

# PCSD1 All-In Reopening Plan

*District-level guidelines for daily, in-person instruction starting in August  
2020*



**Platte Canyon School District 1**

Revised September 3, 2020

## INTRODUCTION

It is the stated desire of the members of the Board of Education of the Platte Canyon School District 1 to have as many of our students in our buildings, as often as possible, as safely as possible starting with the first day of school, Monday August 17, 2020.

We know that school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic are taking a toll on our children's development and social well-being; in fact, they have the potential to be significantly impactful when compared to summer closures or other events that have affected education.

While PCSD1 was able to quickly transition to a remote learning platform in mid-March, we faced many challenges:

- The majority of our teachers did not have the expertise, background, or training for the challenge of on-line teaching and learning.
- Many of our families do not have access to the internet at home, do not have sufficient bandwidth, and/or do not have reasonably new devices that allow for problem-free remote learning.
- Students have a limited appetite for hours of computer-driven instruction.
- Parents stated that they had difficulty helping their children with school work and/or creating routines at home that facilitated learning. This challenge was compounded by parents' employment requirements.

This pandemic has affected every domain of our lives and it has been traumatic for our children—especially children whose families struggle economically. Every facet of a child's life has been disrupted. Fortunately, schools are uniquely positioned to provide stability, comfort, and security during the months and years to come, if we are allowed to do so.

PCSD1 supports the American Academy of Pediatricians statement:

*“Schools are fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being and provide our children and adolescents with academic instruction, social and emotional skills, safety, reliable nutrition, physical/speech and mental health therapy, and opportunities for physical activity, among other benefits ... all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with the goal of having students physically present in school.*

## REOPENING PCSD1 SCHOOLS IN AUGUST 2020

In reopening PCSD1 schools, we acknowledge that bringing together large numbers of individuals may result in some COVID-19 cases; however, with clear and actionable guidance for safe operations, we hope to minimize the risk to students, staff, and the public.

The PCSD1 believes that our local conditions allow us to provide in-person instruction to our students starting in August 2020. Since the outbreak began in early 2020, Park County has consistently seen a low incidence of positive cases, as well as a low rate of transmission. With thoughtful planning and well-implemented prophylactic measures, we can provide an environment where the rewards of attending school outweigh the risks.

We also know that grade levels and District facilities offer unique challenges. **This plan is meant to be a general description of the measures we will employ at each location.** Each District location will design specific procedures that address the unique characteristics of differing buildings and school populations.

While the risk of viral transmission can never be totally eliminated, by consistently and strategically applying science-based mitigation strategies, PCSD1 can create an environment in which our students have the greatest chance of enjoying a successful 2020-2021 school year. These strategies are outlined below.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN REOPENING OUR SCHOOLS

The overriding principles in our reopening plan are:

- To prioritize the safety and well-being of students, staff, and community members.
- To minimize the risk that someone becomes infected in the first place.
- To understand that the start of the school year will not be “business as usual”.
- To provide parents the choice of in-person or online (remote) education.
- That to the extent practicable, in-person learning will provide social distancing and reduced group size/capacity loads in each classroom and/or building.
- To open school as close to “normal” as possible to provide familiarity and stability for our students.
- PCSD1 operational principles: Outside is always safer than inside; distance is always safer than proximity; face coverings are very effective; frequent hand sanitizing is effective; and the better our community control of the virus is, the less likely it is that disruptive school outbreaks will occur - everyone in our community has a role in this.

## PARENT CHOICE

Parent voice and choice are key to the successful reopening of schools in August 2020. We understand that some parents possess doubt about what is best for their children—health on the one hand versus the academic fulfillment and necessary socialization that our schools provide on the other.

To gauge how our parents felt about schooling in the fall, we conducted a survey of our parents, students, and staff. Of the 439 parent/student responses received, 82% of those surveyed felt comfortable returning to in-person learning, with few or no restrictions, in the fall of 2020.

Clearly, we need to provide options for our District families. We are proposing two learning models for the 2020-2021 school year:

- A return to school with a phased structure as “normal as possible”.
- A remote learning option that is completely online. For more info. on this option, see the PCSD1 Online Services link on our website: [www.plattecanyonschools.org](http://www.plattecanyonschools.org).

