

Zion Lutheran School

Terra Bella

COVID-19 Mitigation Plan and Waiver Application

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Waiver Application Cover Form	3
General Overview	5
School Overview	
Management of the School	6
Staff and Students	7
Supporting Documentation	7
Waiver Criteria	
Consultation	8
Elementary School Reopening Plans	
Cleaning and Disinfection	9
Cohorting	10
Entrance, Egress, and Movement Within the School	10
Face Coverings and Other Essential Protective Gear	11
Health Screenings for Students and Staff	11
Healthy Hygiene Practices	12
Identification and Tracing Contacts	13
Physical Distancing	13
Staff Training and Family Education	15
Testing of Students and Staff	17
Triggers for Switching to Distance Learning	18
Communication Plans	18
Continued Evaluation of Virus Mitigation Plan	19
Summary	20
Signature Page	21

Waiver Application Cover Form

Background Information

Name of Applicant: Zion Lutheran School

School Type: Faith-Based School

Number of Schools: 1

Enrollment: 25 (K-6, not including 7th and 8th)

Superintendent Name: Tim Day, Chairman, Board of Parish Education

Address: 10341 Road 256, Terra Bella, CA 93270

<i>Grades/Number of Students:</i>	TK	K	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th
	0	4	5	4	2	4	0	6

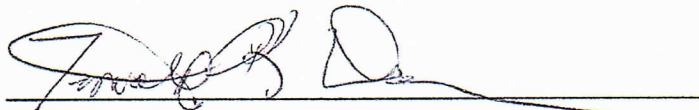
Date of Proposed Reopening: Virtual school begins August 13th
If waiver approved, in-person begins September 1st or as soon as possible after approval.

Name of Person Completing Application: Tim Day, Chairman, Board of Parish Education
Steven Schultz, Elder, Church Council

Phone Number: (559) 310-9575

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Signatures:


Tim Day


Steven Schultz

Date: August 17, 2020

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Since the spread of the COVID-19 virus began to infest our local communities earlier this year, the staff of Zion Lutheran Church and School began an aggressive approach to dealing with and mitigating the potential effects of the virus on the children and staff of our church and school. Our direct approach, we believe, has assisted the school and church to maintain and record no known cases of the virus among our students, staff, or congregational members.

As the State was determining which counties should be placed on the watch list, the decision was obviously made utilizing the epidemiological data for each respective county. No county is alike, and the data certainly reflects that diversity. This diversity resulted in some counties, such as Tulare County, being placed on the watch list, while others were not. However, understanding that each county is different in terms of its demographics and epidemiological data, it should also be considered that each community within the county is diverse as well. For example, the city of Visalia, located in Tulare County, has a much larger population, an extensive number of positive COVID-19 cases, with numerous rest homes or elder care facilities where the virus has shown some aggressiveness. On the other hand, the Terra Bella community is much smaller with only a handful of home-based elder care facilities and few positive cases of COVID-19.

According to the most recent epidemiology data, there are only about 3 communities in all of Tulare County that have fewer positive results than Terra Bella. It should also be understood that although the address of Zion Lutheran School is recorded as being in Terra Bella, our school is located about 4 miles east of Terra Bella. Therefore, it is even further away from the sparsely populated areas in the Terra Bella community.

As we began to plan and prepare for the upcoming 2020-21 academic year, the staff has been diligently working on a virus response plan that would continue to mitigate the virus and provide our students and staff with a healthy, caring, and effective learning environment. With that, we are confident that our current efforts and our future plans meet the general requirements and recommendations as stated within the *COVID-19 INDUSTRY GUIDANCE: Schools and School-Based Programs* document released by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) on July 17, 2020.

