

July 23, 2020

## District 60 releases Return to School Plan for 2020-21 school year

PUEBLO, CO – Pueblo School District 60, under the direction of the D60 Board of Education, has announced its Return to School Plan for the 2020-21 school year. The D60 Return to School Plan consists of a mixture of in-person instruction, hybrid instruction, and a 100% virtual learning option. The Plan follows all appropriate health and safety guidelines recommended by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), and local health partners at the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment (PDPHE).

A special Board of Education meeting was held Thursday night, in which the D60 Return to School Plan was presented and adopted, which allows for students to safely return to our schools for the 2020-21 school year.

Students will return to school on Monday, Aug. 31. This change ensures sufficient time for D60 buildings to implement health and safety guidelines, distribute technology devices, and for teachers to prepare for a socially-distanced, blended learning instructional model. Teachers will return on Monday, August 10.

Upon reviewing the Return to School Plan, Board of Education member Judge Dennis Maes said the plan addressed the needs of families, allowing them to ultimately make the final decision about their child's education.

"This plan is incredibly detailed, and can serve as a template for other districts," Maes said. "This plan gives families the choice as to whether they want to return in-person, or do online instruction."

Board of Education member Tommy Farrell added that the plan followed the guidance of public health officials, which should ultimately be the guiding light for any decisions regarding in-person instruction during the pandemic.

"Every step of the way, listening to what our public health officials and epidemiologists are saying is going to be important," Farrell said. "If they say we do hybrid instruction and mitigate the risks, then that's what we should do, even though it creates a burden on our staff and our students."

The following is a high-level overview of District 60's K-12 Instructional Delivery Models for the 2020-21 school year:

- **K-5 students** will have 100% in-person learning four days a week, with health and safety measures in place
- **6-12 students** will have two days in-person learning, and two days of distance learning each week. Each teacher will prepare two in-person lessons and two online lessons each week.
- Pre-K students will attend in-person four days a week (½ day or full-day)
- For families that prefer it, **a 100% online learning option is available**. Please note, for staffing reasons, families that choose this option will be asked to commit to this option by August 7 for a minimum of one semester of fully online learning before being allowed to transfer back to in-person learning.
- **All K-12 students will be issued technology devices**. K-1 students will receive an iPad, grades 2-12 will receive a Chromebook. In-class instruction will incorporate students' technology devices to the extent possible.
- In addition to the technology resources provided, **D60 will provide one cloth mask to every student and employee of the district**.

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Following all appropriate health and safety guidelines recommended by the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment, the Colorado Department of Education, and the Centers for Disease Control, District 60 will incorporate the following practices in all buildings:

- Students and staff who feel ill are required to STAY HOME.
- All students and staff will be required to wear masks to the extent possible.
- Nonessential visitors, volunteers and outside groups will be limited on school grounds.
- Students will be kept in small cohort groups as much as possible.
- Assemblies and group gatherings have been suspended until further notice.
- Social distancing will be observed and practiced to the fullest extent possible.
- Class sizes could vary and bell schedules could be altered to minimize traffic in hallways.
- Regular hand washing for staff and students will be expected.
- Shared items in a classroom/school will be reduced.

The D60 Return to School Plan is the product of intense planning by a Stakeholder Task Force, consisting of approximately 70 teachers, administrators, staff, parents, and students. The Task Force included multiple leaders from both the Pueblo Education Association (PEA) and the Pueblo Educational Support Personnel Association (PESPA).

The School Reopening Plan also took into account the results of a summer survey that included nearly 4,000 responses from D60 families, in which 87% of households indicated a preference for in-person instruction or a hybrid of in-person instruction and distance learning.

Charlotte Macaluso, D60 Superintendent of Schools, shared her personal viewpoint that the decision to re-open schools was based on service to marginalized students that rely on the services schools provide.

“If our schools remain shuttered, there is a real risk of increasing achievement and opportunity gaps,” Macaluso said. “Many of our marginalized students are housing insecure, food insecure, or require a safe refuge from abuse and neglect. Many of our students require special services that cannot be easily provided for online. If our students who are in most need of our school system are denied an opportunity for in person learning, it could have grave consequences for our community.”

Macaluso added, “These are unprecedented times and we must have the courage to implement measures and plans that meet the needs of all of our students to the best of our ability. We know that each family has a personal choice to make when it comes to the educational options for their children. We are striving to adapt to the continually changing conditions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, while also providing equitable access to a high-quality PreK-12 education in a safe environment. We’re confident that the D60 Return to School Plan will accomplish this.”

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