DRAFT Great Falls Public Schools - Return to School Planning - 2020-2021 ***DRAFT***

The Great Falls Public School's Mission Statement says that; *"We will successfully educate students to navigate their futures"*. Nothing has changed regarding that banner which guides the work we do with our students. However, we will be changing, how and what we do within our schools to provide for the health and safety of all students and staff, to the best of our abilities. This guidance document is designed to serve as a framework for the administration of educational activity in a healthy and safe manner in our schools, relative to the phase or level of COVID-19 spread we are experiencing at the state and local level. The components of this plan will remain flexible and adaptable to the potential changes in the phases and levels of concern for individual and public health. Therefore, this document will be dynamic and updated regularly as new information becomes available and/ or additional requirements are requested of the School District.

School Topic	Governor's Plan	OPI's Plan	Academy of Pediatricians	GFPS Plan
Phasing Model	*Phase I, II, III* Reopening for school districts has been categorized into three phases that align with Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III of the Governor's Reopening the Big Sky Plan.	*Scenario 1,2,3,4* As COVID-19 impacts are fluid, we anticipate that multiple scenarios may occur when schools re-open in the fall of 2020 or may occur throughout the school year.	General guidance given for all situations, not dependent on any particular phasing model.	During Phases 1, 2, 3 or 4 GFPS will provide High Quality; Face to Face and remote learning, for all students as appropriate. The Social, Emotional, mental health and will being of students and staff will be monitored.
Grouping & Scheduling	Establish protocols for students to remain in the same groups or classroom, while teachers rotate, when practical.	Consider alternative schedules for class instruction. Keep students in same groups or classroom, Realign a bell schedule to include times for hand washing/sanitizing. School districts should create a unique plan that is appropriate for their school size. It is	The risk reduction of reducing class sizes may be outweighed by the challenge of doing so. Cohort classes to minimize crossover among children and adults. Have teachers rotate instead of students when possible. Use of block schedule at MS and HS to assist with	Elementary and Middle School students are in class and grade level cohorts, Schedules are designed to limit large gatherings in Library, Gym, Lunch area or Playground. High Schools will implement Block Schedules to reduce frequency of movement and make time for cleaning. Large Group gatherings will be mitigated with Physical distancing, masks or eliminated.

		recommended that gatherings occur in shifts (recess, cafeteria and hallway passing)	cohorting of students. Stagger class periods by cohort for movement between classrooms.	
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Social / Physical Distancing	Under Phase I and Phase II, the school Health & Safety plan SHOULD consider strict social distancing; for example, rules for traffic flow in congregational spaces and occupancy limits that allows for social distancing. Under Phase I and Phase II, the school Health & Safety plan MAY consider methods of limiting the number of individuals in classrooms and other learning spaces.	Scenario 2 (Phase I) Students may alternate school days, prohibit congregation in hallways and lunchrooms, install physical barriers in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart, provide physical guides such as tape on floors or sidewalks. Scenario 3 (Phase II) Recommended to continue physical distancing in gatherings of any size. Continue to limit communal spaces such as cafeterias and playgrounds.	There is a conflict between optimal academic and social / emotional learning in schools and strict adherence to current (CDC) physical distancing guidelines. In many school settings, 6 feet between students is not feasible without limiting the number of students. Evidence suggests that spacing as close as 3 feet may approach the benefits of 6 feet of space, particularly if students are wearing face coverings and are asymptomatic. Schools should weigh the benefits of strict adherence to a 6-feet spacing rule between students with the potential downside if	Physical Distancing of students and staff will occur to the degree necessary for the activity, event and location. In most classrooms 3-6 feet is achievable. The wearing of masks will be required in most settings, especially where optimal physical distancing cannot occur. For example, on school busses and in some classrooms. Many hallways are being marked for directional traffic flow and some offices have transparent barriers for student and staff protection. Limited numbers of spectators will be allowed at student events and there will be adequate physical spacing between seats and rows in common gathering places.

