

TerryPublic Schools
Safe Return to School and Continuity of Services Plan

Date of Original *Reopening* Adoption: August, 2020

Date Plan was Last Revised: April 2021

Next Regularly Scheduled Month for Consideration: 11/15/21

Date Reviewed: June 22, 2023

March 2020 - June 2021

1. The Terry Public Schools was ordered to close to in person instruction on March 15, 2020, under an executive order issued by then-Governor Bullock. Districts were provided a two week period of time during which they could remain fully closed to instruction of any kind while developing a plan for remote instruction required by the Governor.
 - a. Although our district was authorized to remain closed, we quickly mobilized and began remote instruction during the timeframe when we were authorized to remain closed. Thereafter, our district continued pursuant to a reopening plan approved by the Governor beginning March 30, 2020.
2. On April 22, 2020, then-Governor Bullock lifted his Stay at Home Order, and Announced a Plan to Begin Phased Reopening of Montana. As part of that plan, effective May 7, 2020, all schools were provided the option to return to in-classroom teaching at the discretion of local school boards.
 - a. Our school district finished the 2019-2020 school year through remote instruction. During the 2020-21 school year, our means of operation have included:
 - i. In person
 - ii. Offsite
 - iii. Online
 - iv. [THS Reopening Plan 20-21](#)
3. Our district developed a plan for reopening to in person instruction, with contingencies, and we implemented that plan for the 2020-21 school year. The reopening plan, details regarding which are provided below, included adoption of various model policies provided by the Montana School Boards Association under its 1900 Series, including model policies aligned with CDC guidance regarding mitigation strategies to limit exposure to and transmission of COVID-19 in school settings.
4. Our district finished the 2020-21 school year strong, having provided high quality learning opportunities to the students in our community in safe and effective learning environments.
5. We embraced a fundamental principle of providing extensive transparency to our community throughout the above timeframe. We publicly noticed, held meetings regarding, and provided opportunities for our community to provide us with feedback regarding the School District's plans and we carefully considered such feedback in developing and refining the School District's plans throughout the last 14-15 months.

Safe Return to Schools and Continuity of Services Plan Contents:

March 2020-June 2021

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

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

Part II: Contents of The School District's plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services:

1. A description of how the district will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff:

Following the lifting of the Stay-at-Home Order and subsequent reopening of the state on April 22, 2020, Terry Public Schools utilized the MTSBA Model Emergency Policies and our own Reopening plan based on guidance from the CDC, State, Office of Public Instruction and the local health authorities. Utilizing these resources supported our district's continued service to students with transparency and accountability while ensuring the operations of the school district reflected the circumstances in our community.

The policies ensured our Board of Trustees and school leaders honored the following priorities: quality instruction to students; a healthy and safe setting for students, staff, and the community; needed support of teachers and staff; and responsible financial and operational procedures. The policies provided an actionable plan for completing the 2020-2021 school fiscal year in a manner that met these priorities and secured district funding while providing an operational platform for considering long term innovations in the delivery of education services.

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

Terry Public Schools reviewed, considered, and addressed numerous areas of operation in our reopening process. On the topic of school district policy and procedures, the district considered emergency policies and procedures, adoption and amendment of policies, suspension of policies, and administrative procedures. To support students' academic, mental, social and emotional success, the district considered alternative grading, counseling, extended school year, student instruction proficiency determinations and declarations, support for particularly vulnerable students, transportation services, access to internet for students, food preparation and service, summer school and additional student instruction resources. To ensure the health and safety of students, teachers, and staff, the district considered cleaning and disinfection, community use of facilities, county board of health orders, diagnosis and confidentiality, hand washing and related hygiene protocols, telework, school closure orders, stay at home orders, symptom monitoring and isolation, travel quarantines, visitors, volunteers, vulnerable individuals, masks and personal protective equipment, and physical distancing.

Terry Public Schools has remained in compliance with guidance and best practices provided by federal, state, or local health officials. Our school district has continued to adapt and adjust our policies as new and updated guidance and best practices have become available.

Further, the policies provide options for consideration through input from our board of trustees, administrative team, employees, parents, students, health officials, and community as collaborative partners as we have worked our way through ever evolving changes due to the pandemic. By considering all possible perspectives and factors when making the decisions to adopt or adjust a policy, or to implement a policy, we focused on the health and safety of our students, staff, and community for delivery of learning and services to our students. The policies have enabled us to adjust our procedures and practices during different phases in compliance with guidance and best practices provided by federal, state, and local agencies.

Terry Public Schools will continue to follow the policies noted below while engaging in a regular reevaluation process, meeting no less than every 6 months, to continue to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of our students, teachers, staff, and community through 2024.