## PCSD1 PHASED PROCESS FOR REOPENING

Similar to many rural school districts across Colorado, we will institute social distancing, transmission mitigation measures and health monitoring measures depending on which local Phase (*Stay At Home, Safer at Home, Protect Our Neighbors*) is in place:

Phase 1: August 17, 2020 through September 7, 2020 (minimally)

Phase 2: September 8, 2020 (tentative) – September 27, 2020

Phase 3: September 28, 2020 (tentative) – October 18, 2020

Phase 4: October 19 , 2020 (tentative) – TBD

At any time, we may need to roll back to a previous phase based on prevailing local conditions. Based on current data, we are assuming that we will be in a low incidence, low transmission community.

### PHASE 1 (August 17, 2020 - September 7, 2020)

#### Phase 1 Key Components:

1. All students attend all classes every school day. Social distancing as practical/possible in classrooms.
2. Maintain student cohorts as possible. If strict cohorts cannot occur, some cohorting is better than none. In circumstances where stricter cohorting is not feasible, the greatest practical degree of cohorting should be employed.
3. Transport as few students as possible. Strongly recommend parents/friends/students to transport students to District locations. District vehicles sanitized between and after runs. Social distancing, as possible, on District vehicles.
4. Face coverings required in all public places per the Governor's Executive Order effective July 16, indoors, by students and staff members.
5. Families asked to screen students prior to coming to school. Staff members will be required to do this as well. Temperature checks available for all employees. Screening

questions posted upon entry. Temperature checks for students as needed.

6. No outside volunteers/visitors. Including at DCES, parents not walking their students into the building in the morning - it will be an adjustment for parents of primary grade students. **No in-person Back to School events and no in-person parent-teacher conferences.**

7. Clearly marked, socially-distanced “traffic lanes” during passing periods. Staggered recess times.

8. Readily available hand sanitizer. Regular hand-washing announcements/reminders.

9. High contact areas sanitized 2x daily (middle and end of business days). Classroom sets of wipes so that desks, etc., can be sanitized between uses.

10. School meals (Breakfast/Lunch) will be “grab-and-go.” Staggered times/locations at lunch to maintain social distancing. Offer grab-and-go meals for remote learners.

11. Contact tracing for any known positive COVID-19 cases.

12. At-home health screening protocol sent to all families, accompanied by messaging campaigns.

**Monitoring Checkpoint:**

1) If there are few positive cases with no outbreaks and we remain in local low incidence/low transmission status, move to Phase 2. In consultation with Park County Health, if there are too many cases to proceed to Phase 2, either remain in Phase 1 or go to contingency Hybrid/Remote Learning Plan.

## PHASE 2 (September 8, 2020 - September 27, 2020)

### Phase 2 Key Components:

1. All students attend all classes every school day. Social distancing, as possible, in classrooms.
2. Maintain student cohorts as possible. If strict cohorts cannot occur, some cohorting is better than none. In circumstances where stricter cohorting is not feasible, the greatest practical degree of cohorting should be employed.
3. Continue to transport as few students as possible. Strongly recommend parents/friends/students to transport students to District locations. Social distancing, as possible, on District vehicles. District vehicles sanitized between and after runs.
4. Face coverings required in all public places per the Governor's Executive Order effective July 16, indoors, by students and staff members. If the Governor's Executive order has expired, we will consider reducing the requirement based on staff and BOE input.
5. Families asked to screen students prior to coming to school. Staff members will be required to do this as well. Temperature checks available for all employees. Screening questions posted and asked upon entry. Temperature checks for students as needed.
6. Continue no volunteers and no visitors.
7. Revise socially-distanced "traffic lanes" during passing periods in order to facilitate social distancing while maximizing operational efficiency. Staggered recess times.
8. Readily available hand sanitizer. Regular hand-washing announcements/reminders.
9. High contact areas sanitized 2x daily (middle and EOB).
10. School meals (Breakfast/Lunch) will be "grab-and-go." *A la carte* station can be operated, if available at a location. Staggered times/locations at lunch to maintain social distancing.
11. Contact tracing for any known positive COVID-19 cases.
12. At-home health screening protocol sent to all families, accompanied by messaging

campaigns (again).