The *Zion Lutheran School COVID-19 Virus Mitigation Plan* includes our current operations and planned methods for mitigating and responding to the various issues regarding the virus. With our proactive and comprehensive efforts, Zion Lutheran Church and School is requesting a waiver of the criteria so that we may begin school in the fall term with in-person instruction rather than virtual learning.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Zion Lutheran School is a K-8 elementary parochial school located approximately 4 miles east of the small community of Terra Bella. The school is physically located in an agricultural area, nestled within orange orchards, far removed from a multitude of residents in a high traffic area. Students do not have to be members of the church. Enrollments are comprised of students whose families are both members and non-members of the congregation.

For the past 111 years, the school has been an integral part of the mission and educational offerings of Zion Lutheran Church. The school is primarily funded and supported through the generous donations of the congregational members, with a portion of the costs to support the school coming from tuition paid by non-members of the congregation.

Management of the School

The school is managed, supervised, and operated in a manner that involves a variety of individuals and committees, rather than being managed solely by a school principal. In fact, Zion school does not have a principal or superintendent. The daily operations of the school are managed and monitored by the Board of Parish Education, which meets regularly to discuss all related issues affecting the school.

The chairman of the Board of Parish Education is primarily responsible to serve as the conduit between the school, the various governance committees of the church, and to the congregational members themselves. The Board reports to the Church Council, and the Church Council is ultimately overseen by the congregation's Voters Assembly.

In addition, the current president of the school's Parent Teachers League (PTL) is a member of the congregation and serves on the Church Council, Board of Parish Education, and Voters Assembly. The PTL meets monthly and provides an environment for the parents to discuss the operations and activities of the school. Part of the PTL president's responsibilities is to represent the families of the students to the congregation's governance committees, i.e. Board of Parish Education, Church Council, Voters Assembly.

Finally, the pastor of the church provides ecclesiastical supervision of all matters within the school and congregation. In addition, he also teaches religion classes for the upper grade students, offers a weekly chapel service for the school, and provides input and guidance into the daily operations of the school.

As indicated above, the management of the school includes input and involvement from a variety of individuals, committees, and councils, in addition to the parents. The result of this broad-based involvement is a school that maintains a comprehensive approach to its management with substantial input from all constituency groups.

Staff and Students

The staff of the school includes two full-time teachers and two part-time aides. The classes are taught in two multi-grade classrooms with the K-3 grades in one room and the 4-8 grades in another room. In addition, adjacent to each of those two rooms is an additional classroom that can be used for individual instruction and schoolwork, tutoring, or other activities.

Since Zion is a private, parochial school, there is no faculty union. In addition to teaching classes, the faculty are involved in most aspects of the curriculum and activities within the school and Zion has enjoyed a committed and dedicated teaching staff over the years.

The school does not provide bus services. Students are transported to and from the school by their parents, other family members or friends of the family. Since the school does not have a cafeteria, snack, or food services, students bring their own lunch and snacks to school.

Currently, there are 25 students enrolled in the K-6 grades for the 2020-21 academic year, which equates to approximately 12 students in each classroom. There are also three students enrolled in the 7th grade and 3 students in the 8th grade; however, Zion understands that the waiver applies only to grades K-6 and we will adjust our curriculum and activities accordingly. The students in 7th and 8th grades will continue with virtual instruction until such time the State allows in-person instruction for their grade levels.

Since the classrooms were built during a time of robust enrollment, the small number of students in each classroom, as compared to public schools, easily allows for adequate and effective social distancing while maintaining an effective learning environment.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Per the request of the Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency, the following documentation is either attached or explained. Hard copies of meeting minutes are available, as necessary.

- Confirmation that the elementary school reopening plans have been published on the website of the local educational agency (or equivalent). Reopening plans must address the components in the CDPH guidance for schools and school-based programs.

The Zion Lutheran School COVID-19 Mitigation Plan is available for review on the church and school website at www.zionterrabella.org. The plan is a comprehensive plan that includes and addresses all of the components in the CDPH guidance document.

- Verification of approval by the school governing board or agency of waiver request.

