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## **Timberlane Regional School District 2021-2022 Plan on the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services**

TRSD acknowledges that, at this time, there is ongoing uncertainty around the local and regional metrics that COVID-19 will present to schools in the fall of 2021. Therefore, there are few definitive decisions that can be made at this time, as all decisions will be made in conjunction with current guidance from the CDC, NH DPHS, NH DOE, and local health officials. The TRSD will review and update this plan in an ongoing manner throughout the summer months to reflect ongoing updates from local, state, and federal public health organizations.

On August 19, 2021 TRSD School Board approved updates to the Plan on the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services. Those updated items will be marked with an asterisk (\*).

### **COVID-19 Data**

- 2020-2021 student attendance rates ranged from 91% - 97% in week to week reporting, with an average attendance rate of 95% daily for the school year. We have every reason to believe this strong attendance rate will continue as the risk of COVID-19 subsides.
- 2020-2021 staff absenteeism averaged 5%, as reported weekly in the TRSD COVID-19 Data Dashboard. Although numerous staff members were fully remote, the district maintained total staff capacity due to the hiring of ‘pandemic proctors’. We expect staff capacity to remain strong into next year, as most of those who were fully remote have returned or plan to return to in person learning.
- On very limited occasions, TRSD schools (TRHS, TRMS) needed to pivot to fully remote instruction. At the elementary level, isolated classrooms needed to quarantine due to a COVID -19 concern. These situations were identified through targeted close contact tracing. With improving conditions and increased vaccination levels in our four communities, we expect there to be little to no disruption or need to shift to fully remote instruction in 2021/2022. The district is prepared to continue to implement contact tracing/ quarantine protocols.
- Transmission within schools has been low to non-existent. We expect little to no transmission as next school year gets underway.
- Although key COVID-19 data points surged to high levels in late winter and early spring, the district maintained our in-person model. We have every reason to believe that improving conditions support a return to even greater pre-pandemic conditions and normalcy.

### **Keys to Our Success**

- Effective resource allocation, including expanded resources and supports for underperforming students;
- Improved access to valid and reliable data to better identify students' academic needs and potential learning loss;
- Expanded educational services for vulnerable populations;
- Support for our staff, including emphasis on emotional and physical well-being;
- Health and safety measures in place for students and staff;
- Equitable access to support services, including mental health supports.

### **Remote Instruction**

- The Timberlane District does not intend to provide a remote-only instructional option, using in-school instructors, for students.
- The district encourages those families who may desire remote-only instruction to look into homeschooling or other alternative options such as VLACS, as the district will not provide such options for all students and families.
- In the event that a student has a medical condition documented by a physician, requiring him/her to remain at home, the district will work with the family on a case-by-case basis to provide appropriate alternatives to in-person learning, as required by state and federal guidelines.
- The district will retain the option to shift to hybrid or fully remote options, based on COVID metrics and informed by state and/or federal guidance.

### **Facility Access**

- School building and office access will return to pre-pandemic status for parents and others attending student-focused meetings. Access for other visitors, including volunteers, classroom guests, contracted service providers, and vendors, will be based on fall conditions and determined on a case-by-case basis. TRSD may continue to ask visitors to self-screen and adhere to appropriate mitigation strategies in effect at the time.
- Restrictions on facility use may remain in place for outside organizations and rental requests, based on COVID metrics and informed by state and/or federal guidance.
- We will update projected opening plans when we have mid-July data from the Department of Health and Human Services