13. Allow after-school tutoring/extra instruction with teachers in limited fashion **and** dependent upon the student's ability to be transported off campus *without using District transportation*. Tutoring/extra instruction will be cohort-dependent at the elementary and middle schools. Small clubs may meet after school under the same conditions, with administrative approval.

#### Monitoring Checkpoint:

1) If there are few positive cases with no outbreaks and we remain in local low incidence/low transmission status, move to Phase 3. In consultation with Park County Health, if there are too many cases to proceed to Phase 3, either remain in Phase 2 or go back to Phase 1.

## PHASE 3

#### Phase 3 Key Components:

1. All students attend all classes every school day. Social distancing in classrooms, as much as possible.
2. Transport all students that prefer District transportation. Social distancing on District vehicles, if possible. District vehicles sanitized between and after runs.
3. Face coverings recommended for all students and staff members, indoors, when social distancing is not possible.
4. Temp checks as needed/requested for students/staff members.
5. Limited outside volunteers/visitors. Masks required. Screening questions. Have PPE available in every building for visitors.
5. Socially-distanced "traffic lanes" during passing periods. Staggered recess times
6. Readily available hand sanitizer. Regular hand-washing announcements/reminders.
7. High contact areas sanitized 2x daily (middle and EOB).

8. Staggered times/locations at lunch to maintain social distancing.
9. Contact tracing for any known positive COVID-19 cases.
10. At-home health screening protocol sent to all families, accompanied by messaging campaigns (again).

Monitoring Checkpoint:

- 1) If there are few positive cases with no outbreaks and we remain in local low incidence/ low transmission status, move to Phase 4.

## PHASE 4

Phase 4 Key Components:

1. All students attend all classes every school day.
2. Transport all students that prefer District transportation. District vehicles sanitized between and after runs.
3. Face coverings recommended, indoors, for all students and staff members.
4. Temp checks as needed.
5. Volunteers and visitors are asked screening questions. Masks recommended.
6. Readily available hand sanitizer. Regular hand-washing announcements/reminders.
7. High contact areas sanitized daily EOB.
8. Contact tracing for any known positive COVID-19 cases.

Monitoring Checkpoint:

- 1) Unless significant uptick in cases and we remain in local low incidence/low

transmission status, remain at Phase 4 indefinitely. Modify as data evolves.

## **KEY ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED AS WE OPEN IN FALL 2020**

The actions below outline how we are redesigning our organization to successfully reopen our schools in fall 2020. Our strategic goal is to provide in-building, five-day-a-week instruction for every student who chooses this option, in a structure that is as close to “normal” as can be achieved.

### **ADAPT SCHOOL/DISTRICT POLICIES WHERE APPROPRIATE**

- Require students and staff to stay home when sick or caring for sick family members.
- Review and revise dress code procedures in order to accommodate wearing masks/facial coverings.
- Pause recognition such as perfect attendance and/or other incentives to come to school.
- Review and revise calendar policies to allow for quick and smooth transitions between in-person and remote learning in case of temporary school closures.

### **SICK STUDENTS AND STAFF SHOULD NOT COME TO SCHOOL**

As part of our phased approach, all students and staff will initially go through a mandatory health screening before entering district properties. This will include:

- Self-screening questions related to symptoms and contact with COVID-19 individuals.
- No-touch, in-person temperature screen as needed.
- Students exhibiting any symptoms while at school will be quarantined onsite until parents are able to remove the child from school.
- An information campaign, targeting parents and guardians, on the symptoms of COVID-19.

- Monitoring of school attendance data to identify trends in reasons for absence(s).

## TARGETED HEALTH PRECAUTIONS- MASKS

Mask-wearing is a “hot-button” issue. We do not wish to debate the merits of wearing a mask (or not). The Governor has issued an Executive Order requiring the wearing of masks in public places by all residents 11 years or older.

