

Please Note: These minutes are pending Board approval.
Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting held virtually on July 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

M. Ku, Chair	L. Rodrigue
D. Delia, Vice Chair	A. Uberti
D. Cruson, Secretary	R. Bienkowski
D. Leidlein	1 Staff
J. Vouros	1 Press
R. Harriman-Stites	60 Public
D. Zukowski	

Mrs. Ku called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. from the municipal center where it was being recorded and live-streamed. All Board members were on video except for John Vouros who joined by phone. Staff on video were Dr. Rodrigue, Mrs. Uberti, Mr. Bienkowski and Dr. Purcaro.

Item 1 – Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Ku asked that the Verkada camera discussion be moved to the end of the meeting after the re-entry presentation.

Item 2 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the consent agenda which includes the minutes of July 7, 2020, the donation to the Sandy Hook School Music Department, and the correspondence report. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 3 – Public Participation

Dennis Brestovansky, 11 Longview Heights Road, spoke about the Verkada camera lease payment. He referred to comments in the June 2 Board meeting video and didn't think pre-payment was a good move. It's better to put that money into the non-lapsing fund. It's no real benefit to taxpayers and the future was highly uncertain now. He also noted the change in the Board of Finance non-lapsing fund policy and suggested adding "taxpayers" to the wording because that's who the money belongs to.

Katherine Burke, 48 Taunton Hill Road, thanked the re-entry committee for their time and effort. She asked if the presenters could share what the virtual option would look like if children stayed home.

Item 4 – Reports

Chair Report: Mrs. Ku said that they attended the Board of Finance meeting where they discussed the policy they are considering with a discussion of the procedure for the non-lapsing account. There was a lot of comparing from the 2014 Board of Finance minutes to those we passed in recent years and thought there might be a conflict. They also talked of having a joint meeting with the Board of Finance and Board of Education and having a memorandum of understanding regarding the Education non-lapsing account.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites asked the purpose of the meeting between the two boards and the charge. Mrs. Ku wasn't sure of the charge but they want to discuss what the procedure is and be sure our policy is in line with what they see as the procedure they approved in 2014. It would be a working committee on this policy.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Rodrigue said she was hosting a Community Conversation around diversity and equity and will include the resolution. We have close to 50 staff and community members joining. There will be a discussion tonight about another change to the school calendar and emphasized the importance of staff training in the fall.

Committee Reports:

Mr. Delia reported that he attended his first EdAdvance meeting today where they discussed the grant they received for space for their Head Start Program in Plymouth.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said the Policy meeting last week went through personnel policies including racial harassment and the new diversity and equity policy which will be presented to the Community Conversation group. They are also finalizing the pandemic and distance learning policies.

Mr. Delia stated he did a high school walk-through with Bob Gerbert and Allen Adriani from the Sustainable Energy Commission and thanked Bob for taking the time to do that for us as he did learn a lot.

Item 5 – Old Business

Policy 4-102 Health Examination – Initial Employment of Personnel:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve rescinding Policy 4-102 Health Examination – Initial Employment of Personnel. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said this is no longer appropriate as other districts don't require physical examinations and this will save money also.

Motion passes unanimously.

Item 6 – New Business

Presentation of the Re-Entry Plan:

Dr. Rodrigue spoke about the formation and work of the Re-entry Committee. She feels strongly that the Newtown community will continue to demonstrate a collective effort to work toward returning students to school with safe and reasonable standards of care and precaution. Our task was very clear to develop a plan with all models of re-entry based on the State plan and how this would be safety operationalized in accordance with our own buildings and classrooms. She thanked all of the members of our staff and community who worked tirelessly on this committee which had a very rigid timeline.

Two surveys were sent with the first to obtain feedback regarding distance learning and the second to gain a confidence level of returning to school in the fall. Another one will go out in early August to get a more accurate count of students returning in the fall. Our plan was made to be flexible and fluid responding to changes that may occur, and there is a collective responsibility that is critical for everyone to follow. We have an improved distance learning model and have mapped out the need for academic and social/emotional supports for students. The plan also includes requirements, recommendations by the State, and other precautionary measures.

Mrs. Uberti and Dr. Purcaro presented the plan.

Mrs. Uberti began by speaking about the six guiding principles from the State's plan which directed school districts to return to school full-time with in-person instruction in the fall.

Connecticut is at low risk which is why the Governor made this decision. Should the community spread increase with a moderate risk, we would adapt the hybrid model, and if there is

widespread community transmission with high risk, all schools will be closed and we would go to the distance learning model.

We organized our plan around six pillars which include Governance, Wellness, Instruction and Technology, Social/Emotional Learning, Facilities, and School Operations. The focus of the Governance Pillar was to establish the vision and priorities of the plan, oversee its development, and ensure effective coordination of the plan. One requirement was to appoint a District COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison and she will be in that position. Nurses will serve as building liaisons. Communication will be very important and the Superintendent will continue to update the Board, meet with community groups and PTA Presidents, as well as hold office hours for parents, staff, and the community. We also plan to send weekly updates to the school community as well as have them posted on the district website.

The Wellness Pillar focuses on promoting the health and well-being of our community and to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff which is the most important consideration of this plan. An important factor is training staff and students on protocols on sanitation. Nurses will provide training presentations for students and families. There will be a screening checklist for parents to use at home before leaving for school.

Dr. Purcaro spoke about the Instruction and Technology Pillar which includes planning for a full-time reopening in the fall and provisions for students who will remain home as they will be required to do remote learning instruction. We will be identifying learning gaps as well as equity, inclusion and access in regards to online instruction for all students. Professional development time will be used to give teachers time to address student learning needs at the start of the school year. The three modes of learning were explained. They include on-site learning, hybrid learning, and full distance learning.

Mrs. Uberti spoke about the Social/Emotional Learning Pillar to ensure students, parents and staff are supported as we transition back to school and that students have the opportunity to develop a relationship with their teacher. SRBI teams will review data to identify students in need of extra support and develop plans for them so that no child is left behind. We will look to other groups like our Safe School Climate Committee to create opportunities for students and staff that support hope, wellness, and optimism.

The Facilities Pillar focused on identifying practices and resource to protect the health and safety of students and staff. They worked to develop clear safety expectations including, but not limited to, safety devices, PPEs, cleaning and sanitizing, signs, and ventilation.

The School Operations Pillar focused on creating a logistics plan that supports a safe, organized transition back to school which includes planning for building usage, outdoor spaces, athletics, and transportation.

Mrs. Ku thanked everyone on the re-entry committee for their hard work. This is an amazing plan.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites appreciated being part of this committee and asked about purchasing what we need and if there was any talk from the State assisting us with the costs.

Dr. Rodrigue meets weekly with the Superintendents and Fran Rabinowitz so we are ordering supplies and haven't run into any problems. She has that outlined in the financial information. Mrs. Leidlein asked if there were guarantees that we will receive the materials prior to the beginning of school.

Dr. Rodrigue said we were working on the dividers and desk shields through a company in Danbury. They feel confident we will get what we need. Other items include signage, face shields and face masks.

Mr. Delia asked about State funding and if masks are mandated by the State if we had to pay for them.

Dr. Rodrigue said there would be some funding for that but is still unclear of how much. Part of that will be the CARES funds.

Dr. Rodrigue said the Board of Education is an entity of the State so she believes the State should be providing the PPE for the schools.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites felt we should write to the State as a Board stating they should supply us PPE.

Mrs. Ku would work on that with Mrs. Harriman-Stites.

The question of quarantining was raised. Dr. Rodrigue said we will be working closely with our Director of Health regarding whether a whole family has to quarantine. There will also be thresholds about what constitutes the closing of a classroom, a building or an entire district. Legislators and senators are looking to speak to the Governor and Commissioner of Education to be sure they clarify that to the public.

Mr. Vouros asked what was happening with the Pre-K program and if parents would be responsible for making sure temperatures are taken before children leave the house to get on the bus.

Dr. Rodrigue said Pre-K students would stay home if they aren't feeling well or have a temperature.

Mrs. Uberti said that evaluations are in place for our Pre-K students so we are going to offer that program. They are awaiting further guidance from the state.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites asked the threshold for staff not returning to school and the reasons.

Dr. Rodrigue said there are clear guidelines in terms of age and underlying medical conditions. Human Resources is dealing with staff who have come forward. That also includes a staff member who lives with someone with a medical condition. There will be some who need accommodations.

Mr. Delia asked if someone came in contact with a person who had the virus would they have to work from home.

