



## Big Sky School District #72

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December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Big Sky School District,

On Tuesday, December 15<sup>th</sup> at the regularly scheduled school board meeting, a transition plan to Learning Model 3 was passed allowing for a phased in approach to a return to 100% in school. The Board will have a special meeting on January 5<sup>th</sup> to clarify the transition in Learning Models. In the meantime, administrators will be reviewing building facilities and installing plexiglass where needed per suggestions from teachers and staff. We will be arranging facilities so that should contact tracing occur it can be as narrow in scope as possible affecting the fewest number of students and staff. Finally, we continue to promote the opportunity to stay informed on COVID-19's presence in the school through our volunteer testing program with LetsGetChecked. Thank you to those who have already provided the online consent (please only sign up once per child). For those who have not provided consent, you can sign up on the school's website, [www.bssd72.org](http://www.bssd72.org), and a confirmation email will be sent to you if successfully completed. Last week, we did over 100 tests and found 1 positive result. That person is now in quarantine studying/working from home. Imagine if we were able to test the whole school and know every week if there was COVID present? If we all work together, we can get through this.

### SURVEILLANCE TESTING

- LetsGetChecked is using a PCR rapid test. You can learn more about their company at [letsgetchecked.com](http://letsgetchecked.com) and more about the Big Sky effort at [bigskyrelief.org](http://bigskyrelief.org).
- The tests are being performed by nurses hired through the LetsGetChecked effort.
- The tests we are using are a gift from many community efforts. They are not being provided by the State of Montana or a Federal effort. The school is very grateful for this opportunity to learn more about COVID in the school community.
- Results from the test will result in contact tracing performed by the nurses and communicated to the Gallatin County Health Department (GCHD).
- The school community will be informed if positive results are found.
- **We were not able to accomplish a seamless effort between testing companies. Please sign up or re-sign up on the link at the BSSD72.org dashboard. You will receive a confirmation email from the school upon completion as confirmation. Please, only sign up once per child.**
- We understand that using PCR testing as surveillance will expose more asymptomatic COVID cases in the schools and this could lead to some disruptions with staffing and student quarantines and contact tracing. We are committed to stopping further spread inside the schools, and we feel we can manage the outcome. We will follow GCHD requirements for quarantine.
- The Gallatin County Health Department has approved our plan for testing and contact tracing.

### SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS/BACK TO SCHOOL SAFELY

- Meetings are available to attend via zoom.
- It is a regularly appearing agenda item at the moment to discuss the Back to School Safely Task Force updates.

## COVID CONFUSION-SCHOOL CASE REPORTING

Here is our new reality: there could be student positive cases in school that the school does not know about and therefore has not been reported to the school community. Here is how this can happen:

- a quarantined family tests their children and finds a positive. The health department does not contact trace anyone at school because they were already quarantined. The student returns to school after two weeks online and tells their classmates and teacher of their past experience with COVID.
- a family uses a private home testing kit and finds a positive. The health department never learns of the positive because the result does not go through a state lab therefore contact tracing never occurs. The student goes online for school and returns after two weeks.

The health department is now overwhelmed and contact tracing is slow. They are not required to report student cases to the school systems. There are only 3 ways that the school could know of a positive case:

- 1) if a parent communicates with the school
- 2) if contact tracing from the county health department alerts the school of a positive test of a student or staff member
- 3) if the school surveillance testing reports a positive test

The school has only communicated 4 positive tests to the school community as a result of #3. We are only communicating to the relevant school: elementary, middle or high school. However, all results are available on the dashboard on the school's website. We know there have been other cases, but not while a student has been at the school. The reason for this information is to offer that over-communication with the school is encouraged as we try to limit the spread of COVID. We want to curb rumors, suspicions, shaming and anything of the sort especially as students return to school potentially having had COVID. When a student or staff member returns from county mandated quarantine after having COVID, they are welcome back at the school.

Back to School Task Force

Please continue reading for more information below.

**December 15, 2020**

## **Back to School Task Force**

Transition from Learning Model 2 – Phased approach

1. **Ophir Elementary School** – Cohort model January 4<sup>th</sup> (1/4/2021-Cohort 1, 1/5/2021-Cohort 2, 1/6/2021-Cohort 1, 1/7/2021-Cohort 2) through January 7<sup>th</sup>; **January 8<sup>th</sup> independent learning day for students-all K-5 students home. Teacher work day.**
  - a. January 11<sup>th</sup> first day 100% occupancy for kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - b. Please order lunch before the Monday back to school using the online order form.
  - c. Please only ride the bus if you were doing so in Learning Model 2.
2. **Ophir Middle School** – Cohort model January 4<sup>th</sup> (Cohort 1 starts rotation) through January 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - a. January 18<sup>th</sup> first day of 100% occupancy for 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades.
  - b. Please order lunch before the Monday back to school using the online order form.
  - c. Please only ride the bus if you were doing so in Learning Model 2.
3. **Lone Peak High School** – Cohort model January 4<sup>th</sup> (Cohort 1 starts rotation) through January 22<sup>nd</sup>.
  - a. January 25<sup>th</sup> first day of 100% occupancy for 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades.
  - b. Please order lunch before the Monday back to school using the online order form.
  - c. Please only ride the bus if you were doing so in Learning Model 2.