Terry Public School District Guidelines for Reopening Schools

During the phased reopening, the Terry Public School District will continue to provide a quality education through shared responsibility in a safe, supportive environment for all students to meet the challenges of a global society.

Local Health Officers School Directive	Safety and Health Measures	On-site and/or Remote Learning
Phase 1 Stay at Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools closed to public access. Food services provided remotely for all students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All instruction and learning will be remote No student or staff school-related travel No extracurricular activities
Phase II Groups Size not to Exceed 50 Static Grouping Not Required <u>Board Discretion on Closures</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student groups allowed to mix, with gatherings not to exceed 50 students Food services provided on site for all students; breakfast and lunch staggered to social distance Transportation is provided; Health screenings, face covering recommended, daily cleaning of vehicles Hand sanitizing upon entry Handwashing and germ transmission prevention pro-actively taught and frequently encouraged Frequent sanitizing of physical space and equipment during the day utilizing electrostatic disinfectant sprayers Face coverings may be required depending on local and state guidelines Sneeze guards installed in various locations throughout the system All assemblies conducted remotely Public access to schools limited to school-related business as approved by admin(deliveries, contractors, guest speakers, trainers, curriculum-related activities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary delivery of instruction and learning will be on site with traditional schedules <u>For health related reasons, student may qualify for remote learning by going through the 504 process</u> <u>Accommodations and/or remote learning will be extended to students and staff who are required to stay home due to COVID-19 quarantine</u> School-related travel occurs in compliance with limitations on crowd/group size, Extra-curricular activities occurs in compliance with MHSAs Guidelines, district activities limitations on crowd/group size, activity type, and health protocols
Phase III No Limit on Group Size Static Grouping Not Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food services provided on site for all students Students schedules and routines as normal Parental involvement in health screening required prior to school entry requested Handwashing and germ transmission prevention pro-actively taught and frequently encouraged Frequent sanitizing of physical space and equipment Face coverings are at discretion of each individual Public access to schools available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary delivery of instruction and learning will be on site with traditional schedules Accommodations will be extended to students and staff who are required to stay home due to COVID-19 related reasons Extra-curricular activities occur per MHSAs regulations Field trips allowed Student or staff school related travel allowed Mass gatherings allowed All school facilities will be open to public rental

These guidelines are based on guidance and recommendations from the Governor, Prairie County Health Department, Montana Office of Public Instruction, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Pediatrics, and additional resources, including review of numerous examples from other school districts in the state and country. Changes and updates will be made based on updated guidance and recommendations from those groups listed above.

General Practices and Procedures

Ongoing

- Direct COVID-19 related concerns and questions to the supt/principal
- Students and staff should not come to school, and should notify the school if they have COVID-19 symptoms, are diagnosed with COVID-19 symptoms, are waiting for test results, or have been exposed to someone with symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case within 14 days of entering the school.
- If a student or staff member exhibits potential symptoms of COVID-19, they will be moved into an area separate from other students until they are picked up to be taken home. Guardians will be provided information to follow up with medical professionals. Confidentiality will be maintained. A face covering may be required if advised by the county health department.
- If an infected person has been in the building, a short school closure may be required as the district works with area health officials to determine next best steps. A board meeting will be held to make that decision. The district will immediately return to Phase II to ensure continuity of learning and meal programs.
- Coordinate with local health officials and monitor changes in community spread.
- Teach and reinforce healthy hygiene. Ensure hand hygiene supplies are readily available in school buildings.
- Establish and implement a cleaning and disinfection plan following state and local guidance.
- Train all teachers and staff in the above safety actions.
- Face coverings are available by request

To reduce communicable disease risk, it is imperative that we follow safe infection control practices as identified by the CDC and Prairie County Health Department in order to help keep ourselves, our students, our families, and our communities healthy. We should assume that there is potential for community spread of COVID-19 in Prairie County and use every effort to reduce risk of contracting or spreading communicable illness of any kind.

BEFORE arriving on an Terry Public campus school site (including riding a bus to campus): Parents, students, and staff should ask themselves the following questions about anyone who will be arriving on campus:

- Is my temperature 100.0 ° F or higher?
- Has my temperature been 100.0 ° F or higher in the past 72 hours (3 days)?
- Do I have any symptoms of illness?
 - These may be, but are not limited to: coughing, headache, sneezing, sore throat, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, dizziness, shortness of breath, chest or nasal congestion, earache, swollen glands.
- Have I had close contact or is anyone in my immediate household able to answer **YES** to the questions above?
- Have I or a close contact been asked in the last 14 days to remain in quarantine for COVID-19 testing, diagnosis, or treatment?

If you answer **YES to any of the following, please stay home** and seek healthcare provider guidance if symptoms worsen or you need treatment.