Dr. Rodrigue said they would have to work virtually from home.

Mrs. Uberti stated they would have to have a substitute teacher in that room. We have also increased the number of subs per school.

Mr. Delia was concerned about the subs and not being able to secure them.

Dr. Rodrigue said Human Resources was putting out a survey to all of our subs to understand their comfort level. The other thing is to go out into the community through our PTAs to help. She feels we'll be okay but it is a concern but too early to tell. In terms of payment, we raised the pay for subs a year ago.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites wants the public to understand why we are going with the full school model and if we would consider the hybrid model.

Dr. Rodrigue said our numbers are the lowest in Connecticut which is why we are looking for a full, all in. We have a solid plan but there are still challenges ahead.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said the State is requiring us to go with the all in model.

Dr. Rodrigue said this was out of our control. We were not able to choose the model.

Ms. Zukowski asked if class assignments would be influenced by families who opt to stay remote.

Mrs. Uberti stated that we are going to be looking at a few factors for teacher placement. We have to prepare for a hybrid so we are establishing cohorts. Also, we are looking at a balance of students for teachers with students in school and those getting instruction at home.

Mrs. Leidlein felt that social distancing has to have an effect in the classroom. She asked if the teachers will have time to discuss the way of teaching with these requirements and have adequate planning, collaboration, and PD time to meet the instruction criteria in the classroom. Mr. Delia worried that teachers would be overwhelmed and have to change models. He wants them to have what they need to deliver the curriculum.

Mrs. Uberti said we all have that concern. This is not going to be perfect and we will need patience from parents and teachers. We want to start working on a concrete plan to support students and want models on how a lesson can be delivered.

Dr. Rodrigue said there will be a shift in what teachers are doing in the PLCs to discuss the changes needed.

Mr. Vouros referred to the substitute issue and was concerned we won't have enough.

Mr. Delia agreed.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites referred to the delivery of the curriculum. We have to support teachers with social emotional issues and there are resources for them. She feels we should have the wellness Wednesday in all models. She also asked if there would be a deep cleaning on Saturdays.

Dr. Rodrigue said it will just be Wednesdays. She expects to be in frequent contact with Board and the community as things may change rapidly.

Mrs. Ku said we will need information on substitutes. We need to send the plan to the State by Friday.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the Newtown Public Schools Re-Entry Plan Fall 2020. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mr. Delia was in full support of the plan and thanked everyone.

Motion passes unanimously.

2020-2021 School Calendar:

Dr. Rodrigue said that multiple Superintendents approached the State about whether they would consider reducing the minimum number of school days to 177. Originally, the State was not going to offer that but since then, they reversed their position and allowed districts to add three days of staff training at the beginning of the year. She proposed to move the student start day to September 3rd with Thursday and Friday as half-days and focus on the protocols with students.

Ms. Zukowski felt if we have to transition between learning models it might make sense to have a staff development day between those transitions.

Dr. Rodrigue said they had that same conversation but it has to be in the beginning of the year. Mr. Vouros asked if it made sense to have Thursday and Friday as professional development days and have the students start after Labor Day.

Dr. Rodrigue felt it was better to use those two half-days to work with students before they come back from the break.

Mr. Cruson was concerned with dropping below the 180 days and was struggling with an education gap. He didn't want to drop below the 180 days and would rather add a day at the end.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved to adjust the school calendar to include Wednesday, September 2 as an all-day professional development day and the students first day of school will start on September 3 as a half-day. Mr. Vouros seconded. Vote: 6 ayes, 1 nay (Mr. Cruson)
Motion passes.

Item 5 – Old Business (continued)

Verkada Camera Lease Payment:

Mrs. Ku said the payment was approved at the June 2 meeting to pay down the remaining three years of the Verkada lease. At the last meeting we approved holding the payment check until this meeting so another motion is needed. There are three options which include sending the check for \$374,797.44, reissuing a check for an amount covering the third year of the lease only, or rescinding the motion of June 2 which would result in no payment at all. We need to clarify the amount to cover the third year only.

Mr. Bienkowski contacted Verkada and asked if we made one payment could it be applied to the third year but the person he had spoken to earlier left the company and the new individual was unable to give him an answer. He sent him an email explaining the situation so he is waiting for an answer.

Mrs. Ku said the previous arrangement was we would have to pay all three years.

Mr. Bienkowski said an advance payment would come off the final fifth year.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved to cancel sending the pre-payment check for the Verkada camera lease.

Ms. Zukowski seconded.

Mr. Delia originally was not in support of this motion. We are not receiving any financial benefit from Verkada and he didn't think it was the right decision. We will need this money for the re-entry and he will push and work with the Board of Finance to make sure this money goes into the non-lapsing fund to be used for returning to school.

Ms. Zukowski said she voted for using the funds as long as we don't use the money for something else. It can go into the non-lapsing fund and be used for charges for returning to school and, if not used for COVID recovery, we can use it at the end of the year and pay off the Verkada lease.

Mr. Cruson referred to the budget surplus for expenses for re-entry and needed all of the numbers to make a decision.

Mrs. Ku said there are still unknown costs which we need to keep in mind.

Dr. Rodrigue and Mr. Bienkowski reviewed the financial information.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites stated we would ask the Board of Finance to put \$600,000 into the non-lapsing fund because without it we would not be able to handle the known costs we have. She asked where this money would go if they don't approve our request.

Mr. Bienkowski said it would go into the Town's fund balance.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites stated that if she votes against making the payment the money would go into the non-lapsing account for unknown expenses but there is no guarantee.

Mrs. Leidlein said even if we make the Verkada payment we still have well over the amount anticipated we have to pay for the Covid expenses in our schools.

Mr. Bienkowski said there would be approximately \$500,000 left.

Ms. Zukowski said if we have anything left after paying for Covid she would put that into our non-lapsing account to build the budget back up.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites agreed with Ms. Zukowski and stated that future years will be difficult budget years. Having \$125,000 removed from budget does help. For the good of the Board and of other Boards she would support the motion.

Mr. Delia was not in support of making the payment is because we aren't receiving a financial benefit from Verkada. He was also concerned if something happens with the cameras when we've already paid them.

Mrs. Ku initially supported it because it would be reducing the amount of tax burden in future years. Her concern is the Covid expenses have been the focus of our surplus. She wants to make sure we clarify whatever we put in is for educational needs in the future and not just for Covid. Special education costs are a very good reason to do that. She will support the motion in good faith that we will be supported in our action this evening.

Vote: 5 ayes, 2 nays (Mr. Cruson, Mrs. Leidlein) Motion passes.

Item 7 – Public Participation - none

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved to adjourn. Mrs. Leidlein seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 8 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Daniel J. Cruson, Jr.
Secretary

**Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting held virtually on July 7, 2020 at 6:45 p.m.

M. Ku, Chair	L. Rodrigue
D. Delia, Vice Chair (9:09 p.m.)	A. Uberti
D. Cruson, Secretary	R. Bienkowski
D. Leidlein	2 Staff
J. Vouros	2 Press
R. Harriman-Stites	8 Public
D. Zukowski	

Mrs. Ku called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. with Board members joining virtually and members of the public joining by phone. The meeting was also being recorded. Board members on video were Michelle Ku, Dan Cruson, Debbie Leidlein, Rebekah Harriman-Stites, Deb Zukowski, and John Vouros by phone. The staff attending included Dr. Rodrigue, Anne Uberti, Ron Bienkowski, Frank Purcaro, and Bob Gerbert.

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education go into executive session to discuss the Superintendent's contract. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 1 – Executive Session

Executive session ended at 7:08 p.m.

Item 2 – Pledge of Allegiance

Item 3 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mrs. Leidlein moved that the Board of Education approve the consent agenda which includes the minutes of June 16, 2020 and June 25, 2020 and the correspondence report Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 4 – Public Participation

Item 5 – Reports

Chair Report: Mrs. Ku was adding two Board meetings on July 21 and August 4 due to the amount of work we will address to get our schools open in the fall. When Sandy Roussas came to our meeting regarding the fund balance policy she offered to attend their meeting for their follow-up discussion which she, Dr. Rodrigue and other Board members attended. Ned Simpson explained why the education non-lapsing fund should be under the capital projects and non-recurring fund heading and the Board of Finance added the description of the account so it now indicates this is a Board of Education's Education Non-lapsing Fund. The special session of the legislature next week will address security officer accountability and wanting to remove all SROs from the schools. She, Chief Viadero and Dr. Rodrigue sent a letter to members stating how important they are for our students.