			remote learning is the only alternative.	
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Face Coverings	No specific requirement or recommendation for use of masks. "Provide masks for those present in the school building. The school Health & Safety plan should consider guidelines on the use of masks by all staff and/or students."	No specific requirement or recommendation, but restates CDC guidance. The CDC recommends cloth face coverings when physical distancing is not possible. This recommendation may be challenging for students (especially younger students) to wear in all-day settings such as school. If schools require face coverings, they should provide instructions to students and staff on the proper use, removal, and cleaning of cloth face coverings.	Yes for Adults and Middle/High School students. Maybe for elementary students. Although ideal, universal face covering use is not always possible in the school setting for many reasons. When developing policy, advisors should consider whether the use of cloth face coverings is developmentally appropriate and feasible and whether the policy can be instituted safely. School staff and older students (middle or high school) may be able to wear cloth face coverings safely and consistently and should be encouraged to do so.	It is requested that ALL staff, visitors and students wear a mask. There will be specific instances where masks or cloth face coverings will be required. All staff, visitors and students **must** wear a cloth face covering when they come into a school or district building and must wear that face covering whenever they are in common areas. Staff, visitors and students will wear the cloth face covering when they enter the building, they are in hallways, when in the presence of a known health compromised student or staff member, **and any shared areas where a physical distance of six-feet cannot be maintained** (shared offices, classrooms with students, etc). Masks and cloth face coverings must be school appropriate.

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Health Screening	Under all phases: Process for monitoring student and staff for symptoms and history of exposure. No specific process defined. Monitor and screen any non-school staff, including parents, when entering school buildings.	No specific guidance regarding testing or health screening. Require anyone (student and staff) with COVID-19 symptoms to stay at home.	Recommended to be done at home, not at school. The list of symptoms of COVID-19 infection has grown since the start of the pandemic and the manifestations of COVID-19 infection in children, although similar, is often not the same as that for adults. School policies regarding temperature screening and temperature checks must balance the practicality of performing these screening procedures for large numbers of students and staff with the information known about how children manifest COVID-19 infection, the risk of transmission in schools… In lieu of temperature checks and symptom	All GFPS staff will sign a release statement at the beginning of the school year that guarantees that they are personally responsible on a daily basis to monitor their own health and potential COVID-19 exposure. If staff are symptomatic or if they have been in close contact to a COVID positive individual, they must report that information to their supervisor and stay home until they have been cleared to return to work by health officials and meet the District's inclusion criteria. Students and parents will be asked to monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and potential exposure. If a student exhibits symptoms or has been exposed, then they must stay home from school and seek medical attention. They may not return to school until they have been cleared to return to school by health care officials and meet the District's inclusion criteria. If a student exhibits symptoms

			screening being performed after arrival to school, methods to allow parent report of temperature checks done at home may be considered.	at school, they will be isolated until a parent can be notified to pick the student up.
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Testing for COVID-19	No mention of testing	No mention of testing	Testing all students and/or staff: It is not clear that such testing would reduce the likelihood of spread within schools. It is important to recognize that virologic testing only shows whether a person is infected at that specific moment in time. Antibody (blood) testing: At the current time, serologic testing should not be used for individual decision-making and has no place in considerations for entrance to or exclusion from school.	GFPS is encouraging all staff to submit to COVID-19 testing prior to the beginning of the school year and at any time throughout the year if they are symptomatic. Students are encouraged to do the same. Alluvion Health Care is providing free COVID-19 testing in Cascade County.
Busing	Clean buses after each route, Reduce bus loads to allow for adequate social distancing, assign seats to students on the bus.	Consider CDC guidance on pupil transportation. Schools should consider the need for more buses or	Encourage alternative models of transportation for students who have other options.	Parents are encouraged to transport students whenever it is feasible to do so. Students will be assigned seats according to the recommended standards.

		alternative schedules to safely transport students. When physical distancing on buses is not possible, schools should consider cloth face masks and other mitigation strategies.	Symptom screening at home. Assigned seating. When 6-ft distance cannot be maintained between students, face coverings should be worn. Minimize the number of people on the bus at one time, within reason. Have windows open if weather allows.	Family groups of students will be asked to sit together. Students will be seated two to a seat on most routes. Masks will be worn by students on school buses. Windows will be open to provide ventilation when feasible. Students will use hand sanitizer on the bus. Sanitation of seats and hand rails will occur between routes whenever possible.
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Hallways / Lockers	Create rules for traffic flow and congregational spaces (bathrooms, concession areas, hallways, etc.); establish methods of staggering the use of communal spaces and hallways and ensure regular cleaning. Clean all hallways, common areas, and the outside of lockers.	Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and children remain at least six feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g. guides for creating "one way routes" in hallways).	Consider creating 1-way halls to reduce close contact. Physical guides on floor or sidewalk for traffic flow. Stagger class periods by cohort for movement between classrooms. Eliminate use of lockers or assign by cohort to minimize mixing of students before/after school.	Hallway traffic will be one way if possible. Clearly defined and marked flow directions will be posted in Hallways. Stanchions and retractable roping will be utilized to route traffic patterns. Routines and procedural expectations will be taught within content classes to accommodate physical distancing and safe practices.
Playgrounds	Keep libraries, gyms, playgrounds off-limits unless they can be sanitized between groups.	Continue to limit communal spaces, such as cafeterias and playgrounds with	Enforcing physical distancing in an outside playground is difficult and may not	Elementary Recess schedules have been established to keep cohort groups of students together on the playgrounds.