Prairie County Health Department Guidance

“If there is a positive case in the school we will do contact tracing to determine close contacts. Close contacts would be defined as anyone that had at least 15 minutes of exposure within 3 feet of the case. All close contacts will be required to quarantine for a period of 7-10 days from last exposure.”

2. The extent to which the district has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC:

Topic	School District Policy Reference	Description of Policy (All referenced policies can be found at the end of this document.)	Policy Adopted and Revised Date(s)
Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments.	3417	3417: In all proceedings related to this policy, the District will respect a student's right to privacy. Although the District is required to provide educational services to all school-age children who reside within its boundaries, it may deny attendance at school to any child diagnosed as having a communicable disease that could make a child's attendance harmful to the welfare of other students. The District will rely on advice of the public health and medical communities in assessing the risk of transmission of various communicable diseases to determine how best to protect the health of both students and staff. The District will manage common communicable diseases in accordance with Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services guidelines and communicable diseases control rules. The District may temporarily exclude from school attendance a student who exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease that is readily transmitted in a school setting. The District may notify parents of other children attending a school that their children have been exposed to a communicable disease without identifying the particular student who has the disease.	<u>3417</u> Reviewed: Jan 21
Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities	3413	Please note that House Bill 702 passed the 2021 Legislature and was signed into law effective May 14, 2021. New Section 1 of that law provides that it is an unlawful discriminatory practice for a governmental entity to refuse, withhold from, or deny to a person any local or state services, goods, facilities, advantages, privileges, licensing, educational opportunities, health care access, or employment opportunities based on the person's vaccination status. The law also provides it is unlawful for an employer to refuse employment to a person, to bar a person from employment, or to discriminate against a person in compensation or in a term, condition, or privilege of employment based on the person's vaccination status. Finally, House Bill 702 provides it is unlawful for a public accommodation to exclude, limit, segregate, refuse to serve, or otherwise discriminate against a person based on the person's vaccination status.	<u>3413</u> Revised: Jan 21 This policy is being discussed and looked at to address HB702.

		<p>3413: Upon initial enrollment, an immunization status form shall be completed by the student's parent or guardian. The certificate shall be made a part of the student's permanent record.</p>	
Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies.	1908; 2162; 2162P	<p>1908: The Board of Trustees authorizes the supervising teacher or district administrator to provide Policy 1908F to families requesting to opt-out of onsite instruction at the school facility for the duration of the declared public health emergency. Students of families opting out of onsite instruction at the school facility shall receive offsite, online, and proficiency-based instruction, or any combination of the foregoing at the discretion of the School District in accordance with District Policy 1906. Students of families opting out of onsite delivery shall be treated the same as students instructed at the school facility for purposes of grading, discipline, and other educational rights.</p> <p>2162: It is the intent of the District to ensure that students who are disabled within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are identified, evaluated, and provided with appropriate educational services. For those students who need or are believed to need special instruction and/or related services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the District shall establish and implement a system of procedural safeguards.</p> <p>2162P: If the parent or legal guardian of a student who qualifies under Section 504 for special instruction or related services disagrees with a decision of the District with respect to: (1) the identification of the child as qualifying for Section 504; (2) the District's evaluation of the child; and/or (3) the educational placement of the child, the parents of the student are entitled to certain procedural safeguards. The student shall remain in his/her current placement until the matter has been resolved through the process set in the policy.</p>	<p><u>1908</u> Adopted: Sept 20</p> <p><u>2162</u> Adopted: Mar 09</p> <p><u>2162P</u> Adopted: Mar 09</p>
Coordination with State and local health officials.	1900; ; 1907; 3417	<p>1900: In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board of Trustees has found it necessary to adopt temporary policies related to emergency school closures, the ongoing provision of educational services to students, meetings of the Board, gatherings on school property, health and safety of students, staff and community members, human resource matters and budgetary matters. To ensure clarity and transparency, the board has organized all emergency school policies into a temporary chapter. School District Policies Numbered 1900-1999 are intended to govern during any emergency related to COVID-19 declared by the President, Congress, Montana Legislature, Governor, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, County Health Department or the Board of Trustees.</p> <p>1907: The Board of Trustees is authorized to declare that a state of emergency exists within the</p>	<p><u>1900</u> Adopted: Mar 20</p> <p><u>1907</u> Adopted: May 20</p> <p><u>3417</u> Reviewed: Jan 21</p>