Dr. Rodrigue explained SROs are School Resource Officers which are police officers who work with students and families if there is a disciplinary action so they are the first point of contact with the administration. SSOs are security officers who are armed but not part of the police department but part of the Board of Education. They work with students but are there for security. We want our students and families to be comfortable working with the police.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Rodrigue was sending families a communication on the re-entry plan on Thursday and provide a timeline and an opportunity for parents to meet with her. This will also include a survey for parents to indicate the option of sending their children back to school or keeping them home and also if they will utilize our transportation. This letter would also include work with our discussions with high school students and invite parents to a

community conversation on diversity and equity. We are also entering negotiations for the administrators contract. We started our ESY summer school program this week and thanked the entire special education department and Deb Petersen. They had to overcome obstacles to be sure students were safe.

Committee Reports:

Mrs. Harriman-Stites reported on the Policy Committee. They are discussing the distance learning policy and also going through personnel policies with one to be rescinded this evening.

Mr. Cruson said the Communications Subcommittee met yesterday and their newsletter will go out later this week. We discussed our next newsletter in November and decided to focus on work being done toward equality and diversity. Dr. Rodrigue will write an article on the district vision and there will be articles on what we will be teaching and the goals.

Mr. Bienkowski reported that the CIP, Facilities and Finance Subcommittee met and Attorney Matt Ritter was there to discuss the non-lapsing fund and he was going to develop a regulation on things discussed. We also reviewed the CIP and the committee finalized it for tonight's meeting. Also, he decided to make the salary adjustments approved at the previous meeting a budget adjustment.

Item 6 – Old Business

CIP:

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education approve the Board of Education CIP. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded.

Mr. Bienkowski referred to the third page of the CIP which included notes on the various projects. All projects with the exception of four were moved forward by one year with a 6% construction inflation factor added to the previously approved plan. The committee was in agreement with these.

Mrs. Ku would like to see the property next to Hawley School be included in a later year given we are seeing increased enrollment and we should be prepared to deal with an increase. Ms. Zukowski said it's a question of whose authority it is to put it on the plan. The Board of Education is not allowed to buy property. It would be on the shoulder of the Board of Selectman regarding real estate purchasing.

Mrs. Ku asked who would put it on the CIP.

Ms. Zukowski said if the Board of Selectman doesn't support it, it won't be considered.

Mrs. Ku said this is a 10-year plan and she wouldn't depend on the same people being in office then. She was willing to give up her quest if no one else was interested in doing that.

Mr. Vouros felt it should be brought up every year. The school and PTA stated why we need it and he is in complete agreement with Mrs. Ku.

MOTION: Mrs. Ku moved to amend the 10-year CIP to add back the Hawley project in year six. Mr. Vouros seconded.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites felt year six seemed like an expensive year. It might make sense to put it earlier on the plan.

Mr. Bienkowski said whenever the property gets developed it would completely be off the table. Mrs. Ku suggested changing it to year five.

Mr. Leidlein said this was never on the Board of Education CIP before. If the Board of Education approaches the Board of Selectman to ask to look at it together that seems a better approach than taking up funds in the CIP just to entertain a conversation that might not have any legs.

Mr. Vouros felt we should ask Dr. Rodrigue each year to approach the First Selectman with reasons why it should be purchased.

Ms. Zukowski said this could be something the Facilities Committee would handle to get more information.

Vote: 6 nays Motion fails.

Vote on main motion: 5 ayes, 1 abstained (Mrs. Leidlein off screen) Motion passes.

Budget Adjustments:

MOTION: Mrs. Leidlein moved that the Board of Education approve the budget adjustments related to salary adjustments. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded.

Mr. Bienkowski stated that these take into account the salary adjustments made at the June 16 meeting.

Motion passes unanimously.

Policies:

MOTION: Mrs. Leidlein moved that the Board of Education approve Policy 5145.14 On-Campus Recruitment. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites received comments and included suggested information.

Ms. Zukowski asked why the last sentence in paragraph three was removed regarding the Board posting information about these school options on its website.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said we didn't want to lock us into putting everything on the website and wanted the policy to be in line with our current practice. Parents can contact school counselors for information.

Ms. Zukowski questioned why the ESSA information was being deleted in the box on the first page and the added wording above it.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said that is just background information for the Policy Committee.

For the added statement, we felt like the language covered that parents should have to re-opt out annually. That's a better approach rather than have things fall through the cracks.

Vote: Motion passes unanimously,

Policy 5145.2

MOTION: Mrs. Harriman-Stites moved that the Board of Education approve Policy 5145.2 Activism and Dissent. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said there were a few changes made adding the word "school" before days on the first page and on the second page removing the word "false" in #4 and "imminently" in #5.

Motion passes unanimously.

Item 7 – New Business

Preliminary Distance Learning Survey Results:

Dr. Purcaro spoke about the results of the survey and mentioned the number of responses by grade levels. This will help us make informed decisions for the re-entry plan.

Mrs. Uberti said one of the reassuring things about this survey is there are definite themes that are consistent with anecdotal information we have been receiving. It is clear what the priorities are as we plan for the fall. The majority of the comments overlapped with the questions and the

same themes were present. A couple of people reached out regarding the lack of a schedule or accountability that had to do with grading. Teachers found it added more to their plate because they found students were not responsible completing assignment or available for live sessions. There were many positive comments on teachers and how credible it was. There were some inconsistencies or specifics to family situations.

Mr. Cruson said the survey results confirmed that the lack of live teaching was a big point for many and he hoped we can improve by having more live lessons.
Mrs. Uberti agreed.

Ms. Zukowski asked if the Board could see the entire survey and answers.
Mrs. Uberti said it's very hard to see it visually because of multiple responses for many questions.
Mrs. Ku said that seeing the actual format would be helpful.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites was not surprised with the results. She asked if there have been conversations with staff if we have distance learning again.
Mrs. Uberti said we are moving at a different direction and will be prepared. There was a lot of anxiety for teachers and students. We are hoping to create model lessons for what an effective on line lesson will be for teachers and students.

Dr. Rodrigue said we've had these conversations from the onset. It definitely was not just the technology. Teachers were feeling the same way as parents in the end. We will make sure there's a balance so scheduling lessons works for everyone.

Re-Entry Plan:

Dr. Rodrigue pointed out some highlights of the state plan which provides flexibility and includes requirements and recommendations. The three phases are based on current, future and changing health trends. All students will return in the fall. The hybrid model is 50% distance learning and 50% in person.

We have to be prepared for all three plans and we will have to articulate what those phases will look like. We have to maximize social distancing. All principals have been instrumental in this part of the plan and Bob Gerbert has looked for spaces in the buildings for the six foot distancing. Facemasks are mandated and that will make the difference in how parents feel sending children back. Another critical piece is training for staff prior to the opening of school so they have a depth of understanding what social distancing means and what to do if a student takes a mask off as well as the cleaning protocols. We need to move to another phase if necessary. Another requirement is cohorting to keep students together by grade level. There are a lot of interpretations on this. We are supposed to be creative in how we apply the recommendations and mandates. With buses, you may want assigned seats by grade levels sitting together. Our re-entry committee is meeting weekly with six subcommittees including Governance, School Operations, Facilities, Wellness and Mitigation, Social Emotional Learning, and Instruction and Technology. We have already defined work days next week to work on a final draft. She will have dates for parents to meet with her to talk about the plan. We just sent out a survey to staff with questions about returning to work and factors if someone needs to work remotely.

Ms. Zukowski said page 19 talked about illness and staying home. Once illness enters a household it finds a way to each person. Is there any discussion about quarantining at the household level and can it change from distance learning and then back?

Dr. Rodrigue said the state will be providing guidance around thresholds for different situations in households and possible quarantining the classrooms. We are in the process of getting state guidance on the answers for different scenarios.

Mrs. Ku said Donna Culbert has been in these discussions and it will be largely up to her and health professionals on how we deal with these situations.

Dr. Rodrigue will make sure it's clearly articulated in the plan.

Mrs. Ku said it's due to the state July 24 and will come to the Board on July 21.

Dr. Rodrigue will have a draft to the Board to review and have time to send questions or comments.

Mrs. Leidlein asked if there will be a mechanism where parents could access information regarding cases to make decisions for their families.

Dr. Rodrigue said she has had discussions with Donna Culbert on this and she will revisit that with her. It would be helpful for parents to have that information. She thinks it will be very public.

