Cortez School District RE-1 will also utilize tribal bulletin boards, public television, and the community radio station (KSUT) now broadcasting in Towaoc.



[Click here to view Colorado Department of Education Guide to Safe Schools](#)