General Guidelines:

- 1) Until the Governor’s Executive Order regarding mandatory mask wearing expires, students in grades 4-12 and all staff members will be required to wear face coverings when in public spaces. We will utilize mask wearing as much as possible with students grades 3 or younger.
- 2) Once the Governor’s Executive Order has been lifted and as long as Park County remains in low incidence/low transmission status, students will be urged to wear face coverings as much as is practical/feasible. When indoors, it will be preferable that students wear face coverings when not able to social distance, whether in classrooms, hallways, shared spaces, or on transportation. For those students who possess underlying medical conditions that make prolonged mask-wearing untenable, we will work with families to develop solutions. Students need not wear facial coverings outdoors or in larger areas where social distancing is possible. Students and staff members will be expected to provide their own face coverings.
- 3) Staff members will be directed to be creative when designing learning spaces so that social distancing can be encouraged at all times. This could include how desks are configured, outdoor learning, the frequent utilization of large spaces that typically wouldn’t be used as classrooms, etc. Regarding mainly middle and high school students (from CDE): *6-foot between-student spacing reduces disease transmission and is preferred; 3-foot distancing still provides substantial benefits and is acceptable in the context of a comprehensive disease control strategy.*
- 4) Staff members should make the greatest effort to maintain 6-foot distancing, as

their risk and disease transmission potential is higher than students.

- 5) Teach and reinforce hand-washing and covering coughs and sneezes with your elbow among students and staff.

## **OTHER TARGETED HEALTH PRECAUTIONS**

- Phased limits on volunteers and visitors.
- Students will be grouped in cohorts with teachers when practicable.
- Social distancing will be observed as advised by health guidance. As each building and classroom is unique in terms of space and infrastructure, social distancing will be flexible, but will be implemented to the fullest practical level.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be available and classroom sets of sanitizing wipes will be provided.
- Without compromising safety, maximize outside air circulation.

## **SAFE LEARNING SPACES**

- To the extent possible, we will minimize the number of students and staff each individual interacts with during the course of the school day.
- We will utilize the cohort model as practicable.
- To the extent feasible, cohorts should remain separate.
- Similarly, staff members should remain solely with one cohort throughout the course of the day as practicable.
- We will endeavor to reduce the number of shared items. Students will be expected to have their own school supplies and these will be kept individually in their desk, backpack, cubby or other container.
- Adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials will be provided (i.e., art supplies, science equipment, etc.). Supplies and equipment will be used by one group of students at a time and then will be cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- To the extent possible, social distancing will be observed.

## **SPORTS**

The Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) has created a Resocialization Task Force to examine when, and how, to resume sports and activities. Among the topics to be examined, the Task Force will address:

- What safety measures will need to be in place to resume specific and/or all activities?
- Should CHSAA consider offering some activities and athletics if federal, state, medical and safety guidelines can be met at the local and Association level?
- Should CHSAA consider adjusting some activities and athletics to be conducted earlier or later than their traditional season?

The district will follow all guidelines provided by the Colorado High School Activities Association regarding team sports and activities.

For summer activities, PCSD1 followed our “Safe to Play” protocols. These can be found at:

[http://plattecanyonschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_62979/File/News/Safe-to-Play.pdf](http://plattecanyonschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_62979/File/News/Safe-to-Play.pdf)

## **PLAYGROUNDS**

- Students will be kept in cohort groups and assigned designated areas on the playground and/or fields as much as practicable.
- Encourage students to participate in touch-free activities such as jumping rope, hula hoops, hopscotch, kicking a soccer ball (encourage footwork only), running and other similar activities.
- Limited use of playground equipment, with frequent sanitization. As more information is made available on the effects of sunlight on COVID-19 and/or the survivability of the virus on surfaces, access to equipment and sanitization protocols may be relaxed.

## **MEASURES TO PREVENT CROWDS FROM GATHERING**

- School meals (Breakfast/Lunch) will be “grab-and-go” during Phases 1 and 2 and students will eat with their assigned cohort during these phases.
- Student traffic patterns will be redirected to minimize the number of student interactions in hallways.
- Recess will be staggered for different groups and cohort groups will be divided into smaller groups and assigned to specific areas of the playground (i.e., five

students to one area).

- All school events will be adjusted to comply with Public Health Orders in place at the time of the event.
- All field trips and/or other activities outside of school will be cancelled/postponed until they are allowed to resume safely.