Mrs. Ku said the state has indicated that once you submit the proposal there will be revisions and updates, which is reassuring.

Dr. Rodrigue stated they want us to be prepared for the three phases.

2020-2021 Calendar:

MOTION: Mrs. Harriman-Stites moved that the Board of Education approve the revisions to the 2020-2021 school calendar. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Dr. Rodrigue said this change speaks to the re-entry plan and training requirements for staff. Some districts were even looking at reducing the 180-day requirement to make it possible to put in days for staff training. We need time so she proposed we use the opportunity with our 182 school days to start students two days later which doesn't change end date. Students would report on September 2nd and teachers would use those two full days preparing for students to come back to make sure all protocols and safety mechanisms are in place. It would reduce students to 180 days but doesn't change rest of the calendar.

Motion passes unanimously.

First Read of Policy 4-102 Health Examination – Initial Employment of Personnel:

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said we found most districts do not require a health exam prior to employment. We decided to rescind this policy which would also help save the district money.

Payment of Verkada Cameras:

Mrs. Ku said at their meeting last week the Board of Finance added the Board of Education prepayment on the Verkada cameras and asked if we could rescind that decision since the check has not been sent yet. She asked the Board of Finance Chair if she had any further comments. We received one from Matt Mihalcik and Keith Alexander who shared that returning students to school could change the financial needs of the district.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites read comments from the Board of Finance members and watched the video. They had some of the hesitation around the prepayment that we had. She asked if anything changed that would add to the discussion we had on this topic.

Mrs. Ku said they expressed a lot more concern about specific aspects than our conclusion on the matter.

Mr. Bienkowski said when we talked about the balance in the non-lapsing account because the award was made for the engineering firm for the Hawley School project, our account was decreased by \$249,900 and not the original cost of \$300,000 so our non-lapsing account has increased by \$50,000. This happened after the Board of Finance discussion.

Ms. Zukowski wanted to be sure we have the correct balance available today in the non-lapsing account and the expected cost for COVID recovery for our next budget year. The amount we have to spend for COVID pandemic is going to eclipse what we have in the non-lapsing account and current year expected balance. The amount was estimated at \$1.2M and asked what the numbers were now.

Dr Rodrigue said the \$1.2M was not related to COVID expenditures but how much was in the non-lapsing account. We are in the process of putting that together.

Mr. Bienkowski said the current balance in the non-lapsing account is \$270,000. The current estimate in the current year is about \$800,000 so we are above a million dollars. We have the Cares Act for \$130,000, the NOVO balance of \$16,000, and the operating budget balance for the Verkada payment in 2020-2021 is \$125,000.

Mr. Vouros said that based on all discussions with the Re-Entry Committee there has been no discussion of how much money we will need to spend to enact the plan and have no idea until the plan is finalized.

Dr. Rodrigue understands the concerns. We spoke with Verkada that there would be no other savings. The only positive is to pay that year in advance to offset the operating plan in that year.

Mr. Delia jointed the meeting at 9:09 p.m.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said the Board of Education had a lengthy conversation about this issue and to assume we didn't think about all of the aspects is troubling. The action we took was in line what other boards have been asking us to do and look at the future. Taking \$125,000 of the budget the next couple of years makes financial sense. She would not be in favor of rescinding the previous decision.

Mrs. Ku said we can have a motion to hold the payment for a period of time.

Mr. Bienkowski said the payment is on the books now and was generated before the end of June so it would be recorded. The check is in his office and will not be released until everyone is in agreement. It's been booked as an expense.

Ms. Zukowski said in that respect there wouldn't be a problem to wait until we know the expenditure for the re-entry plan. She sees no reason why we can't wait two more weeks to see the cost for the re-entry.

Mr. Cruson asked when we had to make the decision for our transfer to the non-lapsing account.

Mrs. Ku said that takes place in August.

MOTION: Mrs. Zukowski moved to hold the check until our next meeting. Mr. Vouros seconded. Mrs. Leidlein was not opposed to this motion but asked how realistic it would be for us to have numbers in two weeks regarding what will happen in the fall. Things could reverse themselves. At what point do we say that's an incredible amount to spend and that the cost outweighs the benefit.

Mrs. Ku said this action is consistent with the idea repeatedly expressed by other boards to pay things off as we go. She understands the Board of Finance feels we would need this for COVID expenses.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites would be willing to wait until the next meeting. She believes in showing good faith between boards. She watched the video and was disappointed with interaction between the Board of Finance and Board of Education and is concerned about the lack of faith in our decision making.

Mr. Delia didn't support the motion but supports the Board's decision and that it was important to stand by our decisions. He feels like the decision was made and it was made by a group of people that debated it and voted.

Vote: 4 ayes, 3 nays (Mr. Delia, Mrs. Leidlein, Mrs. Harriman-Stites) Motion passes.

Resolution Regarding Equity and Diversity:

Dr. Rodrigue feels this is a good starting point. She spoke to many students and alumnae as well and has had honest conversations with family members who have shared some experiences they have had in the community and schools related to racism and bias. She thanked Dr. Ku and Mrs. Harriman-Stites who helped with this resolution.

MOTION: Mrs. Harriman-Stites moved that the Board of Education approve the resolution regarding equity and diversity. Mrs. Leidlein seconded.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites felt this was a very good start and grateful this was coming forward and read the resolution.

Ms. Zukowski said it was well-written and thorough but had a question on the fourth bullet on page two and including bullying and harassment.

Dr. Rodrigue said the thinking behind that bullet was that we wanted to frame racism to make sure there was a clear protocol and highlight racism separate from other areas.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites felt the feedback from the community was around the lack of safe clear protocol around racism. We want people to be safe to report these incidences. There is a feeling of mistrust, that trust needs to be built, and this is a step to do that.

Mr. Cruson thought we already had a protocol in place for these items.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said there is an anonymous tip line but not about racism. We recently updated our racial harassment policy and will look at that again.

Mr. Cruson said this sounded like we didn't have anything in place.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said we have a mechanism for reporting it but not recording it.

Dr. Rodrigue said this resolution isn't about what we don't have. We may have protocols in place but this says we will do this in a consistent way.

Mr. Cruson said if we have mechanisms in place it is better to resolve to review and refine mechanisms to modify the language in the fourth bullet.

Mrs. Ku said this point is to make it clear students feel safe about reporting things.

Mr. Cruson felt there is a misconception that things are missing which we already had in place. Saying "review and employ" would be alright.

Mr. Delia loved the resolution but thought there should be a timeline when we will get this work done.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites liked that too but that would mean Dr. Rodrigue having to look at it again.

Dr. Rodrigue said she has not seen that in a resolution. However, she sees this as the framework with ongoing updates.

Ms. Zukowski said in bullet four the public is holding the district administration and Board of Education accountable. She asked if there would be a protocol in reporting the incidents to the superintendent and the Board of Education if we are held accountable.

Mrs. Ku did not have an objection.

Ms. Zukowski wants the Board of Education to be informed.

Dr. Rodrigue said we keep all of that data.

Mrs. Leidlein said we are discussing a very timely resolution. We could request from the administration a quarterly report as to the progress being made and reports coming in with the anonymity of students being maintained. This doesn't need to be part of the resolution but just give Dr. Rodrigue the directive to do this.

Mr. Delia said regarding reporting to the Board, he was concerned because we serve as a board and information could come to us before we need to have it which would make it difficult, for example, for us to serve at a grievance.

Mr. Cruson referred to bullet one and felt these are items not in the purview of the Board of Education, but for the administration.

Mrs. Ku said we have oversight over the district but curriculum does come to the Board. We have purview over all of these things but can delegate to the superintendent.

Mr. Cruson said it should say "support the development of academic pathways...."

Mrs. Ku reviewed the three changes which are adding "supports the development of" in bullet one, adding "records and reports" to bullet four, and adding "review and employ" to bullet five. Vote on the motion with these changes: Motion passes unanimously.

Item 8 – Public Participation

MOTION: Mr. Cruson moved that the Board of Education go into executive session regarding the evaluation of the Superintendent and invite Dr. Rodrigue. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 9 – Executive Session

Executive session began at 9:57 p.m.

Item 10 – Public Session

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education extend the employment contract of Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue as Superintendent of Schools, through and including June 30, 2023, and MOVE FURTHER that the Board Chairperson be authorized to finalize and execute the employment contract with Dr. Rodrigue for the period July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2023. Mrs. Leidlein seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved to adjourn. Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 11 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Daniel J. Cruson, Jr.
Secretary

THIS DOCUMENT HAS A MULTI-COLORED FACE THAT CHANGES COLOR GRADUALLY.

