

Bigfork School District #38

Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

Date of Adoption: August 19th, 2020

Revision Dates: Sept 9th, Sept 25th, Oct 7th, Nov 11th, Dec 9th, Jan 6th, Jan 13th, Feb 10th, Feb 17th, Feb 22th, Mar 10th, April 14th

HISTORICAL RECORD

Anticipating COVID-19 spreading to the United States, Bigfork School District began Google Level I training for all certified staff and interested classified staff in February of 2020. On March 4th, 2020 the Bigfork Board of Trustees reviewed the Google training details and options to continue instruction virtually in the event there was a local lockdown response similar to other countries.

On Sunday, March 15th, 2020, Governor Bullock issued an executive order to close all in-person instruction. Bigfork Schools started virtual instruction on Tuesday, March 17th. On March 25th, Trustee Anderson made a motion to declare an unforeseen emergency in accordance with Sections 20-9-801 through 20-9-806 MCA, due to the community and school health concerns related to COVID-19 and authorize the administration to take the necessary steps to execute this declaration and implement the Bigfork School District Plan of Action.

Bigfork schools continued to provide virtual instruction for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year with the exception of 1:1 instruction and assessment. On April 22nd, 2020 Governor Bullock lifted the Stay at Home Order, while setting expectations for schools to begin a phased reopening. On May 7th, 2020 schools were provided an option to return to on-site instruction. Despite limited time, lack of PPE and other safety precautions, Bigfork Schools was able to provide some on-site services for our most challenged students as well as gather assessment data for all 3rd – 8th grade students. This data proved valuable for the back to school planning for the 2020 – 2021 school year.

The Bigfork Schools Phased Reopening Plan centered on being able to provide on-site instruction, remote synchronous instruction, as well as a hybrid model of synchronous and asynchronous instruction. The plan incorporated recommendations and requirements from DPHS, FCHD and the CDC to limit exposure and mitigate transmission of COVID-19.

In October of 2020, Flathead County positive case numbers for COVID-19 increased beyond the capacity of the contract tracers for FCHD and KRHC. In an effort to keep our schools open to on-site instruction Bigfork School Administrators were trained and deputized as Flathead County Contract Tracers and served in that capacity through the 2020-2021 school year.

In response to growing political opposition to mitigation strategies implemented by the district and guided by DPHS, FCHD and the CDC, in December of 2020 Bigfork Schools established a

COVID Advisory Committee consisting of board members, staff, and community members. The advisory committee continued to meet through February of 2021 discussing a range of COVID-19 topics mostly related to instituted mitigation strategies and the changing landscape of COVID-19. On February 10th, the Bigfork Board of Trustees approved Policy 1910 extending emergency leave measures through the school calendar year. On February 17th, the board approved a motion to continue with face coverings as a mitigation strategy through March 12th 2021. On February 22nd, the board approved a motion to open all school facilities for regular use on April 3rd. On March 10th the board approved a motion to extend the face covering mitigation strategy through April 9th.

Bigfork Schools maintained on-site instructional opportunities throughout the 2020-2021 school year. Three calendar changes were approved by the board allowing staff additional instructional preparation time and professional development opportunities to respond to the demands of providing on-site instruction, remote synchronous instruction, as well as a hybrid model of synchronous and asynchronous instruction. Additionally, all student activities fulfilled full season schedules through flexible rescheduling of postponed events due to positive cases or quarantines of scheduled competitors.

Bigfork Schools ended the 2020-2021 school year with around 8% of students testing positive for COVID-19 and 26% of staff testing positive for COVID-19.

ESSER FUNDING

Fund Source	Time	BF Elem	BF H.S	Total Funds
MT CRF	March 2020 – December 2020	\$308,262	\$141,474	\$449,736
ESSER I –	March 2020 – Sept 2022	\$137,300	\$48,376	\$185,676
ESSER II – App. Due Sept. 1	March 2020 – Sept 2023	\$478,599	\$178,038	\$656,637
ESSER III – Safe Return Plan Draft due June 24	March 2020 – Sept 2024	\$1,037,026	\$379,559	\$1,416,585

Bigfork Schools uses ESSER II funds to Prevent, Prepare, Respond to COVID – 19. We have a duty to address the past, ongoing and future needs present by COVID -19. All stakeholders have been active in the process throughout the pandemic and continue to assist in driving the planning for our future. We have assessed our school specific needs and evaluated them against allowable uses for ESSER II funds. We continue to study and seek guidance from federal and state agencies including the OPI. Expenditures are as diverse as the complications presented by COVID – 19.

Prevent:

- Hire additional custodial services to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- Purchase PPE to minimize the spread of COVID -19.
- Purchase air purification classroom systems to prevent the spread of COVID -19.
- Assess all HVAC systems for proper ventilation and indoor air quality parameters.
- Conduct a full test and balance of all systems to assess, evaluate and determine a path forward to provide proper ventilation requirements while balancing energy costs.
- Purchase cleaning supplies used to minimize the spread of COVID – 19
- Purchase HVAC filters to minimize the spread of COVID – 19
- Purchase Chromebooks to reduce sharing of technology devices to prevent spread of COVID – 19.

Prepare:

- Purchase hardware and software (i.e. desktops, laptops, Chromebooks, interactive boards and associated software) to assist students and staff through on-site and remote education.
- Hire a communication specialist to assist in keeping community up to date with information related to on-site and remote instruction.

