

QUITMAN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
REIMAGINING EDUCATION
RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN
(Revised May 19, 2021)



2021-2022 School year
Dr. Evelyn W. Jossell, Superintendent

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has caused districts globally to rethink, revisit, and reimagine educating the mass of our students in a safe and healthy environment. The Quitman County School District is dedicated to reopening schools for the 2021-2022 school year with a commitment to continuing to provide academic excellence in an environment that is safe and secure for all students, teachers, staff and administrators. The district will include within this plan a method to provide remediation/intervention, enrichment, social emotional learning and acceleration to **all** students.

After establishing a COVID-Task Force Committee in the summer of 2020, to review the options extended by the Mississippi Department of Education, and several weeks of meeting, planning, and researching, the Quitman County School District is proposing a three phase Return to School Plan based on the following principles:

- Providing an environment that promotes student and staff safety first and foremost
- Providing quality instructional support to ensure students continue to learn, and supports to close learning gaps caused by COVID-19
- Ensuring that all students receive the necessary social and emotional support whether at school or at home
- Providing parents with the necessary options and support so they will not have the added burden of educating their children in the home and providing for the home.

PUBLIC COMMENT

In addition to the COVID-Task Force Committee, parents and community stakeholders were allowed to comment on the district's return to school plan using two surveys that was sent out via Google Survey in June and July of 2020. Data from the surveys was taken into consideration when establishing the three phases for student return to school. A third survey or public hearing will be held in early July to allow for public comments that will be included in the revised plan in November.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

Return to school implications: The district will remain consistent with our previously approved calendar and start school **using a Traditional, in-person Model** on **August 9th**. This date will remain consistent unless there is an increase in local community infection spread of Covid-19. Listed below are some of the most important reasons we believe a **Traditional Model** is the best option for students and parents when students return to school.

- Multiple academic regression at all levels
- Removes burden from parents having to educate children if they opt to send their child to school
- Removes issue of "no supervision" if students at home participating in a Virtual Format

- Allows students to receive critical face-to-face instruction from teachers to help them master grade level information needed to pass MAAP 3 and other State Mandated Tests
- Provide extended learning opportunities through after school and summer remediation and enrichment
- Provide focused and authentic interventions for struggling students
- Allows students to receive necessary social emotional support while at school through on site Mental Health Therapists, Case Managers and Social Workers.

Learning Management System

All students in grades PreK-12 will have access to a Learning Management System in the event of a school closure. The District has selected Google Classroom as the district-wide Learning Management System. District teachers and students have used Google Classroom for a couple of years and they are familiar with the maneuverability of this system. If the district has to switch to a totally Virtual Plan due to the Governor or MDE orders, Google Classroom will be the system that will allow us to provide uninterrupted learning for our students. On-going training and informational sessions will be held for all teachers, students, and parents. SchoolStatus, a district digital software program will allow continuous communication between parents and school, and also serve as a catalyst for teacher feedback and administrators' monitoring of face-to-face and virtual instruction if the district has to revert back to Virtual Learning. This method will also be used for in-person students, and for any student who has a documented medical condition that prohibits him/her from attending school face-to-face.

Professional Learning Communities will meet a minimum of weekly at each school site to allow opportunities for teachers to review the effectiveness of instructional approaches and to determine individual student support needed.

Grading Policies

The Quitman County School District will maintain established grading policies and procedures found in the Student Handbook. These policies will be consistent for a traditional, hybrid blended, or virtual model of instruction. Students will be expected to complete and turn in all assignments, and will receive grades according to the District's grading policies, regardless of the model of instruction used.

OPERATIONS

Transportation

Transportation is key to students returning to school in a traditional manner. Additional buses will be purchased that are larger and will provide additional spacing for student safety. Siblings or relatives from the same home will be allowed to sit together. Students must continue to wear masks prior to boarding buses and for the duration of the ride to school. Bus drivers and

monitors must also wear masks. Bus monitors are placed on each bus to take temperatures and to ensure practice of social distancing and mask wearing is strongly enforced. This practice will remain in effect until further notice and guidance from CDC. Arrival and dismissal times will resume a normal, pre-covid schedule in August. All safety precautions will continue for dismissal and arrival, which includes but is not limited to remaining 6ft apart, mask wearing, no hitting, and touching or horse playing. Buses will continue to be disinfected after each unloading of students in the morning and afternoon.

Masks/Face Shields/Desk Shields

All staff and students will be required to wear a Face Mask or Face Shield, until otherwise notified. All visitors entering any of the district's facilities will be required to wear a mask. Face Shields are recommended for elementary teachers so that young readers can see the shape and movement of the teachers' lips to understand phonics. Desk shields are currently being used for elementary age students to further mitigate the spread of COVID 19 while students are at their desks.

Academic Calendar

The District's academic calendar for 2021-2022 is published on the district website along with the Return to School plan.

Food Services

The Quitman County School District will continue to provide breakfast and lunch opportunities for students following prescribed school lunch schedules. The District will follow CDC recommended guidelines in providing grab-and-go and packaged meal options during summer months. All meals will continue to be served in the classrooms as cafeterias will not be used for congregate feeding until further guidance from CDC.

Physical Education

Students will participate in physical education activities. These activities will follow the guidelines established by the CDC and MSDH. Physical activities will be conducted in the classrooms and designated areas outside. Gymnasiums will not be used for physical education at the beginning of school. When CDC restrictions are lifted, normal in-door classes will resume.

Recess

A safe recess/playground experience is an extremely important part of a child's experience. We believe we can continue to provide these experiences, once students return to school, by following CDC social distancing guidelines, minimizing equipment use, and maintaining control through a more structured supervision. Staggered recess periods will be observed and students will attend a designated area and remain there for the duration of recess.