SEE LIST OF SECURITY FEATURES ON THE BACK. DO NOT CASH UNLESS ALL ARE PRESENT.



CD Baby
9600 NE Cascades Pkwy Ste 180
Portland OR 97220

FIFTH THIRD BANK

2562552

13:31
420

VOID AFTER 180 DAYS

DATE: 06/29/2020



PAY ONLY **686.55**

*****\$686.55

PAY TO THE ORDER OF: SANDY HOOK SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

208473 0629 0 001240 001240 1/1 US

SANDY HOOK SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT
118 CAPITOL AVE
WATERBURY CT 06705-2403



Jay Miller
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

⑈0002562552⑈ ⑆042000314⑆ 7025757696⑈

Hi Kathy,

Here is a nice check from
Voices For Heroes. This is to be used
for the music program only.

We love to hear what it
purchases. (can also post on Facebook
so all the musicians we worked with
can share & see!)

Be Safe,

Denise Labrecque

Facebook (Voices for heroes Sandy Hook)

Correspondence Report
07/07/2020 – 07/20/2020

Date	Name	Subject
7/7/20	Michelle Ku	Items for this evening
7/7/20	Michelle Ku	Fwd: 6/25/20 BOF Meeting Follow-up (Sandy Roussas Comments)
7/7/20	Michelle Ku	BOF member comments
7/7/20	Michelle Ku	Fwd: 6/25/20 BOF Meeting Follow-Up (Keith Alexander Comments)
7/10/20	Kiley Gottschalk	BOF 7/13/20 Agenda
7/13/20	Kiley Gottschalk	BOF Meeting TONIGHT
7/14/20	Kathy June	Fwd: Attached Image (CIFC Community News)
7/14/20	Lorrie Rodrigue	Retirement News
7/15/20	Kathy June	Re-Entry Plan
7/17/20	Kathy June	BOE Mailing – July 21, 2020
7/19/20	Lorrie Rodrigue	Re: Questions on the Re-Entry plan (answers to Mr. Cruson)
7/19/20	Lorrie Rodrigue	Responses to Questions (answers to Ms. Zukowski)
7/20/20	Lorrie Rodrigue	Responses to Questions (answers to Mr. Delia)
7/20/20	Kathy June	Revised Re-Entry Plan
7/20/20	Nancy Hintze	Questions for consideration regarding the Re-entry Plan

TO: Lorrie Rodrigue, Superintendent
FROM: Suzanne D'Eramo, Director of Human Resources
RE: Superintendent's Report – Certified Staffing Update for June/July 2020
DATE: July 17, 2020

JUNE/JULY 2020

Retirements:

none

Resignations:

Justine Giorgi
Allison Rider

New Hires:

PRE SCHOOL

SPED – Patricia DeLucia

HAW

Grade 2 – Sabina Rea

SHS

School Psychologist – Sarah Williams

HAW/HOM

Carley Donath

ELEMENTARY

Spanish – Nicole Justiniano

RIS

Grade 5 – Elvina Rugovac

Grade 5 – Denise Strong

NMS

Music – Heidi Ohngemach

SPED SAIL PGM – Stephanie Simon

NHS

Latin – Catharine Kimberly

Art – Kimberly Noone

SPED SAIL PGM – Kara Gabriel

Internal Position Changes:

NMS

SRBI Coord – Valerie LeBlanc

Project Challenge (.4) – Anna Malkin

Open Positions:

MGS Kindergarten (on hold – watching enrollment)

RIS SPED

NHS SPED (.6)

HEALTH EXAMINATION - INITIAL EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONNEL

Purpose

The health examination requirement, upon initial employment, is both a protection for the individual in terms of the ability to perform the requirements of the assignment as well as for the school district in order to protect the health of students and others at work.

There is no intent that this requirement will be used to deny employment because of a particular handicap or condition of health unless it can be established by examination that:

- a. the health condition would be dangerous in the performance of assigned duties
- b. the health condition would be hazardous to the health of others

Requirements

As a condition of initial employment, each employee shall file with the Office of the Superintendent a written report of a health examination secured through a designated physician's service selected and paid for by the Board of Education. The report will become part of the employee's personnel file available only to the School Medical Advisor and the Superintendent. The written report will consist of a comprehensive statement of the appointee's fitness for duty.

This requirement is applicable to full- or part-time appointees unless the assignment is for less than ninety (90) days.

Exemption

An exemption may be made if such examination procedure is contrary to the religious beliefs of the appointee and is so stated in writing. However, certification from a recognized source indicating that the appointee is free of certain communicable diseases will be required.

Reference: CGS 1-20a

Adopted 1/22/80

Amended 10/10/95

BOE Non-Lapsing Fund & Other Funds

<u>Non-Lapsing Fund</u>	Reserved for <u>Special Ed</u>	<u>Undesignated</u>	Total <u>Balance</u>
2019-20 Current Balance Non-Lapsing Account	\$63,000	\$207,434	\$270,434
2019-20 Anticipated Deposit based on 6/30/20 financial		\$696,337	\$696,337 <i>Estimated</i>
2019-20 Anticipated Non-Lapsing Balance	\$63,000	\$903,771	\$966,771

<u>Other Available Funds</u>			
CARES Act		\$130,000	\$130,000
NOVO Balance		\$16,000	\$16,000
VERKADA Donation		\$2,000	\$2,000
Balance in 2020-21 Budget from VERKADA payment relief		\$124,932	\$124,932
Total Other Funds Available	\$0	\$272,932	\$272,932

Funds Available for Additional COVID Expenditure	\$63,000	<u>\$1,176,703</u>	\$1,239,703	-
---	-----------------	---------------------------	--------------------	---

Transportation Savings (2 less school days)	\$32,154
Professional Development Savings	??
Budget Hold or Freeze	??

NEWTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2020-2021 SCHOOL CALENDAR

AUGUST (4)

M	T	W	TH	F
		26	27	28
31				

26-All Teachers Report
26, 27, 28 & 31 -Staff Development Days

SEPTEMBER 19(20)

M	T	W	TH	F
	1	*2	*3	*4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

1 - Staff Development Day
*2 - Students Report
*2, *3 & *4 - 3 hr. Early Dismissal--Staff Development
7-Labor Day - Schools Closed
28-Yom Kippur - Schools Closed

OCTOBER 22 (22)

M	T	W	TH	F
			1	*2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	*21	*22	*23
26	27	28	29	30

*2--2 hr. Delayed Opening--Staff Development
*21, 22, 23--3 hr. early dismissal-Elementary, Reed and Middle School Conferences

NOVEMBER 18(19)

M	T	W	TH	F
2	*..	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	*18	*19	20
23	24	*25	26	27
30				

*3-Election Day-Schools Closed For Students, Staff Development
*18 & 19-High School Conferences
3 hr. Early Dismissal
*25--3 hr. Early Dismissal
26-27-Thanksgiving Recess

DECEMBER 17(17)

M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	*23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

*23--3 hr. Early Dismissal - Holiday
24-31-Holiday Recess

JANUARY 19(19)

M	T	W	TH	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	*15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

1-New Year's Day-Schools Closed
*15--3 hr. Early Dismissal--Staff development
18-Martin Luther King Day - Schools Closed

FEBRUARY 18(18)

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	*12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26

*12--3 hr. Early Dismissal--Staff Development
15-16-Schools Closed

MARCH 23(23)

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	*10	11	12
15	16	17	*18	*19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

*10--2 hr. Delayed Opening--Staff Dev.
*18 & 19-3 hr. Early Dismissal-Elementary, Reed and Middle School Conferences (25 & 26 makeups)
*18-High School Conferences
(25- High School make-up day)

APRIL 15(16)

M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	*30

2-Good Friday - Schools Closed
12-16- Schools Closed
*30-Schools closed for Students-Staff Development Day

MAY 20(20)

M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	*28
31				

*28--3 hr. Early dismissal--Staff Dev.
31-Memorial Day- Schools Closed

JUNE 9(9)

M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	☀11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

☀-Projected last day of school

Please Note:
State of Connecticut mandates 180 calendar days for students. Beyond the projected June 11 date, school cancellation days will be made up by adding days through June 30. By Mar. 12 if there are more than 8 cancellations, April 30 will be a full day of school.

