



PALOUSE PRAIRIE
CHARTER SCHOOL

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Remote Yet Connected Safe Return to Palouse Prairie

Working Draft, July 30, 2020

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Background and Context

The Board of Directors and Leadership of Palouse Prairie Charter School are committed to getting students back into the classroom as soon as it is safe to do so. The PPCS Board has approved a “Remote Yet Connected” model, described further below. Upon receiving additional input and receiving Board approval, this plan will be more fully elaborated.

Starting our school year in a remote learning model was not anyone’s vision for 2020-2021 school year. However, we have come to this decision through extensive deliberation and substantial feedback from our families and teachers. We believe that it is the safest and wisest choice in light of the rise of Covid-19 cases in our region, the many unknowns about Covid transmission in a school environment, the unknown long-term impact of the disease on children, and our school’s desire to provide a consistent and dependable program for learning.

This plan described in this document is not yet final. Details will continue to be shaped by information we receive from families and teachers, as well as guidance from the state, the EL network, and other sources. However, we do know the following about our return to school, under this model.

- School will be primarily remote for most students, using a structured model. We will use principles and practices from the EL Network to provide learning experiences that are inquiry-based, dynamic, and authentic.
- PPCS school grounds will be used to provide in-person instruction and childcare to students identified as needing additional support or care.
- Teachers will strive to create in-person time with students as much as safely possible outside of the remote classroom.

Overall philosophy and guiding principles

We recognize the following priorities and limitations:

- Our highest priorities are:
 - The safety and wellbeing of our students, staff, and school community
 - Providing an exemplary education, using the EL model
 - Supporting the social and emotional health of our students
- Because some of our families will not be able or willing to return to school in the PPCS school building until Covid-19 is no longer a threat, having a high-quality remote option for learning is a priority if we are to serve those students and retain those families as part of the PPCS school community.
- Because some students are not able to learn well remotely, or are not able to remain home due to family circumstances, options for in-school care, intervention, and instruction are also a high priority.
- Our school's small size limits our options but increases our ability to be creative in how we teach and support students, including finding ways to supplement a remote learning program with safely distanced outdoor gatherings.

Our reopening plan strives to provide PPCS students with high-quality remote instruction that emphasizes:

- Student, family, and staff health
- Social, emotional and physical wellness through trauma- and culturally- responsive practices
- Supporting and empowering students to succeed in their learning
- Consistency in delivery of educational content
- Ample time for teacher preparation leading to the best possible remote experience.
- Engaging with families to provide supports to best meet the needs of their students.
- Crew interactions with peers and teachers in the true spirit of EL Education
- High quality instruction for English language arts (ELA) and math
- Depth of learning through expeditions that cover social studies, humanities, and science content and reinforce major ELA standards

Remote Yet Connected - Details and Questions

The *Idaho Back To School Framework 2020* presents a Full Distance/Remote Learning option when a community is in both Category 2 (Widespread or sustained transmission with high likelihood or confirmed exposure within communal settings with potential for rapid increase in suspected cases) or Category 3 (Substantial Transmission is defined as large-scale community transmission, healthcare staffing significantly impacted, multiple cases with communal settings like healthcare facilities, schools, mass gatherings, etc.).

IDENTIFY LEVEL OF TRANSMISSION/RISK

Level of Community Spread	Learning Model	Response
Category 1 No Community Transmission	Traditional	School buildings open
Category 2 Minimal to Moderate Community Transmission	Traditional	School buildings open
	Hybrid/Blended	Limited/Staggered Use of School Buildings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targeted Closure - Short-term Closure (1 to 4 weeks) - Mid-term Closure (4 to 6 weeks)
	Full Distance/Remote Learning	Minimal Use of School Building - Limited in-person instruction for special education and special needs populations
Category 3 Substantial Community Transmission	Full Distance/Remote Learning	School Buildings Closed for Extended Period of Time (longer than 6 weeks)

Source: *Idaho Back to School Framework*,

<https://sde.idaho.gov/re-opening/files/Idaho-Back-to-School-Framework-2020.pdf>

As of July 18, according to [CDC Guiding Principles](#), full-sized, in-person or smaller in-person groups without full compliance of six-foot distancing is considered a “highest risk” situation. PPCS has a deep desire to mitigate this risk while providing the richest academic and social-emotional education for our students. Given this desire and the expected dynamic nature of the pandemic throughout SY21, PPCS is preparing to offer a high-quality fully remote learning plan for our students.