### Mitigation Efforts/Safety Protocols

- All mitigation efforts and protocols will be based on local conditions as well as state and federal guidance.
- We will continue to inform our decisions by recommendations of public health officials.
- TRSD will employ numerous safety mitigation strategies as recommended by NH DPHS\*\*.
- Due to a federal mandate, masks are required on all public conveniences (this includes our school busses) until January 18, 2022.\*
- Staff and students will have access to hand sanitizer and soap in buildings. Hand hygiene signage will be posted through all our buildings.\*
- TRSD will strive for 3 foot distancing between people in all indoor spaces.\*
- TRSD will use daily cleaning protocols, supplies and techniques as recommended by CDC and NH DPHS in all indoor spaces.\*
- TRSD will use an ‘at home screening tool & process’. \*
- TRSD will use our ‘nurse’s form’ to inform nurses about sick and absent students and staff.\*
- TRSD asks that those individuals with COVID-19 signs and symptoms stay home. \*
- At this time and with recommendation from NH DPHS, TRSD will NOT quarantine close contacts identified at school, rather, ask individuals who have been identified as a close contact to self-observe and monitor for symptoms.\*
- NH DPHS asks that household contacts to a positive COVID-19 case quarantine. For any student who is being asked to quarantine, it is state law to still provide students an education. Therefore, it is the expectation that teachers will provide learning resources that provide students comparable learning opportunity to those that are in person. This may include materials posted to google classroom, and / or synchronous class experiences.\*
- FACE MASKS\*
  - Masks are not required outdoors (recess, outdoor classrooms, etc.)\*
  - Indoor facemasks are recommended by CDC and AAP, regardless of individual’s vaccination status\*
  - TRSD will use the Indoor Mask Decision Matrix as recommended by NH DPHS to determine the daily/ or weekly use of facemask in buildings. Please see the decision matrix below:\*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>NH DPHS <u>INDOOR</u> FACE MASK RECOMMENDATION</b></li> </ul>				
		Level of Community Transmission		
		Minimal	Moderate	Substantial
Cases within facility	Sporadic cases without facility transmission	Optional*	Optional*	Universal†
	Single Cluster	Targeted	Targeted	Universal†
	Multiple clusters or a larger outbreak	Universal†	Universal†	Universal†

\*Face mask still recommended for people who want maximal protection for themselves or others (e.g. a household member who is unvaccinated or medically vulnerable).

†Exceptions can be made for classrooms/ schools that have achieved a high (>80%) vaccination rate, or where other prevention measures can be strictly enforced (e.g. 6 foot distancing).

### Vaccinations

- Although students ages 12-18 are eligible for vaccination, we do not currently have data on percentages of vaccinated students.
- We do not yet know how variants will affect staff or students and influence a return to school this fall, but we expect to be able to overcome any related hurdles by remaining prepared for contingencies, including the ability to pivot to remote instruction if necessary.
- We know children are at lower risk for contracting the virus. We will continue to adhere to guidance from health and medical professionals as to the need for mitigation strategies for those students under age 12 who cannot receive the vaccine.
- TRSD will encourage and promote vaccines, but it is NOT required.\*

### Mental Health and Well-Being

- We will maintain student emotional health and well-being as a priority. Counseling Team members will meet regularly to identify student and staff needs and supports.
- School-based mental health teams will continue to develop practices that focus on emotional, mental, and physical well-being.
- We will focus on formal school community and classroom team building.

### **Diagnostic Screening and Testing / Learning Loss**

- The district will implement a new diagnostic screening tool through grade 8, to better identify student academic needs in both literacy and math.
- Educators are meeting across grade spans this spring to discuss a review of the 20/21 school year and to make plans for how to start the 21/22 school year to avoid further regression.
- Summer opportunities are being provided and supports will extend into the new year
- We will plan late transportation home for after-school programming and extra help sessions
- Biggest concerns are for vulnerable populations, including special needs, foster children, ELL and minority students

### **Coordination with State and Local Health Officials**

- Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, the district has maintained close communications and a collaborative relationship with local and state health officials.
- TRSD administration will continue to work with local and state health officials to ensure fluid communications in regard to COVID metrics as well as federal, state and local guidance/ requirements for schools.

### **Funding**

- We will use available grant funds to ensure our schools continue to be safe for students and will plan the use of funds accordingly
- Our priorities to determine allocation of available grant funds will be:
  - The potential learning loss for all students, as well as our at-risk sub-group student populations, as identified by clear, reliable, and valid student data;
  - Updates to the infrastructure of our current school buildings and aging facilities to maintain safe and healthy environments for students and staff; and
  - Increased training for staff to support Social Emotional Learning and increased mental health supports for both students and staff.

\*\*<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/school-childcare-toolkit-2021-2022.pdf>