

**QUITMAN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
REIMAGINING EDUCATION
RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN**



2020-2021 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 2020-2021 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 has to include within this plan a method to provide remediation, enrichment, and acceleration to all students.

After establishing a COVID-Task Force Committee 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 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 won't have the added burden of educating their children in the home and providing for the home.

Return to school implications: The district will remain consistent with our previously approved calendar and start school **using a Virtual Model on August 10th**. This allows the district extra time to order needed equipment for busses and the classroom needed to meet CDC Guidelines. With escalating COVID-19 cases, this plan also allows time to see if the trajectory of infection rates will change before bringing students back on campus. If there is no substantial community spread of COVID-19, the district will engage in a **Hybrid Blended** return to school plan, beginning October 14, 2020. With this plan, students will return to school in a traditional manner but will be in small classes of 10-12 students, following CDC guidelines. Half of the students will be engaged in virtual learning at school, while the other half will receive face-to-face instruction. The groups will switch after two days so that all students will receive some form of face-to-face instruction. Parents who are still not comfortable sending their child to school following the traditional plan can opt to participate in a total virtual learning format. These parents must sign a waiver committing to virtual learning for nine weeks to ensure that we do not overpopulate buses. If there is continued substantial community spread of COVID-19 in October, all students will remain **Virtual** until January, 2021 (Appendix A-RTS Matrix)

Listed below are some of the most important reasons we believe a Blended Hybrid Model is the best option for students and parents when students return to school.

- Allows for smaller classrooms to comply with social distancing guidelines
- In the absence of computers for every student, the blended model provides access to computers and internet at each school site
- 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
- Allows students to receive necessary social emotional support while at school

Transportation

Transportation is key to students returning to school in a traditional manner. All busses will be outfitted with plastic separation curtains to allow for one student per seat, in a staggered manner. Siblings or relatives from the same home will be allowed to sit together. Students must wear masks prior to boarding buses and for the duration of the ride to school. Bus drivers and monitors must also wear masks. A recent survey completed by District parents provided data that over 50% of our parents are willing to either carpool or drop their child off at school.

Learning Management System

All students in grades PreK-12 will have access to a Learning Management System. The District has selected Google Classroom as the district wide Learning Management System. District teachers and students have used Google Classroom 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. Training and informational sessions will be held for all teachers, students, and parents.

Masks/Face Shields/Desk Shields

All staff and students will be required to wear a Face Mask or Face Shield. Using the appropriated COVID Cares Funds, the district will purchase two cloth masks for every student and every teacher. 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 will be ordered for elementary age students to further mitigate the spread of COVID 19 while students are at their desks.

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.

Technology

A computer and internet access will be provided to every district student. Due to back orders of equipment, students will not receive computers until October. Technology Assistants will be identified among existing staff and paid a supplement to assist Mr. Strickland with the myriad of responsibilities that will result from a Virtual/Blended Hybrid Model.

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.

Recess

A safe recess/playground experience is an extremely important part of a child's experience. We believe we will be able 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.

Sports/Band

The Quitman County School District began a period of acclimatization (Strength training and conditioning) as directed by the Mississippi High School Athletic Association on June 1. Other small group activities were used to prepare students for return to practice when allowed. Both band and athletic programs are responsible for following recommendations made by the CDC and MSDH. The Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA) governs athletic in Mississippi and they have not released plans or guidelines for the 2020-2021 athletic seasons. No decisions have been made regarding spectator attendance at athletic, school, or other seasonal sports. Decisions on other extracurricular activities such as Band, Cheer and other Club activities will be made closer to the start of school.

Attendance

The Mississippi Department of Education is responsible for establishing general attendance requirements that are to be followed by Mississippi School Districts. These guidelines are currently being revised due to the Pandemic Crisis. Parents will have a choice to choose virtual

learning for their child and their attendance will be counted. MDE has not provided guidelines to date how they will be counted, however discussions with MDE officials implicate that students attending virtual classes will be considered present when they log-in, participate, and complete classwork assigned during the instructional time. Students who are absent from school will be expected to comply with all class attendance requirements if they have a device at home. Students will be dismissed from school each day by 2:00 p.m. once school reopens.

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.

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. All meals will be served in the classrooms as cafeterias will not be used for congregate feeding at the beginning of school. Students will continue to receive lunch and breakfast while virtual learning at home.

Health and Wellness

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. The District will implement social distancing measures, increased handwashing opportunities and hand sanitizing. One-way directional, and other markings will be 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.

Communication

The District will put in place a communication team to provide accurate, timely, and vital information to parents and stakeholders. Our communication methods will include use of the district's website, emails, 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.

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. 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.

The immediate need facing the District is a contingency plan for opening schools for the 2020-21 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. The plan is a result of weeks of planning and research conducted by a COVID-19 Task Force that is comprised of all district administrators, parents, mental health and medical professionals, and community representatives. If the trajectory of COVID-19 continues to climb as it is currently doing, the District will maintain a Virtual Learning Format until such time it is deemed safe for students to return to school in a traditional/Hybrid Blended manner.

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 January 5, 2021 for traditional learning following CDC Guidelines to a degree that is safe and practical



Substantial Community Spread



Minimum to Moderate Spread



Minimum Spread