		<p>community. A declaration issued by the Board of Trustees is distinct from any declaration in effect or previously issued by local, state or federal authorities.</p> <p>3417: The District will manage common communicable diseases in accordance with Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services guidelines and communicable diseases control rules. When information is received by a staff member or a volunteer that a student is afflicted with a serious communicable disease, the staff member or volunteer will promptly notify a school nurse or other responsible person designated by the Board to determine appropriate measures to be taken to protect student and staff health and safety. A school nurse or other responsible person designated by the Board, after consultation with and on advice of public health officials, will determine which additional staff members, if any, have need to know of the affected student's condition.</p>	
<p>How the district will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services.</p>	<p>1906; 1906P;</p>	<p>1906: The School District has adopted the protocols outlined in this policy to govern during the term of the declared public health emergency to ensure the delivery of education services to students onsite at the school, offsite at other locations using available resources including but not limited to online methods. The supervising teacher, principal, superintendent or designated personnel are authorized to implement this policy. The Board of Trustees may revise the school calendar to adjust the completion of the school year for particular grade levels and groups once students have satisfied the required number of applicable aggregate hours.</p> <p>The Board of Trustees authorizes offsite and online instruction of students in a manner that satisfies the aggregate number of instructional hours outlined in the School District's adopted or revised calendar for a school year affected by a public health emergency. Offsite and online delivery methods shall include a complete range of educational services offered by the School District and shall comply with the requirements of applicable statutes. Students completing course work through an offsite or online instructional setting shall be treated in and have their hours of instruction calculated in the same manner as students attending an onsite institutional setting.</p> <p>The Board of Trustees authorizes proficiency-based ANB calculation in situations when a student demonstrates proficiency in a course area as determined by the Board of Trustees using district assessments consistent with the School District's adopted Plan of Action, District Policy 1005FE, or other measures approved by the Board of Trustees.</p> <p>The Board of Trustees authorizes a summer program of instructional offerings for the purpose of</p>	<p><u>1906 and 1906P</u> Revised Sept 20</p>

		<p>remediation of credit, maintenance of skills, and enrichment. All classes offered for credit must meet minimum state requirements for accreditation and may be delivered at the school or at another offsite location. Remediation credit courses shall be offered, grades 9-12, in accordance with District advancement requirements. Credit course offerings must be approved by the Board of Trustees</p> <p>Students shall receive services in accordance with the applicable Individualized Education Plan or Section 504 Plan based on methods and locations agreed upon and documented by the applicable team to meet the student's needs and goals. Students shall have access to regular school counseling services whether their instruction is provided in an onsite, offsite or online setting. Staff shall promptly report any suspected student distress or concern to their supervisor for review and referral. Students receiving instruction in an offsite setting are governed by the staff obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect. This policy in no way limits or adjusts the School District's obligations to homeless students or students in foster care. Applicable District policies serving these students, or this population of students remain in full effect.</p> <p>1906P: Proficiency or satisfying aggregate hours of instruction can be achieved through an on-site, off-site, or blended learning model as outlined in Policy 1906. Best practices will assist districts in facilitating quality learning for each student regardless of background or circumstance. Best practices include but are not limited to, planning and communication, clear expectations, differentiated instruction and learning models, and flexible demonstrations of learning.</p>	
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June 2021

Part III – Updated Compliance for the District’s Previously Adopted Plan for the Safe Return to In-person Instruction and Continuity of Services:

Section 2001(i)(3) of the ARP Act states that a school district that developed a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services prior to the date of enactment of the ARP Act will be deemed to have met the requirement to develop a plan under section 2001(i)(1) as long as the plan meets the statutory requirements (*i.e.*, is publicly available on the LEA's website and was developed after the LEA sought and took into account public comment).

The School District’s plan meets the requirements of Section 2001(i)(1) and (i)(2) of the ARP Act. The School District’s plan is available on our website and, as noted above, was developed through a process that included extensive public comment. Further, we have, as part of the organization of the School District’s plan for purposes of the ARP Act, revised the School District’s plan at a meeting held on 6/14/21 that included not just a notice of opportunity for public input.

We have considered the input of all affected parties and have carefully deliberated regarding the best possible means by which our district can provide safe effective learning environments for each of our students.

June 2021 - September 30, 2024

Part IV – Schedule for Future Review and Updates:

Consideration of this Safe Return to Schools and Continuity of Services Plan shall be added as an agenda item on regular of the board of trustees no less than every 6 months during the 2021-24 school years. The agenda item shall, at a minimum, include notice of any changes to the plan recommended by the administration with an invitation for input, notice of opportunity for public input.

Appendix – Attach and/or provide a website URL for the school district’s adopted 1900 policies in their entirety.

[Terry Public Schools Reopening Plan on School Website](#) - Link posted on Website September 2020

[Terry Public Schools Policies](#)

[MT-PEC](#) *A Roadmap for Safely Reopening Montana’s Public Schools Using Emergency School District Policies.*