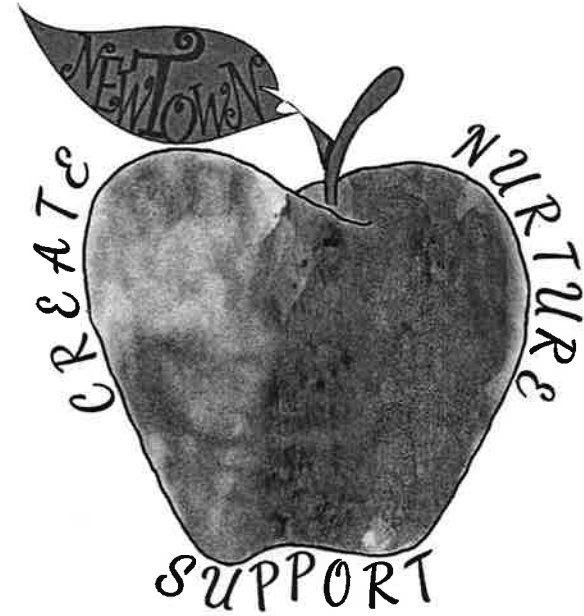
Please Note: Shaded calendar days = all schools closed for staff and students

Open House Dates:
Elementary: Sept. 8 & 9
Reed Intermediate: Sept. 10
Middle School: Sept. 2 gr.7, Sept. 3 gr. 8
High School: Sept. 17

Student Days – 180
Teacher Days – 187
Adopted: March 3, 2020
Revised: July 7, 2020

July 2020

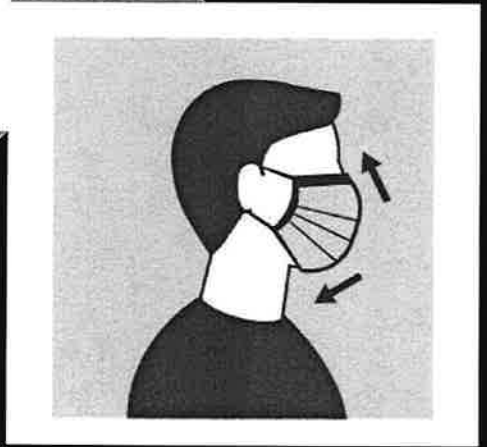
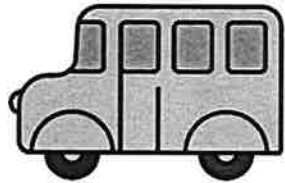
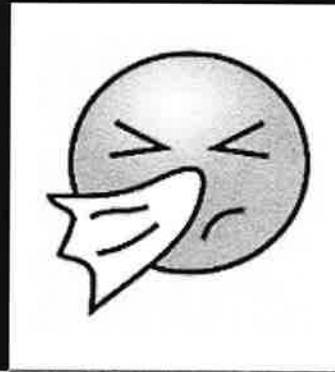
Overview Newtown Re-Entry Plan



At Our Core

It Takes A Village...Re-Entry Committee

- Newtown Administration
- Central Office leaders
- Ass't Superintendent and Director, Teaching and Learning
- Staff (both certified and non-certified)
- Union leaders
- Newtown Director of Health
- Parents
- Board of Education members



Important Drivers of the Plan
Requirements and Recommendations



A Lens to View the Plan

- ✓ Flexible and Fluid
- ✓ Collective responsibility
- ✓ Improved distance learning - interactive model
- ✓ Academic and Social/Emotional Supports
- ✓ Requirements, recommendations, and other precautionary measures



At Our Core

Newtown Public Schools Re-Entry Plan

Fall 2020



Table of Contents

Committee Members	1
Introduction	3
Newtown Public Schools Planning	6
Component of Re-Entry Plan	7
Pillar I: Governance	9
Planning and Coordination	9
Communication	9
Human Resources Considerations	10
Pillar II: Wellness	11
Education and Training	11
Health Supplies	12
Immunizations and Health Assessments	12
Minimizing Exposure: Physical or Social Distancing	12
Minimizing Exposure: Face Coverings/Face Masks	12
Managing and Containing Illness	13
Returning to School After Illness/Close Contact with Illness	14
School Day Considerations	14
Attendance	14
Pillar III: Instruction and Technology	16
Initial Re-Entry	16
Identifying Learning Gaps, Equity, Inclusion, and Access	16
Instructional Materials	17
Specials	17
Paraeducators	17
Special Education	18
English Language Learners	18
Newtown Public Schools Modes of Learning:	19
Levels of COVID-19 Community Transmission	20
Corresponding Shifts in Learning Modes	20
Learning Modes - Sample Weekly Schedules	22
Pillar IV: Social/Emotional Learning	23
School Re-engagement	23



SEL Staff Training	24
Pillar V: Facilities	25
Classroom Health and Safety	25
Signage and Messaging	26
School and Campus Security	26
Pillar VI: School Operations	27
Building Usage	27
State and Federal Lunch Programs & Policies	27
Cafeteria Spaces, Lunches and Snacks	28
Athletics	28
Recess and Play	28
Transportation and Buses	28
Student and Family Responsibilities	30
Resources	31

Committee Members

In preparing to welcome all students and staff back to school safely for the 2020-2021 school year, a Re-Entry Committee was formed to draft a plan that would meet the unique educational and social/emotional needs of students and staff of the Newtown Public Schools. The committee, a cross-section of staff, parents, administrators, and Board of Education officials, met weekly to develop a feasible plan that would appropriately address the health and safety priorities in compliance with requirements and recommendations, including mandatory and recommended training for staff, outlined in the State of Connecticut's Reopening Plan. Members of the committee, as well as their sub-committee groupings, are listed below.

I. **Governance (Communication)**

Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue - Superintendent

Kristen Bonacci – Newtown Middle School PTA President
Dr. Matthew Correia – Reed Intermediate School Principal
Kristin Larson – Grant Specialist
Meredith Walsky – Sandy Hook School Teacher

II. **Wellness (Spread Mitigation)**

Dr. Michelle Ku – Newtown Board of Education Chair

Anne Dalton - Nursing Supervisor

Donna Culbert – Newtown Health Director
Lisa Kilcourse – Head O'Meadow School Counselor
Karen Powell – Newtown High School Nurse (Union President)
Kerri Sommer – Sandy Hook School Special Education Teacher

III. **Instruction & Technology (Teaching & Learning)**

Anne Uberti – Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Frank Purcaro – Director of Teaching and Learning

Carmella Amodeo – Director of Information Technology
Tracy Galassi – Hawley School Teacher
Michelle Hiscavich – Director of Visual and Performing Arts
Suzanne Hurley – Middle Gate School Library Media Specialist
Andrew San Angelo – Newtown Middle School Library Media Specialist
Induk Song – Reed Intermediate School Teacher
Allyson Story – Parent
John Vouros – Newtown Board of Education Member

IV. **Social/Emotional**

Dr. Kathy Gombos - Sandy Hook School Principal

Bret Nichols - K-12 School Counseling Director

Jennifer Hoag – Newtown High School School Psychologist

Rebekah Harriman-Stites – Newtown Board of Education Member

Keristan Raccio – Newtown High School Teacher

Kimberly Shapiro – Hawley School Counselor

V. **Facilities**

Christopher Geissler – Middle Gate School Principal

Erin Ardino – Sandy Hook School Principal's Executive Secretary (Union President)

Ron Bienkowski – Director of Business

Robert Gerbert – Director of Facilities

Thomas Kuroski – Newtown High School Teacher (Union President)

Mark Pompano – Director of Security

Sharon Vetrano – Reed Intermediate School Teacher

Jack Vichiola – Newtown High School Head Custodian

VI. **School Operations (Logistics)**

Dr. Kimberly Longobucco – Newtown High School Principal

Marlene Bucci – Middle Gate School Behavioral Interventionist Paraeducator (Union President)

Alan Colangelo – All-Star Transportation Terminal Manager

Suzanne D'Eramo – Director of Human Resources

Matthew Memoli – Athletic Director

Thomas Pescarmona – Newtown High School Teacher

Deborah Petersen – Director of Pupil Services

Joseph Stango – Whitsons General Manager

Introduction

In March of 2020, when Newtown Public Schools closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, educators knew teaching and learning would be transformed dramatically for years to come. The virus impacted traditional ways of life, not only in our own community but throughout the United States and the world. Despite adverse conditions under which everyone worked, staff and parents rose to meet the challenges, demonstrating incredible strength and resilience. Kitchens, living rooms, and home offices turned into makeshift classrooms in order to support students within a remote learning environment.