Respond:

- Hire certified and classified staff on additional contracts to address learning loss.
- Hire certified and classified staff to supplant elimination of anticipatory enrollment increases from state funds.
- Hire certified staff to gather student achievement data determining individual and grade level student learning loss.
- Provide supplies for summer school learning programs.
- Hire administrative staff to organize, respond and supervise extended service contracts for classified and certified staff.
- Contract remote learning contracts (i.e. Virtual High School, MTDA) to support remote education.
- Supplement substitute salaries from staff absent due to COVID – 19.
- Purchase curriculum materials to allow for remote education access.
- Hire certified staff to complete additional assignments supporting on-site and remote students.
- Hire mental health professionals to support social, emotional, and mental health needs of at-risk students.
- Respond to schedule changes, travel accommodations and cleaning protocols for student activities.
- Hire ESSER fund audit and legal services.

SAFETY MEASURES

The District is taking the following measures to safely provide in-person instruction, including consideration of guidance by the CDC and state and local health officials as follows:

Universal and correct wearing of masks

On February 17th, 2020 the Bigfork Board of Trustees reviewed Policy 1905 COVID-19 Emergency Measures, Governor Gianforte's February 12th Directive Implementing Executive Order 2-2021 and Flathead County Health Director letter to Flathead Valley superintendents. A motion passed to continue the mask procedure in place until March 12th, 2021. On March 10th the Bigfork Board of Trustees extended the mask requirement deadline to close on April 9th, 2021. Bigfork Schools offers optional face covering.

Physical Distancing

During the 2020-2021 school year all K-5 students maintained classroom grouping by cohort including breakfast, recess, lunch and student entrance and exit of the building. All 6th-12th grade students practiced social distancing and cohort grouping by maintaining seating assignments during lunch and other non-class events. Bigfork High School students will be encouraged to maintain cohort groups by using established break out space during lunch. While physical distancing will be encouraged, cohort groups will not be maintained during the 2021-2022 school year.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

All Bigfork School District employees adopted procedures regarding personnel cleaning and disinfecting in accordance with policy 1905. Additional hand sanitation stations are available at all entry points in the building, water temperatures have been adjusted and monitored and students have been trained on regular and thorough hand cleaning. Educational informational posters and flyers developed by the DPHS, FCHD and the CDC are widely posted within each building. Face coverings are optional.

Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities (including improving ventilation)

Bigfork Schools continues to take a proactive approach in preventing the spread of COVID-19. GenEon mist fogger/blowers are used to sanitize buses, gymnasiums and classrooms. Active Pure Technology air purifiers have been purchased for the purposes of diminishing the spread of COVID-19 in smaller or sustained use spaces. Koch Multi-pleat MERV 13 high capacity air filters have replaced all other air filters on campus. The high capacity filters enhance air quality in the circulation process.

Contact Tracing

Bigfork Schools continues to work with the Flathead County Health Department to identify close contacts of confirmed positive cases. Building and district level administrators have been trained and deputized for contact tracing purposes, making them ready to fulfill all aspects of the quarantine process as needed.

Diagnostic and Screening Testing

Bigfork Schools acts as a conduit and resource for students, staff and community members with inquiries on testing sites or protocols.

Vaccinations

The District will act in accordance with state and federal law with respect to vaccinations for its staff and eligible students.

The District will not refuse, withhold from, or deny a person any services, goods, facilities, advantages, privileges, licensing, educational opportunities, health care access, or employment opportunities based on the person's vaccination status.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

The District will provide accommodations to its policies for students with disabilities as determined appropriate based upon the individual student needs and in accordance with a individual accommodation plan or individualized education plan. Students requiring accommodations should contact their building administrators or Matt Porrovecchio at mattp@bigfork.k12.mt.us to request information on plans for students with disabilities.

CONTINUITY OF SERVICES

The District will provide for continuity of services as follows:

Student Academic Needs

Student progress monitoring will continue at the building level at regular intervals. Students identified as sub-proficient will be contacted for summer school/learning loss opportunities. All students regardless of proficiency status are welcome to participate in summer school/learning loss or course advancement course and programs.

Student Social, Emotional, Mental Health Needs and Other Student Needs

Bigfork Schools continues to offer a tiered system of supports for all students. Students have access to their applicable IEP or 504 plans based on assessed needs. All students have access to regular school counseling services and SAP group supports. Qualifying students will have additional therapeutic services through CSCT or Intermountain. Students and parents will continue to be surveyed to identify food scarcity needs.

Staff Social, Emotional, Mental Health Needs and Other Staff Needs

The Bigfork Board of Trustees amended the 2020-2021 school calendar to include three additional days for staff to prepare and respond to the increased teaching demands of additional instructional preparation time and professional development opportunities to respond to the demands of providing on-site instruction, remote synchronous instruction, as well as a hybrid model of synchronous and asynchronous instruction. Certified staff have been compensated at their hourly rate for additional work beyond their salaried contract. School culture and climate surveys have been administered by a third party organization, which will continue to support the school improvement process and social needs of all staff. Bigfork Schools staff have an opportunity to participate in the SAP and small group therapeutic supports facilitated by counseling and psychologist staff.

PUBLIC INPUT

The District will review this Plan at least once every six months and will provide an opportunity for public input in association with any review of the Plan. The update plan will be posted to the school website and available in printed form at the Bigfork Schools District Office.