As several iterations of the plan were being developed, they were shared with the members of the Church Council, the governance council that includes the Chairman of the Board of Parish Education, current president of the Parent Teachers League (PTL), in addition to other officers and congregational members. The Church Council has monthly meetings and provides general oversight responsibility over the Board of Parish Education. Minutes of the recent Church Council meetings show discussions pertaining to the development of the plan and are available upon request. The final draft of the plan was approved at the Church Council meeting on Sunday, August 16th.

- Documentation of consultation with the following stakeholder groups – labor, parents, community.

The faculty and staff at Zion Lutheran School are not part of a labor union. Therefore, consultation with the staff is through regular weekly meetings with the Chairman of the Board of Parish Education. Parents also participate in the Parent Teachers League (PTL), and the current president of the PTL is an active member on the Church Council and serves as the conduit between the parents and governance bodies of the school and church. Minutes of the Church Council meetings confirm his participation on the council. In addition to the regular PTL meetings, the chairman of the Board of Parish Education consistently and routinely communicates with the parents via email, text, and phone conversations.

WAIVER CRITERIA

CONSULTATION

As noted above, since Zion is a parochial school, there is no faculty union or labor organization that represents the staff. The teaching staff holds weekly meetings during the academic year with the chairman of the Board of Parish Education. These meetings include topics regarding all aspects of the curriculum and school operations.

With the current involvement and interactions of relevant stakeholders, including staff, church members, committees, boards, parents, and the pastor in the daily activities and overall guidance of the school, the implementation and administration of the industry guidance recommendations will be offered and managed in a comprehensive and effective manner.

Communication is ongoing and an integral aspect of the monitoring and overview of all programs, services, and activities within the school. Recent parent surveys conducted by the

Board of Parish Education showed overwhelming support of the parents for their involvement and the communication within the school.

Since the school has no labor organization that represents the staff at the school, the consultation with staff is generally maintained through the various boards and councils that oversee the activities of the school, such as the Board of Parish Education, Church Council, and Voters Assembly.

Zion Lutheran Church and School takes very seriously the potential effect of the virus and will work cooperatively with all stakeholders and aggressively to manage and deal with any issue related to COVID-19.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REOPENING PLANS

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Zion has implemented an aggressive cleaning and disinfecting process. As noted earlier in this report, the janitor cleans, disinfects, and sanitizes on a daily basis the surfaces and objects most often touched by human hands, such as bathrooms, desks, countertops, doorknobs, and faucets handles.
- With respect to the other assigned duties, cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects are now the primary responsibility of the janitor. The teachers and aides also assist the janitor in cleaning those areas that students come in contact with during the instructional day.
- The introduction of outdoor air is attempted whenever possible. For example, when appropriate and able, doors to the classrooms, offices, and other facilities are left open to allow for ventilation. In addition, the cooler air filters have been changed and they are inspected and cleaned frequently to allow for proper filtration.
- The church recently purchased a portable multi-purpose sanitizer similar to those used in bars and restaurants. The machine is like a fogger that can be transported to each of the rooms and the room sanitized via the mist that is extracted into the room's atmosphere. This machine is now part of the daily efforts to sterilize and disinfect the various rooms used on the church and school facilities.
- All products used by the janitor are under lock and key and are only used by the school staff. Therefore, all materials or chemicals used are out of the children's reach and are stored in a room with restricted access. The Church Council has committed itself to ensure that adequate funding in the budget is appropriated for the ongoing cleaning and disinfecting needs of the facilities.

- In an effort to minimize the risk of the COVID-19 virus as well as Legionnaire's disease or other water-related diseases, the water fountains have been shut off. The PTL will purchase bottled water for the students.

Cohorting

- As can be seen in the grade enrollment distribution numbers on the waiver application form, there is an average of only about 5 students per grade. With that, students will be grouped together for most of the classroom activities within their respective grades. In addition, lunch, recess, and other activities are generally offered per grade level.
- The grades are broken down into two main classrooms. The lower grades (K-3) are in one classroom and the upper grades (4-6) are in the other classroom. Each classroom has one teacher and one aide. The groupings of the grades and/or classrooms will be stable and activities per each grade and room are completed in their respective groupings.
- The groupings are such that one classroom grouping of students is not part of and does not comele within the other grouping or cohort.

