



# SEDALIA SCHOOL DISTRICT #200

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June 29, 2020

To: Board of Education

From: Mr. Triplett

Re: COVID-19 Protocols and Guidelines

The Sedalia School District is committed to providing a quality education to all students, while also ensuring their safety and well-being. The administration has researched COVID-19 and have developed plans following all applicable local, state, and federal guidelines, to the greatest extent feasible, and will incorporate many best practices advocated by school associations and groups. The following are considerations as of June 22, 2020.

### **Student Considerations**

Students may have experienced educational loss due to prolonged school closures during this pandemic. While some school districts have implemented distance learning, this is not generally believed to replicate the in-person learning experience. Such districts may also experience a widened divide in academic progress, with certain children able to access distance learning and continue to grow academically, while others might experience difficulty accessing or engaging with virtual instruction. Additional considerations include:

**Education:** The impacts of lost instructional time and social emotional development on children should be anticipated and we will need to be prepared to adjust curricula and instructional practices accordingly without the expectation that all lost academic progress can be caught up. Plans to make up for lost academic progress due to school closures and distress associated with the pandemic should be balanced by a recognition of the likely continued distress of educators and students that will persist when schools re-open. If the academic expectations are unrealistic, school will likely become a source of further distress for students (and educators) at a time when they need additional support. It is also critical to maintain a balanced curriculum with continued physical education and other learning experiences rather than an exclusive emphasis on core subject areas.

**Students with Disabilities:** The impact of loss of instructional time and related services, including mental health services, as well as occupational, physical and speech language therapy during the period of school closures is significant among this population. Students with disabilities may also have more difficulty with the social and emotional aspects of transitioning out of and back into the school setting. As schools prepare for reopening, school personnel should develop a plan to ensure a review of each child with an Individual Educational Program (IEP) to determine

the need to adjust for lost instructional time as well as other related services. Further, schools can expect a backlog in evaluations, therefore, plans to prioritize those for new referrals as opposed to re-evaluations will be important. Many school districts require adequate instructional effort before determining eligibility for Special Education services. However, virtual instruction or lack of instruction should not be reasons to avoid starting services such as response-to-intervention (RTI) services, even if a final eligibility determination is postponed

**Annual School Health Requirements:** Parents should continue to reach out to coordinate well-child care and immunizations with their health care provider. School districts may consider limited extensions for families to submit annual paperwork required for start of school, to accommodate delays in accessing well child care during the public health emergency. To limit the risk for other vaccine-preventable diseases during this critical period, immunization compliance should continue to be prioritized.

**Mental Health:** School mental health professionals are critical in shaping messages to students and families about school re-entry including addressing anxiety, social acclimation, etc. Students requiring more mental health support, including those who are exhibiting suicidal ideation, should be referred for additional services. Support should be provided to grieving students as well as those experiencing other losses (e.g., missed experiences). Schools are encouraged to contact students who do not return to school, as they may be experiencing school avoidance due to anxiety related to the pandemic. Schools should be attuned to the broader social and family stressors that may affect a student's ability to attend school or be ready to learn. Schools need to incorporate academic accommodations and supports for students who may still be having difficulty concentrating or learning new information due to stress associated with the pandemic into planning considerations.

At this time we are planning for a face-to-face return to school in August. The following is a list of what we believe at this time to be best practices and applicable based on current recommendations:

- Students and faculty have the option of wearing protective masks.
- If a student or faculty/staff member is unable to obtain masks, the district will provide masks. Availability of district-provided masks is subject to the district's ability to procure masks (shortages of masks may limit availability).
- Homemade masks are acceptable but must meet school dress code guidelines.
- Student requests for masks are subject to approval from parents/guardians.
- Masks must be in clean, sanitary condition.
- Students may not share masks.
- Students will be given opportunities to wash hands multiple times per day.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided at multiple locations throughout the school.
- Drinking fountains should not be used, except for the bottle filling capabilities.
- Students should bring personal water bottles from home. They should be labeled with the student name, and in clean, sanitary condition.
- Social distancing will be observed to the extent possible by all faculty, staff and students.
- Student activities and athletics will be conducted as usual to the extent they are permissible under local, state, and federal guidelines.
- Daily sanitizing and disinfecting will be a priority at all District facilities.
- Attendance incentives for both staff and students will cease. If you are sick you need to stay home.
- Where applicable, large group gatherings will be limited. This **may** result in:
  - Students reporting to a classroom upon arrival, instead of large gatherings
  - Altered cafeteria procedures
  - Limited attendance and/or guidelines at sporting or other events
  - Concerts and performances in small groups or not at all
  - Modified bus loading and unloading procedures
  - Cancellation or modification of school dances or parties, assemblies, etc.