What Will Remote Yet Connected Learning Look Like?

PPCS staff is prepared to maximize the quality of our remote learning by emphasizing live and pre-recorded lessons, while providing in-person support as needed, possible, and safe. We know that families benefit from consistent schedules and regular communication - and these are high priorities for this fall. In addition,

- Most students will be taught remotely by PPCS teachers, using an online learning platform (eg. Google Classroom)
- PPCS teachers will provide high-quality teacher-created remote instruction and engagement for CREW meetings to prioritize social-emotional interactions and needs in the true spirit of EL Education; Expeditions that cover Social Studies, Humanities, and Science content areas as well as reinforce Math and ELA major standards;;
- Office Hours for students and parents to seek additional academic and social-emotional supports.
- **Social-emotional learning** will be prioritized in the planning process. Ideas include, but are not limited to:
 - Meet (in-person and/or virtually) in small groups. These meetings could occur in various safe formats (i.e., following all public health protocols for preventing viral spread including outdoors, masks, 6-feet social distancing, etc.).
 - Meet individually (in-person and/or virtually) under the same safety scenarios above
 - Small-group meetings at PPCS and/or on PPCS campus
 - Small group meetings in a park or other open space, or when necessary/requested, teacher visits to students’ outdoor home space (i.e., yard, porch, sidewalk). As weather conditions permit, CREW meetings and expedition learning activities will be offered in outdoor settings as much as possible.

Meeting the needs of students who are a Priority for In-Person Learning & Care

We know that learning remotely is challenging for many students - and can be especially difficult for some. For this reason, we will prioritize space for in-person learning, intervention, and care for students who require this additional support. These categories will be better defined in cooperation with families, our teachers, and guidance from the state, but will include:

- Indoor space in the PPCS building may be reserved for students with identified needs who require in-person support to fully attend to learning to meet with appropriate staff as needed to support their academic and social-emotional needs.
- Indoor space may also be prioritized for younger students (K-2) to meet with peers and teachers, as they tend to struggle the most with remote learning and will likely need the most support socially and academically.
- Child care may be offered during school hours on an as-needed basis. Child care enrollment will be restricted due to limitations in space available to maintain 6-foot social distancing at all times. Staff will provide support for students in grade-level remote learning plans, lunch and physical activity.

Next Steps

Upon receiving your feedback and getting final approval by the PPCS Board of Directors, the Director and Staff of PPCS will continue to fill in key components of the “Remote Yet Connected” plan, including making decisions about:

- The length of time that we commit to this initial plan (trimester or semester) before reassessing
- Criteria for identifying students who need in-person support
- How to best tailor in-person support for those students who may need them.
- The specifics of our online learning management system, resources and technologies to support PPCS teaching and learning
- Specific protocols and guidelines for consistent in-person meet-ups outside school
- Information about safe transport for students to locations outside of school or to the school building
- Our staff capacity for accommodating priority in-person student needs
- Early warning system for teachers and staff to help identify and monitor for needs as they pop up and shift
- Clear expectations and “handbooks” for families and teachers to ensure clarity of expectations in the Remote Yet Connected model

Appendix

This Plan was Prepared by the PPCS Rapid Response Task Force

The Rapid Response Task Force (Jeneille Branen, Renee Hill, Lauren Crawford, Mike Connell, Stacey Hust, Amy Ball, and Jessica Bearman) met for many hours over the course of two weeks, working as a whole task-force and in smaller groups to hammer out these options for your review.

Sample Information Consulted

As we worked through these scenarios, we drew from a wide variety of information, including:

- Family Survey Data & Staff Survey Data
- Guidance from CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and others
- Moscow School District's planning
- Idaho-specific (and Latah County specific) data presented by U of I researchers, Craig Miller and Holly Wichman: [Covid-19 and Scientific Considerations for Opening Schools in Moscow](#)
- Many articles, studies, and plans from other charter schools, school districts, and the EL network, including its [flex curriculum](#) for remote learning

The Remote Yet Connected option was approved by the PPCS Board of Directors on July 27. The slides shared during that meeting can be found here: [PPCS Board Meeting Deck](#).