Entrance, Egress, and Movement Within the School

- When students enter the campus, or when they are waiting for transportation home from school, markers are placed on the concrete to indicate where a student may stand as she or she is waiting. These markers are placed 6 feet apart to ensure proper distancing.
- Outside and inside of each classroom, spaced markers are placed on the flooring 6 feet apart to provide a guide where students should stand when waiting to go into or out of their classrooms for lunch, recess, or other school activities.
- Parents have also been instructed to utilize the spaced markers throughout the campus and facilities to ensure they properly distance themselves from other students, parents, or staff members.
- During the instructional day, cohorts are generally not mixed in with or part of the other cohorts. In addition, since the main classrooms are fairly large, coupled with the smaller

grade sizes, there is more than adequate enough facility space to maintain distancing at all times.

Face Coverings and Other Essential Protective Gear

- Following the recent directives of the governor, face coverings will be required for students in grades 3-6, unless otherwise exempt due to health, hearing, or other factors. Although the younger students (K-2) will be recommended to wear a covering, determination of that will be on a case-by-case basis.
- For those students who come to school without a face covering, a disposable mask will be provided to them and the parents will be contacted and encouraged to ensure their children come to school with an adequate face covering. No child in grades 3-6 will be allowed on campus without a mask or face covering. However, since the school is committed to ensure all students receive a daily education, Zion will provide disposable masks to students, as necessary.
- Proper use and care of the face covering is taught in the classrooms so that students are aware when they need to wear one, how to clean it, where it should be stored, etc.
- Signs are currently posted on the doors and gate that enter the campus indicating that face coverings are in compliance with the current state recommendations for all students, staff, parents, and visitors to the campus facilities. No one is allowed into the campus facilities without wearing a face covering.
- The campus does not have a cafeteria or food booth so students bring their own lunch; however, students are directed to not share their food with anyone.

Health Screenings for Students and Staff

- The health and safety of our students and staff is paramount at Zion. With that, students will receive a daily temperature check at the school entrance gate using a touch-free thermometer upon entering campus.
- Parents will be required to wait for their child to be checked in and social distancing will be observed at the gates as they wait for their child.
- Any student with a temperature that exceeds the 100.4 limit will not be allowed to enter the school and will be sent home. If a student develops a temperature during the day, the parents will be contacted and asked to pick their child up from school.

- No student who has been tested and found positive for the virus will be discriminated against. And students will not be penalized for missing a class because of their illness.
- The chairman of the Board of Parish Education will serve as the coordinator designated to work with local county health agencies when a student or staff member receives a positive COVID-19 test result. He will also assist county health officials with tracking the virus and provide any assistance or support necessary while the health officials conduct their investigation.

Healthy Hygiene Practices

- During the previous academic year as the virus became more ingrained in our daily lives, all students, staff, and parents were taught about personal hygiene and what practices they should utilize that will mitigate the spread of the virus. Proper hygiene is now part of the ongoing curriculum of the school and daily practices are implemented for all students and staff. Students are shown how to effectively wash their hands, cough, and sneeze into their elbows, etc. Posters and other materials are distributed throughout the classrooms and facilities that highlight and emphasize these practices.
- Students and staff are now asked to wash their hands upon entering or leaving campus, following recesses, before and after lunches and restroom breaks, and other activities during the school day. Teachers are encouraged to reinforce the washing or sanitizing of hands as they continue throughout the day of classes and activities, and to serve as models to their students by practicing these methods themselves.
- Ethyl alcohol-based hand sanitizing bottles are placed strategically throughout the campus and church facilities. When staff or students are not able to wash their hands in a particular location they may find themselves in, they are encouraged to use the sanitizing liquid from one of the bottles.
- The janitor has been trained on what methods of cleaning and sanitizing are necessary to ensure a safe and healthy environment. The surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as bathrooms, desks, countertops, doorknobs, and faucet handles are thoroughly cleaned in preparation for the following day.
- As noted above, the Church Council has committed itself to ensuring that the janitor be provided with adequate supplies of soap, sanitizers, tissues, and other items that may be necessary in order to support proper hygiene and cleanliness.
- The K-3 classroom maintains individual cubbies for students to place their lunches, coats, or other personal items. Parents are encouraged to clean and sanitize personal items each day after school or before the next school day.

