



Weekly Update—Wednesday, July 1, 2020

From June 17 to August 26, Superintendent Elizabeth Domangue will be providing weekly updates (via written communication and virtual meetings) regarding our Restarting School plans and up-to-date information. These written communications will be emailed every Wednesday. The virtual meetings will be every Wednesday from 5:00 p.m. – 5:45 p.m. This will also be a time for staff, students, and families to ask questions.

Happy almost Fourth of July!!!



New Updates:

1. **Weekly Virtual Meeting.** This evening, from 5:00 p.m. – 5:45 p.m., we will host the second virtual Restarting School meeting for the community. I hope you will join us. You will need to download Zoom in order to join the meeting. Here is the link:

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/78636573545...>

Meeting ID: 786 3657 3545

Password: 8RgDqX

Moving forward, I will invite leaders at the school and district level to provide updates.

- July 8—Buildings and Grounds (including cleaning procedures, signage, etc.)
- July 15—Safety and Security (including Captain Randy Perkins, MSFD)

2. **Manitou Springs Elementary School Principal Search.** I know that the quick principal vacancy at Manitou Springs Elementary School, as a result of Mr. Vogel's announcement of retirement, has been important for staff, families, and students. While I initially communicated that this position will be posted as an interim role, I want to share that after having a little more time, I have decided that this position will now be posted as a permanent position.

As we all know, MSES is a special and exceptional school. My decision to shift to a posting for a permanent principal is grounded in the fact that I am confident that we will be able to hold a competitive and thoughtful search/hiring process, which will be open to both internal and external candidates. There will be multiple ways for students, families, staff, and community members to be a part of the hiring process (e.g., student participation, multiple stakeholders on the interview committees, meet-and-greet opportunities). These opportunities will be considerate of current concerns related to COVID, while also not compromising the great responsibility of selecting the next principal of MSES.

I want to assure you that we will seek the best fit for MSES.

To fill the Principal vacancy for the 2020-21 school year, our Human Resource Specialist (Marsha Weimer) will lead a community-engaged hiring process. The specifics for this process will be communicated next week. The process will not be quick. It will be inclusive of stakeholders (students, staff, families, community members). We look forward to you being engaged in this significant decision/opportunity!



Additionally, later today, MSSD parents and MSES staff will be receiving a survey that seeks input about priorities and best hopes. This survey will also ask if individuals are interested and willing to participate in the interview process. Tentatively, we will be scheduling interviews the week of July 27. The community meet-and-greet opportunities will also be held the same week. The events will accommodate and honor in-person experiences while also considering current health and safety guidelines (including opportunities to meet candidates virtually).

If you have any questions about the process, you can reach out to me at (Elizabeth Domangue) at edomangue@mssd14.org or Marsha Weimer (Human Resources Specialists) at mweimer@mssd14.org.

During this time of searching for the next principal, you can direct all MSES questions to Eric McMartin (Assistant Superintendent) at emcmartin@mssd14.org or Maria Masone (Assistant Principal) at mmasone@mssd14.org.

3. We are currently **working towards a return to full in-person learning**. This plan will also include a fully online learning option for students and families who, at the time, decide that learning from home is a better option for their child or family. I know that there is lots of information that comes to us about the health concerns about returning to in-person learning. I am working closely with the El Paso County Health Department through the small Return2Learn team. I want to share an important quote that was recently provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP),

The importance of in-person learning is well-documented, and there is already evidence of the negative impacts on children because of school closures in the spring of 2020. Lengthy time away from school and associated interruption of supportive services often results in social isolation, making it difficult for schools to identify and address important learning deficits as well as child and adolescent physical or sexual abuse, substance use, depression, and suicidal ideation. This, in turn, places children and adolescents at considerable risk of morbidity and, in some cases, mortality. Beyond the educational impact and social impact of school closures, there has been substantial impact on food security and physical activity for children and families.

While the AAP document is a good reference, we are still awaiting guidance and recommendations from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and El Paso County Health Department. The plan we move forward with on August 20 will be honoring of the recommendations.

4. **Remote Learning versus Online Learning. Is there a difference?**

Yes. There is a difference between Remote Learning and Online Learning.

Remote Learning refers to learning opportunities that are similar to the 4th quarter of the 2019-20 school year. To move to remote learning means that we have received public health orders that require students to learn from home. Our staff would then shift to the model of teaching and learning remotely. Remote Learning, we believe, is not a replacement for a student having access to an exceptional in-person learning experience.

Online classes refers to those that do not have any connection to a regular District 14 classroom or teacher. The curriculum, instruction, and grades for these online classes will be the responsibility for the online instructor who will not be a District 14 staff member. These online classes are meant to be a full replacement of traditional in-person learning and classes. Student participation in these online classes will be monitored by staff at each of our schools.

- MSSD will support any family that would like to participate in completely online courses.
- The district will pay the cost associated with a student being enrolled in online courses.



- We will be using Colorado Empowered Learning and Colorado Digital Learning Solutions (CEL/CDLS) as the platform for this coursework. There is also the possibility for students to be enrolled in Fuel Education (which is currently being used at MSHS).
- The grades and credits that are earned through these online platforms will be transferred to District 14 and applied to the students' transcripts and report cards.
- Students who participate in online classes will remain students of Manitou Spring School District and enrolled in our schools.
- If you are a choice family, your status and enrollment in the district will not be impacted if you decide for your child to learn using an online platform.