As a result, and in harmony with our District's core values and beliefs, the school community came alive with visible acts of creativity, nurturing, and support during the implementation of Newtown's *Alternative Learning Plan (ALP)*. Teachers created new lessons using technologies outside the familiar and intimate environment of the classroom. Counselors and staff identified and supported students who struggled or were disengaged. Administrators worked collaboratively to ensure teachers and parents had the necessary resources to guide students appropriately. Parents and caregivers, unexpectedly thrust into the role of home school instructors, facilitated learning and nurtured their children to stay engaged throughout the remainder of the school year. Students learned very quickly to adapt, the best they could, to a brand new world of school that required a higher degree of self-direction, independence, and persistence. Although not ideal nor perfect, staff and parents worked as partners with students' best interests at the core.

Connecticut's Plan

As COVID-19 data trends in Connecticut gradually improved, Governor Lamont developed a phased approach to reopen businesses and industries in the State. In early July, the Connecticut Department of Education, in collaboration with the Governor's Office, shared a clear and comprehensive rationale for reopening schools in the Fall of 2020. The reopening plan, [*Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together*](#) acknowledged input from a variety of key stakeholders:

- Thousands of parents and students who participated in surveys
- Connecticut PK–12 Reopen Committee
- Reopen Regional Advisory Teams
- Learn from Home Task Force
- Connecticut Office of Policy and Management
- Connecticut Department of Public Health
- Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Education

Great things are done by a series of small things brought together.

~ Vincent Van Gogh

Guided by these six principles, the Connecticut State Department of Education directed all school districts to return to school for full-time, in-person instruction at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, as long as public health data continues to support this model. In addition to preparing for full-time instruction, school districts must also prepare for a partial reopening (hybrid model) or school closure (remote learning model) in the event that public health conditions change. Based on the Connecticut plan and public health authority guidance, Newtown Public Schools is planning for an in-person learning model, with all students returning to school full time in the Fall. **The decision to change to another model will be based on the level of public health risk as determined by local and state public health officials.**

Low Risk (Minimal to No Community Transmission)	Moderate Risk (Moderate Community Transmission)	High Risk (Widespread Community Transmission)
Fall 2020 Plan	As Needed	As Needed
In-Person Learning Model	Hybrid Model (In-Person and Remote)	Improved Distance Learning Model
All Students Full Days/5 Days A Week	50% of students are in-person 50% are remote - groups alternate days.	Students and staff quarantine at home and learning is remote

The best way to predict the future is to invent it.

~ Alan Kay

Newtown Public Schools Planning

As an organizational strategy, Newtown committee members focused their work around six “pillars” that defined critical elements of the plan: **Governance, Wellness, Instruction and Technology, Social/Emotional Learning, Facilities, School Operations**. This provided a sound framework for our plan - incorporating the essential and logistical requirements relevant to safety, health, social/emotional, and instruction.

Pillars

Governance: The focus of the Governance Pillar is to establish the vision and priorities for the re-entry plan, oversee the development of the plan, and ensure effective communications regarding re-entry for students, families, and staff.

Wellness: The focus of the Wellness Pillar is to promote the health and well-being of our community as we return to school this fall.



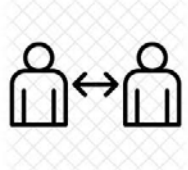





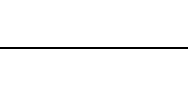
Instruction and Technology: The focus of the Instruction and Technology Pillar is to establish a plan for the Newtown Public Schools’ Community that best meets student learning needs for both in-person and online instruction.




Social/Emotional Learning: The focus of the Social/Emotional Learning Pillar is to create a plan to best support the social/emotional needs of all students, families and staff as we transition back to school.

Facilities: The focus of the Facilities Pillar is to identify practices and resources to protect the health and safety of students and staff across all Newtown campuses and within our buildings.

School Operations: The focus of the School Operations Pillar is to create a logistical plan that supports a safe, organized transition back to school in regard to building usage, outdoor spaces, food services, athletics, and transportation.

The Newtown Re-Entry Plan outlines areas of focus and action steps for each of the “pillars” to support feasible implementation across all buildings. Below is a **Summary** of the key components of Newtown’s Re-Entry Plan in alignment with State guidelines and requirements.

Component of Re-Entry Plan		
	Parents can temporarily choose for their children not to return to school and continue with remote learning. Parents will receive information about how to make that choice in early August.	✓
	All students and staff will wear face coverings/masks inside school buildings , and schools will supply masks to any student or staff who does not have a mask.	✓
	Newtown schools will maximize social distancing between student workstations in classroom spaces, 6 feet where feasible, 3 feet at a minimum.	✓
	For additional protection, students will be provided with individual plastic desk dividers for use at desks and tables throughout the day and all staff will be provided with face shields.	✓
	If families choose remote learning or if schools move to the hybrid model or full remote learning model, there will be more interaction with teachers and peers, more synchronous instruction, and a high level of structure to each school day.	✓
	Students will move through their school day in defined cohorts in grades K-8 and, where feasible in grades 9-12.	✓
	Maintaining cohorts helps mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19 and allows for contact tracing among and between cohorts when necessary.	✓
	All staff will have mandatory training on signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and health and safety protocols prior to students returning to school. Students will receive instruction on health and safety protocols on the first day of school.	✓
	Staff and students (or parents or guardians) will need to perform self-assessments before school to identify any COVID-19 symptoms and stay home if symptoms are consistent with COVID-19.	✓
	Staff and students will also need to inform the school if they have had contact with someone positive with COVID-19.	✓
	School nurses at each of the buildings will act as liaisons for health and safety, responsible for responding to questions from staff and families regarding COVID-19.	✓

	A district compliance liaison will coordinate system-wide questions regarding COVID-19 and related issues. Our district compliance liaison is: Anne Uberti, Assistant Superintendent.	✓
	All facilities will be cleaned and disinfected prior to student arrival and enhanced cleaning protocols will be in place for all buildings during the school day.	✓
	Enhancements will be made to existing HVAC systems to increase ventilation rates.	✓
	For schools and classrooms without HVAC systems, air purifiers with HEPA filters will be provided.	✓
	Outdoor instruction will be encouraged, when possible.	✓
	Transportation will resume at capacity. All bus drivers and riders will wear masks and there will be assigned seating for students.	✓
	Bus monitors will be used for the first two weeks to ensure students are following safety protocols.	✓

Valerie Strauss, in her article in the Washington Post, observed “Every decision, every interaction, every collaboration would aim to nourish well-being, inspire inclusion and equity, and strengthen the school community as a whole. Everyone participates, everyone contributes, everyone is responsible for the well-being of every student and every student is cared for.” While we recognize these are immensely stressful times for everyone, staff and families must remain partners to support our students and each other. At the core of Newtown’s plan is a strong reliance on the flexibility, adaptability, responsibility, and trust of all school community members. Educating our children is not only a moral imperative but a shared responsibility, and together we must put our students’ interests at the forefront while balancing the health and safety needs of everyone in the community.



Pillar I: Governance



The focus of the Governance Pillar is to establish the vision and priorities for the re-entry plan, oversee the development of the plan, and ensure effective communications regarding re-entry for students, families, and staff.

Planning and Coordination	
1.	The Newtown Public Schools Re-Entry Plan is designed to be in alignment with State of Connecticut recommendations and requirements and is informed by input from the Re-Entry Committee, comprised of more than 40 members representative of all stakeholders.
2.	The Superintendent will hold weekly, public Re-Entry Committee meetings to inform the development and implementation of the Reopening Plan and will post meeting minutes and videos on the Town and BOE websites.
3.	The Newtown Public Schools Re-Entry Plan will be reviewed and approved by Donna Culbert, Director of the Newtown Health District, and the Newtown Board of Education.
4.	Anne Uberti, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, will serve as the District COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison, will be responsible for providing information to parents, staff and administrators regarding health and safety requirements and will ensure compliance of health and safety protocols as outlined in this document.
5.	School nurses will serve as School COVID-19 Health and Safety Liaisons and will engage students, staff, and families with COVID-19 regarding health and safety concerns, as appropriate.
Communication	
6.	The Newtown Public Schools Re-Entry Plan will be shared with staff, students and families via School Messenger and will be posted on the District website available in multiple languages and accessible to those with visual and/or hearing impairments.
7.	The Superintendent will meet regularly with community groups, such as PEAC (Parent Educator Advisory Council) and PTA Presidents, and will hold periodic open office hours for parents, staff and community members in order to ensure two-way communication regarding the Re-Entry plan and any new and/or relevant developments following the reopening.