- Sharing is discouraged. Similar to their lunches, students are encouraged not to exchange any classroom materials, laptops, cell phones or other items with a fellow student. Equipment or other items that are shared between students will be cleaned and sanitized by the staff, and parents, where appropriate.

Identification and Tracing Contacts

- The Zion Lutheran Church and School staff is supportive of the efforts to identify and trace those who may have been in contact with a person identified with the virus. The chairman of the Board of Parish Education is the designated staff member who serves as the contact with the local health agencies.
- The Chairman of the Board of Parish Education will develop a list of names of those at the school site who have been exposed to the virus when a confirmed case has been identified. This list will be shared with the local public health agency to assist in the tracing process.
- The Chairman will also be responsible for communication with the exposed person in terms of the protocols and practices that will be implemented due to their exposure.

Physical Distancing

- Since the total enrollment at Zion is around 25 (K-6, not including grades 7 and 8), and since classrooms were added when enrollments were in the high 80s, distancing inside and outside of the classroom is easy to achieve and maintain. There is much more space available and unused due to the lower number of enrollments as compared to past years.
- Based on the current number of students enrolled for next school year, the maximum number of students in a classroom will be around 12. Since each of the classrooms can potentially hold up to 30-35 students, this less than half-capacity allows for the desks to be spread apart, easily meeting the 6 feet distancing recommendation.
- Sidewalks where students normally wait to enter the buildings are being painted with the logo of the school, placed 6 feet apart to ensure social distancing as students are waiting in line.
- The Church Council is discussing the purchase of plexiglass shields, or building clear screens, that can be placed around each of the student desks. These shields will allow the students to visually interact with their teachers and classmates while reducing the possibility of spreading the virus to others in the classroom.

- In response to the recent mandates, and in an effort to reduce or mitigate the spread of the virus, a couple of instructional classes or learning opportunities are being discontinued. Zion has maintained a small band of a handful of students, in addition to a small children's choir. Both of these will be suspended until such time we are able to offer them again.
- There has been discussion regarding moving more of the instructional activities of the school to the outdoors. Zion has a football field size area, in addition to a playground area and a small park in which more activities could be moved, weather permitting. Distancing requirements are expected regardless if the activity is indoors or outdoors.
- The school does not provide any contact sports and is not a member of any sports league or athletic club. The activities during recess will not include or allow for physical contact with other students.
- The school does not have a cafeteria, so students bring their own lunch. Students, however, are not allowed to trade food with other students. During most of the school year, students eat their lunch outside, not in the classroom. When sitting with their friends during lunch, the students are expected to sit 6 feet apart from each other, and the staff is expected to do the same while eating theirs.
- A chapel service is provided and is a part of the established weekly curriculum just like any other subject our Christian school offers. The only difference is that chapel is held in the church, while the other subjects are held in their respective classroom at the school. Chapel is held once per week in the church sanctuary, across the street from the school, for about 30 minutes. As we have done recently for our church services, the chapel could certainly be held outside in the school park weather permitting, and if need be. The brief service includes a message from the pastor, his readings of creeds, Bible verses, saying prayers, and announcements the staff may need to share with the students relating to the upcoming week of school. The building capacity of the church sanctuary where chapel is offered is almost 500. There are two main sections of seating in the sanctuary and two side wings for additional seating. With such a large facility, and with small enrollments, social distancing in the sanctuary is easy to maintain. In addition, the two classroom groupings of students will be seated with their group, on opposite sides of the sanctuary, and not mingled in with the other classroom. And within each grouping the children will sit in the pews at least 6 feet apart. They will remain separated from each other.
- During the chapel services, offering baskets that were normally distributed among the children will now be placed in a stand near the exit of the church for students to place their offerings into. Normally it does not, but if a chapel service utilizes a special service

folder or bulletin for its order of service, these folders or bulletins will be disposable and discarded after the service. The church building will be regularly sanitized and disinfected before and after the chapel. All attendees in the chapel, where required, will wear a mask. In addition, each attendee in the chapel service will sanitize his/her hands when entering and exiting the sanctuary.