You might be asking the following question...why would our MSSD teachers not teach these online courses?

This is an excellent question. Our teachers will be teaching students who participate in in-person learning, so it would not be realistic or feasible for them to also teach online courses. We are planning ways for students who participate in online classes to connect with students who are learning in-person. For example, there might be a 5-minute daily check-in via Google Hangout and other ways to stay creatively connected. Again, the district will fully support any parents' decision about their child learning through an online platform.

5. **Hybrid option update.** The hybrid option is described on the last page of this communication. I have received questions from some of our parents about our ability to schedule their children on the same hybrid days. This would definitely be our best hope in the event that we would need to move to this model. The reason we planned for clustered days was to support the impact this model would have on families (as much as possible). The ability to group students on the same hybrid days will require significant collaboration within and across our schools.
6. **Restarting School Survey for Parents.** Next week, I will be providing further updates related to the specific health and safety protocols we will be implementing for each plan: (1) Full in-person and (2) Hybrid. This will allow you to have more information about the specifics of each plan. After that information is shared, you will receive a survey that asks you to provide information about your plans for August.
7. **Staff Return.** If you have any concerns about returning to work, please reach out to Marsha Weimer at mweimer@mssd14.org. More information will be provided in the upcoming weeks as we are still awaiting updates from CDPHE and EPCHD.
8. **Staff Professional Development.** Through the CARES Act monies, we will be able to compensate our licensed staff for 16 hours of professional development/work time. This compensation will be at the district hourly rate of \$25/hour (plus benefits). Licensed staff will soon be receiving more information from their principals. This compensated time has been allocated because we know that the readiness for the start of school on August 20 will be different than any other start of the school year.

I look forward to "seeing" everyone shortly during the weekly update meeting at 5:00.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Domangue
Superintendent of Schools

-----End of July 1 Weekly Update-----
The remainder of this document is information from previous updates.



The information below is from the June 24, 2020 weekly update and is posted as a reference.

1. Communication Tools

Weekly Updates will be posted on the MSSD homepage.

Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/manitouschools/>

- 2. Health and Safety Readiness.** The Building and Grounds Team, Business Office, Safety & Security, and I met to ensure that we are prepared for the start of the school year. This meeting included ventilation, signage, handwashing stations, cleaning procedures, and more. Please know that these are health and safety considerations that our team has been considering for many years. We are adding additional precautions that allow us to have a strong start to the 2020-21 school year.
- 3. El Paso County Health Department** leaders have developed a Return2Learn Team that includes a few superintendents from the Pikes Peak Region, the County's Attorney (Diana Ma), the County's Coroner (Dr. Leon Kelly), and other public health officials. I will be participating in this group as we develop plans related to restarting schools. Information and updates will be shared along the way.
- 4.** Last week, we restarted our summer **Strength and Conditioning** program for high school students. It has been great to see students on campus. The protocols for physical distancing have been in place and students have been engaging in physical activity. We use these opportunities to learn how to refine all restarting plans and implementation.
- 5. Registration in PowerSchool...** This week families who have students returning for the 20-21 school year will receive an email with information on completing the 20-21 Returning Student Registration. The online portal to complete the registration will be opening in early July. You will receive an email once the online portal is open. New families to MSSD will not need to do this as they have already completed their registration.

6. Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) Opportunity & Continuation of Free Breakfast and Lunch Program

This program intends to provide financial assistance to families of children eligible for free or reduced-price school meals who have lost access to food due to the school closures caused by COVID-19. The financial assistance will be distributed to eligible families on new or existing Colorado EBT cards. The average P-EBT benefit is \$5.70/child per day or up to \$279 per eligible child, retroactive to when school initially closed. These P-EBT funds can be used to purchase food at stores that accept EBT.

This benefit is in addition to the grab-n-go breakfast and lunch meals that Manitou Springs School District is currently offering at Ute Pass Elementary School and Manitou Springs High School. Here is the summer schedule:

June—11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.—Monday–Friday

July—11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.—Mondays and Thursdays (You will be able to receive 3 days of breakfast and lunch on those days).

August—11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.—Monday–Friday

Most families who currently receive SNAP benefits will see these funds automatically added to their accounts and no further action is needed.

Other families will need to complete a simple and quick online application in order to receive P-EBT. To complete this application, you must receive a state-issued student ID, or SASID, from Manitou Springs School District 14. <https://www.colorado.gov/cdhs/p-ebt> . Please contact us at pfaucette@mssd14.org or call 719-685-2000 for more information about P-EBT and to receive your student ID.



7. Technology Updates

- a. Working towards 100% of Preschool to 2nd Grade students having access to iPads starting August 2020. Access dependent on when other devices for other grade levels arrive (See b). 3rd-12th Grade students will continue with 1:1 access.
- b. When the ordered laptops arrive, students in 8th-10th Grade will be issued laptops instead of iPads. These laptops include touchscreen functionality. Staff and students will receive training on how to use these new Windows-based devices.
- c. Bring Your Own Device option available for high school students. Contact Cathrine Olimb (colimb@msssd14.org) if your child will be bringing his or her own laptop computer to school for the 2020-21 school year.

The information below is from the June 17, 2020 weekly update and is posted as a reference.

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 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.