## TRANSPORTATION

- Parents will be encouraged to self-transport their children to school during Phase 1 and Phase 2.
- Hand sanitizer will be available on school buses.
- Social distancing will be implemented where practicable. This will not apply to family members.
- Wearing masks/face coverings by students and drivers will be part of our phased program.
- Additional decontamination of school buses after each run.

## HOME WELLNESS SCREENING - FAMILIES AND STAFF MEMBERS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend screening all students and staff members prior to entering school facilities. We will rely on our families to conduct daily morning screenings of all of our students prior to departure for school. Similarly, we will require our staff members to do the same prior to departing for work.

- Screenings should include the following symptoms with exclusion for:
  - New onset of cough or shortness of breath  
OR
  - At least 2 of the following:
    - Fever (100.4 Fahrenheit or higher)
    - Chills
    - Muscle pain
    - Sore throat
    - Loss of sense of taste and/or smell
    - Gastrointestinal symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting, or nausea.
  - Children or staff members who become ill with COVID-like symptoms should be kept home, consult their doctor, and tested for COVID-19 if appropriate.

- Children screened positive at school should be kept separate from faculty and students in a well-ventilated area and cared for by staff wearing appropriate PPE and parents contacted immediately.

## CONCLUSION

PCSD1's Reopening Plan is presented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This plan supports public confidence that provides a safe learning environment for our students.

- Utilize all available data and guidance from state and local officials in order to make informed decisions and to adjust the plan as needed. **This is intended to be a fluid document.**
- Maximize our attention on learning and the acquisition of the essential standards.
- Maintain a separation of cohorts, as possible, to allow for early identification and isolation of students exposed to, or exhibiting symptoms of, COVID-19.
- Institute contact tracking protocols to catch exposure early and reduce the risk of a school wide exposure. Contact tracking will also allow us to identify siblings in other schools, helping to reduce the risk of a district-wide outbreak.
- Continue social distancing, to the extent practical.
- Require the use of face coverings and personal hygiene regimens for students and staff.
- Reduce the number of non-essential individuals in our schools.
- Institute a cleaning regime that is frequent, targeted, and of a scope sufficient to reduce the on-going transmission of the virus.
- Foster creativity and flexibility in scheduling to stagger recess, lunchtime, and passing periods to reduce "crowd" size and keep students socially distanced.
- Ensure communication between the district and local/state health officials.

## FUTURE COMMUNICATION

Each PCSD1 location has unique implementation challenges. School administration, as well as District department leaders, will use this plan to develop operational procedures that best utilize available District resources. If you have questions about a specific location, please contact the lead administrator for that department:

Mike Schmidt: District operations, PCHS - [mschmidt@pcsdk12.org](mailto:mschmidt@pcsdk12.org), 303-838-7666, x1002

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Jeff Lubansky: DCES - [jlubansky@pcsdk12.org](mailto:jlubansky@pcsdk12.org), x1203

Jesse Walters: FMS - [jwalters@pcsdk12.org](mailto:jwalters@pcsdk12.org), x1402

## SOURCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: “Considerations for Schools,”

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>

Colorado Department of Education: “A Framework and Toolkit for School and District Leaders for Feedback,” <http://www.cde.state.co.us/planning20-21>

Colorado Department of Education/Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment: “Revised (July 20, 2020) - Reopening Schools: Health Guidance by COVID-19 Phase,” <http://www.cde.state.co.us/planning20-21/healthguidancebycovidphase>

Colorado Health Institute: “COVID-19 Strategies for Schools,”

[https://www.coloradohealthinstitute.org/sites/default/files/file\\_attachments/Metro\\_20Denver\\_Partnership\\_for\\_Health\\_School\\_Guidance\\_25June2020.pdf](https://www.coloradohealthinstitute.org/sites/default/files/file_attachments/Metro_20Denver_Partnership_for_Health_School_Guidance_25June2020.pdf)

El Paso County (CO) Public Health: “COVID-19 School Guidance,”

<https://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/FINAL%20-%20El%20Paso%20County%20Public%20Health%20-%20COVID-19%20School%20Guidance.pdf>

Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health: “Schools for Health - Risk Reduction Strategies for Reopening Schools,”

<https://schools.forhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2020/06/Harvard-Healthy-Buildings-Program-Schools-For-Health-Reopening-Covid19-June2020.pdf>