Staff Training and Family Education

- As noted earlier, the chairman of the Board of Parish Education maintains weekly staff meetings with the pastor, teachers, and aides to discuss all areas of the school's operations. During this meeting, he brings in appropriate information about the virus and methods of mediation. Training is an ongoing, weekly effort. During these training sessions and/or staff meetings, the 6-foot distancing requirement is easily met.
- Each family will be provided a copy of the document "*Checklist: Planning for In-Person Classes*" found at the following website: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus. This document is a checklist that provides a wealth of information for the parents related to the virus and what they can do to help mitigate any exposure by their children, including when to keep their child at home, sanitation practices, social distancing and why it is important, how the virus is spread and how to identify the symptoms of the virus, identifying the school's point person relating to virus issues, etc. This handout and other virus-related flyers and information sheets are posted in the classrooms, multipurpose room, church and school office, and on the main bulletin board found at the entrance/exit of the school. At the beginning of the CDC checklist, it indicates that parents should check their child each morning for signs of illness. Zion will do that, too.
- As already noted in this virus mitigation plan, anyone entering the facilities, including students, parents, staff, volunteers, and visitors, will have their temperature taken with a touch-free thermometer. The staff at Zion will not allow a child with a 100.4 temperature to attend school that day, nor will a staff member, volunteer, or visitor be allowed on campus who has this high of a temperature. When dropping their child off at school in the morning (Zion does not provide transportation), the parents or guardians have been instructed to wait until their child's temperature has been taken before leaving the facility. Any child with a high temperature is directed back to their parents or guardians who are waiting for their child's results.
- In addition, regular communications with the parents via emails, phone calls, and text messages also provide an opportunity to educate and update parents and families accordingly. Since our enrollments are low, personal contact via the telephone is also part of our communication process. In an effort to reduce personal contact, email, text, and phone calls are better and more appropriate forms of communication than meeting

face-to-face. Through email, text and phone calls, information can be provided as necessary while avoiding the potential risk of spreading the virus.

- The PTL is also an avenue in which parents are educated as to the efforts the school, county, state, and nation are taking in response to the spread of the virus.
- The families at Zion were recently provided a letter, followed up with a text and phone call, indicating the various methods the school will be taking next school year in response to the virus. These communications with the families are ongoing and have been proven to be effective. With a small school with fewer families, communication within our school can be more personal, enhanced, and easy to maintain.
- As noted previously, Zion has a variety of ways in which to contact and notify parents if their child becomes ill or if there has been an exposure to the virus on or off campus. With a total enrollment of only around 25 children, and fewer family units, personally contacting the responsible parent or guardian of the children is easily maintained. In most cases, the parent or guardian will first be called personally on the phone. The school office, teachers, and Board of Parish Education chairman keep a phone log of each family enrolled at the school. Then, if contact is not made via a phone call, a text will sent, and finally, an email. In the morning hours, the administrative assistant for the church and school is the primary person who will make the contact with the parents or guardians. In the afternoon when she is not working, the teacher or aide of that classroom will make the contact. Due to our small size, Zion enjoys a close relationship with the families of our children, and personal communication is quite easy to maintain. Zion also uses social media as an avenue to utilize when contacting all of the parents at once. Facebook, group emails and Parent Teacher League (PTL) remind group texts, and the church and school website may be utilized when a blanket announcement needs to be sent to all of the families of children.
- The school currently only employs two full-time teachers and two part-time aides. The total enrollment in the school is organized into two classrooms. One room holds the K-3 grades while the 4-8 grades are in another classroom. There is one full-time teacher and one part-time aide assigned to each classroom. One of the part-time aides is a certified and credentialed elementary school teacher who recently retired from Zion after over 30 years of full-time teaching at the school. She continued working at the school as a part-time aide because of her love for the school and its children. If one of the two full-time teachers becomes ill, she is the person called to provide classroom coverage temporarily. Since she has been teaching part-time through this pandemic, she has participated in training sessions and staff meetings and is certainly aware of the signs to

