

Dear Manitou Springs School District Community,

I wanted to provide you with an update on some important information related to our planning for restarting schools in August. Our District 14 Leadership Team, Board of Education, the Restarting Schools Planning Team, and I will be working closely with local and state-level educational and public health experts throughout the summer to develop our Restarting School plans.

Two weeks ago, Governor Polis publicly announced his expectation that schools in Colorado would be back on schedule to start the 2020-21 school year. Manitou Springs School District 14 is developing a plan to return to full in-person learning on August 20, 2020. We are committed to investing in human, instructional, material, and safety material resources that will allow the return to in-person learning. I am working closely with area superintendents to develop El Paso County School District Protocols for Schools Reopening in August 2020. This return to full in-person learning will also include a fully online learning option for students and families who, at the time, make the decision that learning from home is a better option for their child or family.

Additionally, the week of June 1, we convened 30 people (school and district leaders, teachers, counselors, social worker, and parents) to develop three Restarting Schools teams.

1. Elementary Team
2. Secondary Team
3. Culture, Climate, Social-Emotional Learning

These three teams are working together to create alternative plans in the event that we will not be able to return to full in-person learning and/or if we need to move to an alternative plan after school begins. These alternative plans include:

Alternative Plan 1 (Hybrid—Combination of In-person and Online Learning)—Return to school with physical distancing and 50% of students on campus each school day (Group A and Group B). For example, in this plan, students would attend in cohort groups attending in-person three days one week and then in-person two days the next week. When not attending in-person, the student would participate in online learning.

- Group A would attend in-person on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Group B would attend in-person on Thursday and Friday.
- The following week, Group A would attend in-person on Monday and Tuesday. Group B would attend in-person on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

Alternative Plan 2—Return to a fully remote learning model due to public health orders that do not allow for in-person learning. This option will be an enhanced version of what we were able to move to during the 4th quarter of the last school year.

*As with the return to full in-person learning, all plans will allow for a student to participate in fully online learning if that option is the best for the student. Students who participate solely in online learning would have opportunities to connect with their

peers through daily check-ins via Google Meets and/or other school-related activities. More details will be shared at a later date.

I also want to add that starting in the fall, 100% of students will have 1:1 access to technology (Pre-school to 12th grade). The purchase of the new devices has been funded by the monies the district received related to the CARES Act. Additionally, we recently secured a grant to support families that currently do not have internet access.

As we develop these plans, we take into consideration the feedback from the Restarting School Survey that was completed by students, staff, and families. Your responses were thoughtful and helpful. I know that every plan has pros and cons related to learning, opportunity, connection, health and safety concerns, impact on staff, and family needs. Please know that these topics are being considered at each step.

To support ongoing communication throughout this time, between June 24-August 26, 2020, I will send a weekly update by email and will host a weekly virtual meeting to provide more detailed and current information, take input, and answer questions. These communications will occur on Wednesdays, with the meeting occurring from 5:00-5:45 p.m. A link to the virtual meeting will be provided in the weekly update.

Here is the link to the first virtual meeting for Wednesday, June 24 (5:00-5:45 p.m.). You will need to download Zoom in order to access the meeting.

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/78636573545?pwd=L0lkZi96UjVQc3drdTJqbWhLUkZNUt09>

Meeting ID: 786 3657 3545

Password: 8RgDqX

If you would like to share comments or feedback, please feel free to complete this [Google Form](https://forms.gle/JB7Nbc1KuXP7LCtd9) (<https://forms.gle/JB7Nbc1KuXP7LCtd9>). The information you share will be used to guide the agendas for the weekly updates and used to inform any decisions that are made about the plans for returning to learning.

While we understand the desire to know as early as possible, MSSD will plan to arrive at a decision in early July. Before finalizing and communicating the plan that will be in place on August 20, the district will consider guidelines from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), and the El Paso County Public Health Department regarding updated research and data on COVID-19. These plans will include specific health and safety guidelines that will be followed for the plan.

I hope you have a great summer.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Domangue, PhD
Superintendent of Schools