		shared playground equipment. If this is not possible, stagger use, and disinfect between uses. Outdoor areas, like playgrounds, generally require normal routine cleaning but do not require disinfection. (Source: CDC)	be the most effective method of risk mitigation. Emphasis should be placed on cohorting students and limiting the size of groups participating in playground time. Outdoor transmission of virus is known to be much lower than indoor transmission.	Sanitation of playground equipment will occur on a scheduled basis.
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Meals / Cafeteria	Establish procedures for restricting the use of cafeterias and other congregate settings, and serving meals in alternate settings such as classrooms	Consider remote meal service options that maximize safety and physical distancing, such as grab and go breakfasts and lunches. No self-serve stations or buffets. Staff wear masks and gloves while interacting with individuals. Establish hours of operation that allow for facility occupancy that meets physical distancing requirements. Develop traffic flow patterns and seating arrangements for each venue. Adopt school breakfast in the classroom strategies for	Consider having students cohorted, potentially in their classrooms, especially if students remain in their classroom throughout the day. Create separate lunch periods to minimize the number of students in the cafeteria at one time. Utilize additional spaces for lunch/break times. Utilize outdoor spaces when possible. Wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after eating.	Students will be kept in cohort groups for cafeteria meal service and dining. Routines and procedural expectations will be taught with intention within content classes to accommodate physical distancing and safe practices. Students and staff will be required to wear face coverings while in line. Touchless ID entry for students will be implemented. Staff will maintain cleanliness of tables and seats between meal periods. Students and staff will maintain food allergy awareness and protocols.

		lunch. Designate entrances for those leaving campus for lunch.		
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Visitors & Adult Protocols	The Health & Safety plan may include processes for identifying and restricting non-essential visitors or volunteers.	No specific restrictions for adults and/or visitors.	Given what is known about transmission dynamics, adults and adult staff within schools should attempt to maintain a distance of 6 feet from other persons as much as possible, particularly around other adult staff. Physical distancing by and among adults is strongly recommended, and meetings and curriculum planning should take place virtually if possible. In addition, other strategies to increase adult-adult physical distance in time and space should be implemented. Parents should, in general, be discouraged from entering the school building. Physical	In order to protect our medically fragile and immunocompromised students and staff members, for the most part, schools will be only be open to students, family members and staff. GFPS campuses will allow limited access for pre-approved visitors, vendors and volunteers. In order to enable contact tracing and enhance the health of the District, Approved visitors will not be allowed access beyond the Main Office without a mask or cloth face covering. All visitors must complete the District approved health screening form.

			barriers, such as plexiglass, should be considered in reception areas and employee workspaces where the environment does not accommodate physical distancing, and congregating in shared spaces, such as staff lounge areas, should be discouraged.	
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Organized Activities / Extracurricular	• Lowest Risk: Performing skill-building drills or conditioning at home, alone or with family members. • Increasing Risk: Team-based practice. • More Risk: Within-team competition. • Even More Risk: Full competition between teams from the same local geographic area. Highest Risk: Full competition between teams from different geographic areas.	Organized youth activities should avoid gathering in groups of more than 50 people in circumstances that do not readily allow for appropriate physical distancing. Pursue options to convene sporting events and participation in sports activities in ways that minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to players, families, coaches, and communities. Limit gatherings, events, and extracurricular activities to those who can maintain physical	It is likely that sporting events, practices, and conditioning sessions will be limited in many locations. Pre-participation evaluations (health screening) should be conducted in alignment with the AAP Pre-participation Physical Evaluation Monograph.	The District will post signs and floor markings to encourage physical distancing; The District will limit the occupancy of events to follow current State Health Officials and Cascade County CCHD guidelines. Events may be staggered, offered with limited viewership, or canceled if safety guidelines cannot be met. The District may require attendance sheets or seating charts for events to assist with contract tracing. The District may require Health Screening for all those in attendance. Face masks and coverings may be required for all those in attendance, depending on the event and venue. Coaches, supervisors and building facilitators are responsible for securing and then disposing of health screening forms, when applicable, for the length of time