look out for and what to do or not do in terms of mitigating the effects of the virus. If an aide becomes ill, the full-time teacher can cover the class without the aide present.

Testing of Students and Staff

- The health and safety of our students and staff is paramount at Zion. With that, all staff will be tested at least 14 days prior to the start of school. Then, the staff will be tested periodically at specific intervals during the academic year as recommended by the local public health agencies.
- Since Zion is a small school and does not have the benefit of employing a nurse or health care professional, staff and volunteers are directed to their own physician or to one of the qualified testing sites in the area to be tested. Although the arrangement has not yet been finalized, a pharmacist in the Porterville area has mentioned that he is available to provide testing for our staff on a volunteer basis. We will be working on that possibility. In the meantime, the Church Council at Zion has committed the church to fund out of its operating budget any testing costs that may be incurred by the staff members and volunteers. After the testing has been completed, the staff person or volunteer will submit the receipt of the costs of testing to the church and school administrative assistant for reimbursement.
- Students will receive a daily temperature check at the school entrance gate using a touch-free thermometer upon entering campus.
- Parents will be required to wait for their child to be tested and checked in and social distancing will be observed at the gates as they wait for their child.
- Any student with a temperature that exceeds the 100.4 limit will not be allowed to enter the school and will be sent home. If a student develops a temperature during the day, the parents will be contacted and asked to pick their child up from school.
- No student who has been tested and found positive for the virus will be discriminated against. And students will not be penalized for missing a class because of their illness.
- The chairman of the Board of Parish Education will immediately notify the parents, school staff, and local health agency if there is a positive case of COVID-19 found at the school. At the same time, however, this notification will take into consideration the right of privacy and maintenance of confidentiality.
- When a student, staff member, or visitor to the campus exhibits any symptoms of COVID-19, they will be directed to an area where they can be isolated from the campus and asked that they call someone to pick them up from the campus. While they are

waiting for transportation to home or a health care facility, they will be expected to continue wearing their mask. If the symptoms they display are much more serious in nature, 9-1-1 will be called.

- The isolation area where they are sent to wait for transportation will be closed off so that no other staff persons, students, or visitors may enter. Once the person has been picked up and taken off campus, the isolation area will be immediately disinfected and sanitized accordingly.
- The person who was sick will be advised that he/she may not return to campus until they are able to complete the protocols of home isolation and have had at least 3 days with no fever, the symptoms of the sick person have improved, and it has been at least 10 days since the symptoms first appeared.

Triggers for Switching to Distance Learning

- When there is a confirmed case of the virus on the school premises, the Chairman of the Board of Parish Education will follow the established communication protocols, including the immediate notification of the local public health agencies.
- In consultation with the public health agencies, and in reviewing the tracing and other epidemiological data for the local vicinity, the Chairman will determine, at the recommendation of the public health agency, whether or not to close the school. The chairman will then notify the Church Council of the proposed recommendation and action taken accordingly.
- At a minimum, the classrooms, or other offices in which the person may have worked will be closed off and disinfected, and the room placed off limits for at least 24 hours after disinfection has been completed.
- Since there is adequate space within our facilities, the classes may be moved to another location in the school while the affected classroom is disinfected.
- Two confirmed cases within a 14-day timeframe will result in the immediate closure of the campus.

Communication Plans

- The chairman of the Board of Parish Education will serve as the coordinator designated to work with local county health agencies when a student or staff member receives a positive COVID-19 test result.