Attendance

The Mississippi Department of Education is responsible for establishing general attendance requirements that are to be followed by Mississippi School Districts. All students will be required to return to school, unless a medical provider provides documentation that the student is at-risk due to a compromised immune system. All school sites will resume pre-pandemic dismissal times beginning August 9, 2021.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The Quitman County School District will continue to provide family and community support through district and school sponsored Town Hall Meetings; Technology Academies to help parents navigate the use of devices and our Learning Management System. Professional Counseling will be offered through the district for families of children attending the district. District Social Workers will be hired to serve as a liaison for community resources and support to help students stay in school and on track. Feedback for services offered is gathered through google surveys and from open discussion at Town Hall Meetings.

COMMUNICATIONS

The District has in place a communication team to provide accurate, timely, and vital information to parents and stakeholders. Our communication methods include use of the district's website, emails, district alert system, social and print media. As a part of our COVID Cares allocation, we will be able hire a Public Relations Coordinator to insure that communication for the district is handled on a daily basis.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Plans will be in place to educate students, parents/guardians, and staff about health promotion and illness prevention practices. The District will continue to provide a clean, safe, and healthy environment for all students and staff. New air filtration systems will be installed in all campus facilities during the summer months. The District will continue to implement social distancing measures, increased handwashing opportunities and hand sanitizing. One-way directional and other markings are in place to facilitate social distancing. Parents will be asked to check students at home to rule out fever and/or symptoms of illness. Students and staff will be required to stay home if they are sick or have symptoms of illness. The schools will conduct temperature checks upon arrival and any student having a temperature of 100 will be sent home. Students who have a temperature upon arrival, develop a temperature during the school day, or become ill will be isolated in a separate room from all other students until picked up by a parent or guardian. Masks will be required by all staff and students while on campus, or while being transported in district vehicles.

The District has contracted with Marion Professional Counseling to provide Mental Health Counseling to both students and staff. A therapist and a Case Manager will be located at each of the three schools to with the myriad of Social/Emotional issues caused by Covid-19.

School Nurse/Health Services

The Quitman County School District currently has access to one nurse through our partnership with the Aaron E. Henry Community Health Center. This one nurse serves all three schools. Through our COVID Cares funds, we have requested a salary for an additional nurse. The school nurse will conduct normal operations at each school while working with staff to teach, monitor and provide strategies for controlling infectious diseases. Nurses will provide professional training and educational opportunities to students on proper hygiene procedures, sanitizing, and the use of thermometers. The nurses will be responsible for maintaining records and completing reports following local district policy, FERPA and HIPPA.

Sports/Band

The Quitman County School District will began full-scale operations on June 1, 2021, and will operate according to CDC Guidelines. Band instruments will be sanitized before and after each use following CDC Guidelines, and large group practices will be held outside. When traveling, students will practice Social Distancing until such time CDC lifts restrictions. All sports programs will continue to follow CDC Guidelines by practicing Social Distancing, wearing masks when not on the field or on the courts, and have daily temperature checks.

Campus Visitors

Visitors/Parents will be allowed in the office area and a designated room for visitors at our schools. All visitors/parents will be required to wear a mask and must go through a screening with the school nurse or designated staff before meeting with faculty/staff, until notified differently. Visitors/Parents will not be allowed in spaces where students are involved in activities. Virtual/and or phone conferences will be used for conference meetings with parents until further guidance from CDC on in-person gatherings.

A district person will be assigned additional duties to oversee that all staff, visitors, and students are following Health and Safety protocols.

The immediate need facing the District is a contingency plan for opening schools safely, in a Traditional Face-to-Face manner for the 2021-22 school year. The aforementioned plan is a fluid document because of the changing landscape of the Pandemic and the weekly updates we receive from MDE and the Mississippi Department of Health. If the trajectory of COVID-19 changes to show an increase in community transmission, adaptations will be made accordingly. For the purpose of this revised Return-to-School plan, we are now entering Phase III as described in Appendix A since we have a very minimum community spread.

TECHNOLOGY

All students have been issued a laptop computer and a hotspot. Technology trainings were provided on the use of the devices for parents and students. All instructors received focused technology training on how to deliver asynchronous and synchronous instruction. Additional training will be on-going, as needed. District and School Level Administrators will monitor instructional practices to determine the amount and type of trainings teachers will need to become proficient at both in-person and virtual instructional delivery. Also, feedback will be encouraged from faculty and staff during PLCs and faculty meetings.

Although all it is the expectation that all students will be returning to in-person learning in August, the district will continue to use technology as a part of interventions, for remediation, and as a tool for students who may have a prolonged illness to keep up with school work.

APPENDIX A

QUITMAN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT-RETURN TO SCHOOL MATRIX

PHASE I-VIRTUAL

All students participate in Virtual Learning beginning August 10, 2020

-Meals will be delivered to all students, beginning August 10th

-IPads will be issued for students who needed them

-QCSD will conduct an Orientation on Virtual Learning on July 27th

-QCSD will work on a case by case basis with students who do not have access to internet



PHASE II-BLENDED HYBRID

In Person Option (Begins 10/14/20)

PreK-12th attend classes with half of classes receiving face-to-face instruction while the other half is participating Virtual Learning at respective school sites.

VIRTUAL OPTION: Parents who are still uncomfortable with sending their child to school may choose to remain virtual

-Meals will be delivered to all virtual students and served in class for students on campus



PHASE III-TRADITIONAL

All students will return August 9, 2021 for traditional learning following CDC Guidelines to a degree that is safe and practical



Substantial Community Spread



Minimum to Moderate Spread



Minimum Spread