		distancing, and support proper hand hygiene. See Guidance from: National Federation on HS Sports		designated by health officials. Hand sanitizing stations will be available at events. Students, faculty, staff, and approved visitors should follow the expectations of the District which promote healthy habits and reduce the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus within our community. Organizations and groups may be allowed to reserve District owned space for meetings and events upon approval of the superintendent or designee; All organizations will be required to follow District expectations and safety guidelines. Athletic Events at the High School Level are still under advisement of Montana High School Association. More information will be available as updated. https://www.mhsa.org/covid
				All Music and Art Health and safety standards are being implemented in Choral and Instrumental music classrooms. Live Concerts, performances and exhibitions are being reevaluated. Limited Concert performances with smaller groups of students live before a guest audience where physical distancing and other safety protocols are in place. Exhibitions and Gallery shows will need to follow physical distancing guidelines as well.
Educational Delivery	**Academic** • Students and/or teachers in an at-risk group or those caring for	**Academic**	**Academics** The impacts of lost instructional time and	**Academics** The district plans for Face to Face learning in a traditional school

	individuals in an at-risk group should have additional accommodations provided to them 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. ● 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 or are caring for someone in an at-risk group. ● 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. ● Develop a plan to distribute learning materials and technology devices to students receiving offsite instruction; ● Train staff to serve students through remote learning; ● Address any digital divide that may exist within the community or student body to ensure equitable access to instruction for staff and students; ● Create sufficient communication protocols to assist parents and students with offsite learning;	➢ Accommodations for students, teachers, and staff in an at-risk group: o Schools that reopen will need to take into consideration that some teachers and staff will fall into a health risk category. These individuals should have additional accommodations including teaching classes remotely, utilizing a larger classroom where physical distancing can be maintained, or given an option not to return until the risks are reduced. o 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. Blended learning should allow for learning in the classroom with meaningful practice at	social emotional development on children and adolescents should be anticipated, and schools 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 because ofschool 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 reopen. 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.	setting will be modified by the Health and Safety protocols and requirements put into place. The accommodations and remediation for students who need support is being addressed in preparation for school reopening. **Remote Learning:** Great Falls Public Schools is offering full time remote opportunities to students and families who desire this model of instruction. Because of the staffing needs for remote learning, students and families are asked to make a commitment to this endeavor. In the secondary (7-12) students and families are asked to make a minimum commitment of one trimester in the middle school, and one semester in the high school. Great Falls Public Schools established a protocol for enrolling in remote learning, that includes: ● Board Policy 1908; ● Parents must sign remote learning contract for students to participate in off site instruction; ● It allows GFPS to collect ANB from the State of MT. ANB is used to help fund the teaching positions and materials needed to maintain this model; ● This contract will need to be signed along with expectations outlined for

	• Prepare for a seamless switch from onsite to offsite through professional development, flexible student, and staff schedules; • Coordinate with special education staff to ensure IEP teams, including parents, review and update Individualized Education Plans for special education students and address educational and health services in a manner that can be implemented both offsite and onsite; • Ensure the availability of staff and access to technology to provide alternative offsite instruction options for students who may request remote learning; • Implement a technology troubleshooting hotline for parents and students to access when encountering difficulty with available resources; and • Establish protocols for students to remain in the same groups or classroom, while teachers rotate when practical.	home (purposeful discussions/activities through an online platform). Pursue virtual activities and events in lieu of field trips, student assemblies, special performances, school-wide parent meetings, and spirit nights. Organize pre-developed study packets and suggested activities for students and parents in case of a second closure of schools due to re-emergence of the virus and/or for students who remain in the remote learning environments due to individual/family high-risk categories. Consider alternative schedules for class instruction. Alter the bell schedule to limit the number of students in transit between classes at any one time. Realign a bell schedule to include times for sanitizing. School districts should create a unique plan that is appropriate for their school size.		parents and students; • Grades will be assigned for remote learning courses (P/F, which may be available during times of extended complete school closure emergencies, is not an option for elected remote learning models). • If the student has an active 504 Plan or IEP, the district will help determine if the accommodations and support can be delivered remotely or will need to be modified. Link to remote learning form: **https://bit.ly/gfps-intent-remote**

Governor's Plan	https://covid19.mt.gov/Portals/223/Documents/Education%20Final.pdf			
OPI's Plan	http://opi.mt.gov/Re-opening-Schools			
Pediatricians	https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/			