Learning Model 3 – Operational Guidelines

- 100% of students on campus for in-person learning M-F regular school hours. Friday 2:30pm dismissal.
- Masks still worn under Learning Model 2 guidelines.
- Distancing guidelines met when possible. If not possible, Plexiglass (or a similar material) will be used to separate students.
- Staff and admin monitor traffic flow between classes (exterior doors open to promote air circulation).
- Public restroom use limited to minimum # of students at a time.
- Students will not share materials.

### **Additional Operational Details**

\*100% virtual / distance learning option available; limitations on individual assistance, participation, interventions and collaborative work. Entering in and out of 100% virtual will be at scheduled times publicized in advance by the school. It will not be willy-nilly.

\* Limited sharing of materials.

\* Structured Re-evaluation of model every 4 weeks (mid-term); board ability to re-evaluate at any time.

\*Some facilities spaces may be repurposed to promote distancing during learning or eating.

### **Technology**

- Access to devices will be key to all phases of our re-opening plans. We have a device for every student K-12.
- All faculty and staff will continue to receive professional development in the area of using the technology tools in order to fully facilitate learning for students regardless of phase.

### **Hygiene**

#### ***Arrival and Dismissal:***

- Specific entrance and exits will be used at each building, with physical distancing maintained on the sidewalks, at the entrance and inside the lobbies (**Learning Models 1,2,3**).
- Daily temperature scanning will take place upon entering the building (**Learning Models 1,2,3,4**).
- Students will be expected to enter the building without parents or caregivers. Visitors to the school will be kept to a minimum (**Learning Models 1,2,3**).

### ***Personal Protective Equipment:***

- Masks and / or face shields worn by students and staff (**Learning Models 1,2,3**).
- In certain areas, sneeze guards or partitions will be used (**Learning Models 1,2,3**).
- Plexiglass to be installed in places to promote distance and separation.

### ***Hand Hygiene:***

- Sanitizing products available in all classrooms, corridors and bathrooms (**Learning Models 1,2,3,4**).
- Signage illustrating proper hand washing technique will be posted throughout the buildings (**Learning Models 1,2,3,4**).

### **Food Service / Recess / Transportation**

- Play equipment shared but limited during outdoor time (**Learning Models 1,2,3**).
- Students will split to eat in the classrooms and in cafeterias to promote distancing when needed (**Learning Models 1,2,3**).
- Masks and / or shields worn (**Learning Models 1,2,3**).
- Distancing requirements met when possible (**Learning Models 1,2,3**).
- Transportation will be limited to riders who need it. (**Phases 1,2,3**).

### **COVID – 19 Cases:**

- All students and staff who are exhibiting signs of infection will be asked to leave campus promptly (**Learning Models 1,2,3**).
- Staff will have access to a covid-19 test kit if exhibiting symptoms for immediate testing.
- Each building will have a designated isolation area (**Learning Models 1,2,3**).
- Protocols from the CDC and GCHD will be followed for self-isolation, quarantine and returning to work and school (**Learning Models 1,2,3,4**).

### **Facility Considerations**

#### ***Ventilation***

- Classroom windows open to promote air circulation (fall / winter, windows open for the first 10 minutes of every period or as often as comfortably possible). (**Learning Models 2,3**).

#### ***Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting***

- High touch areas (door handles, sinks, faucets and desktops) cleaned and sanitized throughout the day, between groups of students and at the end of the day (**Learning Models 1,2,3**).
- Restrooms cleaned throughout the day using EPA / CDC products determined to be effective against COVID – 19 (**Learning Models 1,2,3**).
- Students and staff will receive explicit instructions on hand hygiene (including signage), self- health checks, disinfecting and movement throughout the building (**Learning Models 1,2,3**).
- Lockers and common areas of the facilities will not be in use (**Learning Models 1,2,3**).

#### ***Volunteer Surveillance Testing***

- All staff and students are being asked to sign up for PCR COVID-19 testing through LetsGetChecked. We have a unique opportunity through generous donations from the community to keep covid-19 out of the school and keep our school safe.
- Please sign up on the school website. [www.bssd72.org](http://www.bssd72.org).
- It takes the good work of the entire community to keep COVID-19 out of the school. It is not just during school hours that parents, students and staff must do the diligent work of wearing masks and limiting exposure, but at all times. The best interest of teachers, staff and students depends on it. With that said, testing will help the school keep transmission from happening in the school.