



## BOZEMAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**BOB CONNORS**

**Superintendent**

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To: Board of Trustees  
From: Bob Connors, Superintendent  
Subject: Recommendation for Instruction  
Date: April 24, 2020

On Wednesday, April 22, Governor Bullock released guidelines for the “Reopening of the Big Sky.” Page 6 of the Governor’s directive addresses schools reopening.

### **Local Control of School Closure Beginning May 7**

- *All non-residential public schools are closed through May 6 and will continue to be eligible for a waiver of pupil-instruction time and receive associated state funding through the funding mechanism described in prior Directives.*
- *Beginning May 7, all schools have the option to return to in-classroom teaching delivery, at the discretion of local school boards.*
  - o *The intent of this provision is to allow local control over decisions about the provision of quality public education to students in Montana while assuring that school districts will continue to receive full funding support from the state to provide learning.*
  - o *The mechanism for a gubernatorial waiver of student-instruction time will expire.*
  - o *However, nothing in this Directive prevents a local school board from declaring a local emergency as provided in § 20-9-806, MCA. Local boards and their districts that do so will continue to receive all state funding, including transportation funding.*
- *The State recognizes that if a school reopens for in-person instruction, reopening will require the district to make adjustments and create plans, policies, and procedures. Schools that plan to reopen should consult the school reopening guidelines provided in Appendix A, (see below)*
- *In addition, if schools plan to reopen they should consider:*
  - o *Implementing an alternative educational delivery model that includes a mix of in-person and remote learning.*
  - o *Providing focused, individual education, especially for at-risk students.*
  - o *How to reconnect and meet the educational needs of students who fall behind in a remote learning environment.*
  - o *The importance of maintaining the connection between students, teachers, and parents.*
  - o *The important role that schools play in the health of students, families, and communities.*
  - o *Graduation environments that can meet the social distancing requirements.*

After consultation with our Gallatin County health experts, Executive Cabinet, Instructional Cabinet, AA Superintendents, Gallatin County Superintendents, Tami Phillippi (Association), and the number of emails that have hit my inbox, it is my recommendation that the Board continues off-site learning for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

This is not a decision I make lightly. I understand the strain off-site instruction places on families and I have also listened as our students, families, and education team have expressed concerns about the emotional toll off-site instruction is taking. I believe, however, that based on current circumstances in the Gallatin Valley, continued remote learning is the responsible course of action to maintain the health of our students and staff.

We will continue to develop our graduation plans for the class of 2020. We will have a graduation ceremony, it just may not look like any past graduations.

## **Appendix A:**

*(Colors added: Green--CAN DO; Orange--DIFFICULT; Red--EXTREMELY DIFFICULT)*

### **CLEANING AND SANITATION**

- *Frequent disinfecting of door handles, desks, and other common spaces.*
- *Require handwashing at regular intervals.*
- *Keep libraries, gyms, and playgrounds off-limits unless they can be sanitized between groups. (NO ACTIVITIES)*
- *Provide hand sanitizer. (PURCHASE/DELIVERY ISSUES)*

### **SICK POLICIES**

- *Implement temperature checks and/or symptom screening when practical. (PURCHASE OF APPROPRIATE THERMOMETERS)*
- *Require anyone (students or staff) with COVID-19 symptoms to stay home. (CARRIER -- NO SIGNS)*

### **LIMIT CLASS SIZES**

- *Consider breaking larger classes into smaller groups. (NUMBER OF PERSONNEL NEEDED)*
- *Students may alternate school days or attend for half days. (LOSS OF LUNCH DISTRIBUTION)*

### **MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCE (NOT ENOUGH SPACE)**

- *Consider the use of face coverings by all staff and students (APPROXIMATELY 8,000 MASKS PER DAY)*
- *Keep students with the same group and in the same classroom, with teachers rotating when practical. (NO BREAK OUTSIDE OF THE ROOM)*
- *Consider students eating lunch in the classroom to help limit the mixing of students. (NO BREAK OUTSIDE OF THE ROOM)*
- *Cancel extracurricular activities.*
- *Prevent any non-school staff, including parents, from entering school buildings.*
- *Consider reducing busloads to allow for one student per seat. (TRANSPORTATION ISSUE)*

### **GRADUATION CEREMONIES**

- *Provide a live stream of graduation*
- *Consider limiting spectator attendance*
- *For larger schools, consider grouping graduates or providing multiple ceremonies*
- *Follow social distancing between families (WHO POLICES THIS AT A STADIUM VENUE?)*

### **ACCOMMODATIONS for students, teachers, and staff in an at-risk group:**

- *Schools that reopen will need to take into consideration that some teachers and staff will fall into the at-risk category because of their age or other health risks. These individuals should have additional accommodations including teaching classes remotely, utilizing a larger classroom where social distancing can be maintained, or given an option not to return until the risks are reduced. (NUMBER OF POSSIBLE SUBSTITUTES NEEDED)*
- *Students who are high risk or who have family members who are high risk should not be penalized for failing to attend and should continue to receive remote support.*
- *Accommodations should also be extended to students and staff who are required to quarantine due to exposure or potential exposure.*

### **CONFIRMED or SUSPECTED case of COVID-19**

- *Collaborate with public health to ensure each school has a plan for reporting, contact tracing, and both short-term or extended closures in the case of a positive COVID case related to the school or community.*
- *Utilize CDC guidelines*  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html>