- Parents/guardians are encouraged to drop off students at school instead of using bus service. Drop-off and pick-up systems will be organized to ensure social distancing to the greatest extent possible
- Buses will be sanitized daily.
- Faculty and staff will receive guidance on how to recognize symptoms that may be associated with COVID-19. The CDC lists the following as possible symptoms of COVID-19
  1. Fever or chills
  2. Cough
  3. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  4. Fatigue
  5. Muscle or body aches
  6. Congestion or runny nose
  7. Headache
  8. Sore throat
  9. Newly emerged loss of taste or smell
  10. Nausea or vomiting
  11. Diarrhea
- Parents and students, as well as staff members, are encouraged to self-screen for potential COVID-19 symptoms before coming to school. Anyone with symptoms of illness should stay home.
- Students at school who display health symptoms that could suggest COVID-19 concerns will be checked by the nurse. If evaluation by the nurse suggests potential for COVID-19 infection, the student will be masked (if the student does not have one) until picked up by a parent/guardian.
- Students with a temperature of 100 degrees or higher will be sent home

**A student/staff member excluded from the school environment due to COVID-19 concerns may return to school in accordance with guidelines provided by the health department. Please understand that guidelines may change over time. At the time of this publication, the guidelines are as follows:**

- Students/staff with symptoms, but not tested for COVID-19 may return if the following conditions are met:
  - ❖ No fever for 72 hours without use of medicine that reduces fever and showing significant improvement for 7 days after the onset of symptoms.
- Students/staff with symptoms, but tested negative for COVID-19, may return if the following conditions are met:
  - ❖ No fever for 24 hours without use of medicine that reduces fever and showing significant improvement of symptoms.
  - ❖ The student/staff has received 2 negative COVID-19 tests in a row, with at least 24 hours between tests
- Students/staff that have tested positive for COVID-19 may return if the following conditions are met:
  - ❖ 14 days have passed without symptoms
  - ❖ Student/staff has received 2 negative COVID-19 tests in a row, with at least 24 hours between tests
  - ❖ Released and given written approval to return by a healthcare provider

## **Curriculum and Instruction**

The 2019-2020 school year saw the following AMI (Alternative Methods of Instruction) used from March 23 through May 21, 2020:

- Paper/Pencil Activities K-8

- 9-12 completed crisis virtual learning using Canvas for 4th quarter

New since March, 2020:

- Realigned K-12 curriculum for 2020-2021
- Planned for lost instruction from 4th quarter 2019-2020 to integrate into 1st quarter 2020-2021
- Started creating AMI units specific to curriculum units for future use
- Vertical documents for each grade level to see curriculum gaps/changes
- In person summer school July 6-August 7 students entering grades 1-5 will see the following:
  - Re-teaching 4th quarter priority standards
  - Guided reading groups
  - Math and reading focused
  - 9 students per classroom during summer school
- June 2020 grades 9-12 summer school will see the following:
  - All Virtual
  - Credit recovery
  - Health, PE, Personal Finance virtual option through Launch
- Professional Development taking place from May through August, 2020:
  - Expedited Canvas training for all 6-12 teachers
    - Ongoing training in June and July
    - Training focus includes teaching online with fidelity (not just how to use the program)
  - August, 2020 all K-5 teachers - Guided Reading Training

The protocols and guidelines listed in this document are being discussed daily due to the fluid nature of this pandemic. Administration will continue to research and discuss best practices in an effort to re-open school in the safest manner possible. For information purposes only, the following is a list of guidelines and protocols considered and discussed, but NOT in the current plan:

1. Temperature screenings
  - Many young people are asymptomatic and may not run a fever with COVID-19. Temperature screenings are not considered determinate and are not advised by the local health department.
2. Plastic shields placed on tables/desks
  - Hygiene, especially with younger students, is a major concern.
  - Behavior issues (throwing items over the shield, etc.) are a concern.
  - A “jail-like” message/environment in the classroom is a concern.
3. Staggered hallway passing times
  - Changing classes already requires co-mingling of students. Different passing times would provide minimal benefit.
4. Students attending school on alternate days, alternate times, staggered school start times, or smaller class sizes.
  - Alternative schedules creates significant hardship for families, especially those with younger children.
  - Limited benefit is gained if students still co-mingle in junior high/high school classes, at activities, athletics, or in social occasions.
5. Limiting buses to one student per seat, or limiting students to every other seat
  - The current one mile limit and the rural nature of our school district makes it necessary for many bus routes to be quite long.
  - This protocol reduces bus capacity by 50% or more and the district is unable to provide the buses and drivers necessary to implement.
6. Placing/constructing clear plastic shields between bus drivers and students
  - These modifications/fabrications are not permitted under federal bus standards.

The following is a list of items still under consideration:

1. Should Sedalia Public Schools be accessible to all students through what other districts have labeled a “Choice Model”? Students and families may choose to engage in their education in an online format or in-person (in a more traditional model).
  - A recent parent survey shows almost 90% of the 1300+ responses of parents stating that they feel comfortable sending their student back for in-person school in August.
  - Should virtual school be a reality, how do we ensure that all students have access to data in order to effectively be a virtual student? Will Sedalia 200 provide a hotspot or other available connectivity options and make every modification it can in order to give access to a student who wants to choose virtual? At what point is virtual not an option for all students?
2. How do we ensure access and equity to all students?
3. What do we do with those students who refuse to be vaccinated once we have a vaccine?
4. How do we manage an employee shortage if staff does not return to work in the fall?
  - The Emergency Paid Leave Act is available to employees if they:
    - Have a diagnosis for COVID-19
    - Have been advised by a health care provider to quarantine due to COVID-19
    - Have symptoms of COVID-19 and is seeking a medical diagnosis
    - Are caring for a person who has been advised by a health provider to quarantine due to COVID-19
    - Are caring for a child whose school or care facility is closed, or whose care provider is unavailable, due to COVID-19.

**NOTE- All of the leave described above is available up to and including December 31, 2020**