- The chairman of the Board of Parish Education will also assist county health officials with tracking the virus and provide any assistance or support necessary while the health officials conduct their investigation.
- When there is a positive case of COVID-19 found at the school, the chairman of the Board of Parish Education will immediately notify the parents, school staff, and the local health agency. At the same time, however, this notification will take into consideration the right of privacy and maintenance of confidentiality.
- In an effort to prevent further cases of individuals on campus contracting the virus, the chairman of the Board of Parish Education, in coordination with the Board and the Church Council will review, modify, and upgrade procedures and protocols in the event someone on campus has contracted the virus. When procedures or protocols are updated, the chairman of the Board of Parish Education will be responsible for ensuring that parents, students, and staff are notified accordingly.

CONTINUED EVALUATION OF VIRUS MITIGATION PLAN

The staff at Zion Lutheran Church and School takes very seriously the health and safety of our children, staff, volunteers, and congregational members. The implementation of this plan will include more than merely providing the various activities that are noted above. Rather, we realize that our commitment to such a plan should include a comprehensive and ongoing evaluation of the various aspects within the plan. With that, our continued evaluation will include:

- The Chairman of the Board of Parish Education will coordinate the review of relevant data and information from the federal, state, and county public health agencies relative to our local mitigation efforts. If necessary, our plan may need to be adjusted based on this data. In addition, this data will be shared with all the stakeholders at the school.
- If the review of appropriate data and discussions with the public health agencies may required a modification to this plan, the Chairman of the Board of Parish Education will forward his recommendations to the Board, in addition to the Church Council and Voters Assembly.
- The Board of Parish Education will continually engage the relevant stakeholders of the school to evaluate the activities within the plan and adjust or modify as appropriate. Consistent contact will be made with the parents to keep them informed of our mitigation efforts. Our contact with the parents will also include obtaining their personal suggestions, concerns, or positive comments regarding the implementation of this plan and our efforts in support of our students.

- This mitigation plan will be one of continual review and improvement, not a document that sits on the shelf gathering dust.
- The Chairman of the Board of Parish Education will coordinate the implementation and review of the plan with the Church Council and, ultimately, the Voters Assembly of Zion Lutheran Church and School. At a minimum, monthly reports will be submitted to these bodies and councils by the Chairman of the Board of Parish Education as to the positive aspects of our efforts in addition to areas of improvement we need to address.

SUMMARY

There are several reasons why our school would be most appropriate for a waiver in order to provide students with in-person instruction:

- Our campus is located in a sparsely populated agricultural area four miles east of the Terra Bella community that has had limited exposure to COVID-19.
- Zion has recorded no infections of the virus on any of our students, staff, or volunteers.
- With the small number of the enrollments on campus, coupled with the large size of our classrooms and facilities, we are easily able to maintain social distance, both inside and outside the classroom.
- Since the number of individual families enrolled at the school is small, we are able to maintain appropriate and effective personal contact with the parents of our children and able to respond immediately to any related issues or concerns.
- The church and school have already implemented many of the required or recommended virus mitigation efforts, such as staff wearing face coverings or masks, outdoor services and classroom activities while maintaining social distance, sanitizers distributed around the facilities, the purchase and use of foggers to sterilize and disinfect rooms, posters, flyers and notifications to education staff, parents, and children regarding the virus, required washing of hands, etc. With these and other measures, our staff, volunteers, congregational members, and students, are already familiar and comfortable with such virus mitigation activities.

As noted above, our church and school leadership are dedicated and committed to ensuring a safe and healthy environment for our students and staff. With that, we take the mandates and recommendations of our local public health officials seriously and will diligently work to follow the guidelines and protocols, as necessary.

The signatures below signify that this plan has been reviewed and approved by the various Boards, Councils and committees at Zion Lutheran Church and School that are responsible for the oversight and administration of the elementary school. These signatures also attest to our overall support and approval of the Virus Mitigation Plan and our commitment to ensure that the plan is fully implemented.

Jedediah J. Sanders
Jedediah Sanders, President of the Parent Teachers League