8.	The Superintendent will present the initial plan for reopening schools to the Board of Education, along with estimated associated expenses, and will continue to provide regular updates to the Board throughout the duration of the pandemic.
9.	Weekly updates will be shared directly with the school community via School Messenger and posted on the District website in order to provide critical information regarding policy, protocol or health data changes that may impact school operations, including the need for changes to restrictions and/or temporary school closure as well as guidance on school protocols related to health and safety.
10.	Surveys will be sent to families and staff in July and again in early August to solicit information regarding plans to return to school in the fall in order to properly align adequate resources for a successful reopening.
11.	Newtown Public Schools will comply with all state and federal family engagement requirements (e.g., Title I requirements) during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Human Resources Considerations	
12.	The Superintendent will ensure that the district is in compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements related to personnel, including but not limited to EEOC guidance related to ADA and the COVID-19 pandemic.
13.	Plans will be developed in order to engage all staff to the greatest degree possible, either remotely or in-person, to support a successful reopening.
14.	A substitute plan will be developed to ensure continuity of instruction.
15.	Personnel needs will be addressed to meet all aspects of the Re-Entry Plan.



Pillar II: Wellness



The focus of the Wellness Pillar is to promote the health and well-being of our community as we return to school this fall. Ensuring the health and safety of our students and staff is the most important consideration in designing a re-entry plan for Newtown schools.

The primary means of preventing the spread of disease are based on:

- limiting the number of contacts each person has
- consistent use of face coverings or face masks
- frequent hand and surface disinfection
- physical distancing

While it may be challenging for schools to satisfy all of these measures at all times, the action steps listed below will be taken in order to promote a healthy and safe school environment. These action steps are in alignment with current guidelines from the CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics, CT Department of Public Health, and the Newtown Health Department. Some action steps will shift dependent upon the level of community transmission present at any given time.

Education and Training	
1.	The Supervisor of Nursing will create training sessions to be delivered to all staff via an online training platform at the start of the school year to review new public health policies and protocols, as well as standard health practices used to prevent the spread of disease. Building administrators will ensure substitutes receive the training when entering schools.
2.	The Supervisor of Nursing will design training presentations which will be shared with all students and parents at the start of the school year to review new public health policies and protocols, as well as standard health practices used to prevent the spread of disease.
3.	The Supervisor of Nursing will provide all staff, students and parents with a COVID-19 screening checklist when conducting daily health assessments prior to leaving for school in order to identify fever and other possible COVID-19 symptoms. Anyone with a fever of 100 degrees (F) or higher will be excluded from school.
4.	Professional learning time will be added to the staff calendar in order to provide additional opportunities for planning and training.

Health Supplies

- | | |
|----|---|
| 5. | Each school will have adequate supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethyl alcohol or 70% isopropyl alcohol (for staff and older students who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, cloth face coverings (as feasible), and no-touch/foot-pedal trash cans. |
|----|---|

Immunizations and Health Assessments

- | | |
|----|---|
| 6. | Students must be up to date with immunizations. |
| 7. | Students must fulfill requirements for Health Assessments prior to students enrolling in school. Health assessments are also required for all students in grades six or seven and grades nine or ten. |

Minimizing Exposure: Physical or Social Distancing


- | | |
|-----|---|
| 8. | Physical or social distancing between student workstations will be maximized, achieving 6 feet when possible, 3 feet at minimum. |
| 9. | Desks will face in the same direction (rather than facing each other) or students will sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart. |
| 10. | Clear plastic desk dividers will be used in all elementary and intermediate classrooms and in middle school and high school classrooms when appropriate. |
| 11. | Outside spaces will be utilized for students to assemble while maintaining maximum social distancing requirements. |
| 12. | Building principals will create plans to minimize crowding in hallways during passing times. |
| 13. | Newtown High School will allow any student with free periods or study halls at the beginning or end of the day to leave campus in order to reduce crowding. |

Minimizing Exposure: Face Coverings/Face Masks

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 14. | All students and staff must wear face coverings or masks that completely cover the nose and mouth while on buses and inside the school buildings with exceptions only for those for whom it is not safe to do so due to medical conditions or disability. |
| 15. | Temporary exemptions for wearing masks/face coverings will be made where masks may need to be removed to provide appropriate special education services. In those cases, other mitigating strategies such as plastic face shields, plastic desk dividers, and maximizing social distancing will be implemented. |

16.	Staff members who work directly with students will wear face coverings or masks as much as possible; however, there may be times when these staff members must remove face coverings or masks in order to provide effective instruction (e.g. speech instruction), and in those situations, a face shield or other barrier will be used and, when possible, physical distance from students will be increased to more than 6 feet.
17.	Students and staff will be encouraged to wear their own face covering or mask and schools will maintain a supply to provide one, if needed.
18.	Masks with a filtered valve will be prohibited.
Managing and Containing Illness	
19.	Staff and families will be instructed to inform the school nurse and stay home if they are sick with COVID-19 symptoms or have been exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19. This information will be kept in a confidential health record.
20.	Families in need of a thermometer may request one from the school nurse.
21.	School nurses will track attendance patterns and work closely with the Health Director for case identification and contact tracing.
22.	Any staff member or student who is feeling ill during the school day should report immediately to the nurse.
23.	Each building principal will designate an isolation room to accommodate students exhibiting possible COVID-19 symptoms until a parent/guardian arrives. Students will remain supervised. Anyone entering the room will be required to wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and log their visit.
24.	If there is a known confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school setting, the Superintendent and Health Director will first be notified. All staff and families in the district will then be notified. The Superintendent will work in coordination with the Newtown Health Director to determine the time needed to assess the situation, trace individual contacts, and take appropriate cleaning measures.
25.	All staff and families of students who were in contact with a COVID-19 student or staff member will be notified (e.g. classmates, bus mates, sports teammates).
26.	It is strongly recommended that families have contingency plans in place should a school need to close temporarily, or a student needs to quarantine due to COVID-19.
27.	The District will utilize community and school-based indicators, which are expected to be released by the Connecticut Department of Health prior to the opening of schools, to guide decisions regarding when schools should be closed.
28.	The Superintendent will notify and consult with the Connecticut Department of Education immediately if contemplating class cancellation or school closure.

29.	In the event of a school closure, the schools will be prepared to provide continuity of learning as outlined in the Instruction and Technology section of this document.
30.	Staff and families are required to quarantine for 14 days and are strongly encouraged to follow any other directives provided by the State of Connecticut when returning from travel-restricted states and foreign countries.
31.	In support of mitigating infection, touchless hand sanitizer stations will be located throughout school buildings.
Returning to School After Illness/Close Contact with Illness	
32.	Staff and students who test positive for COVID-19 must follow guidelines from the Newtown Health District and provide documentation of a negative test result or physician's note to the school nurse upon return.
33.	Staff and students who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 should follow CDC Guidelines by quarantining for 14 days and monitoring for possible symptoms.
School Day Considerations	
34.	Student cohorts will be maintained whenever possible.
35.	Visual markings will be used, as needed, to assist students in maintaining physical distancing.
36.	Each student will be provided with a personal, portable plastic barrier for added protection. Students will be responsible for regularly cleaning their own barrier. Teachers will assist younger students in ensuring daily cleaning of their barriers.
37.	Classroom doors may be left in the open position to reduce contact; students will be reminded to sanitize or wash hands following the use of door handles; paper towels will also be placed by doors to use when opening door handles.
Attendance	
38.	Staff and parents of students who have concerns about health risks related to COVID-19, including pre-existing conditions which may increase risk, should consult their health care provider prior to reentering the school setting.
39.	Students not participating in on-site learning will be expected to attend classes online. Attendance will be taken and monitored.
40.	Student absences due to illness including absences from distance learning, should be reported to the school nurse.



41.	Students not participating in on-site learning due to illness may choose distance learning on days when they feel ill but well enough to participate virtually.
42.	Students who are quarantined due to exposure to COVID-19 will be expected to participate virtually.
43.	Building principals will proactively follow up with disengaged students and families.
44.	Staff members who are unable to return to work should notify Human Resources as soon as possible and an alternative work assignment will be developed.



Pillar III: Instruction and Technology



The focus of the Instruction and Technology Pillar is to establish a plan for the Newtown Public Schools' Community that best meets student learning needs for both in-person and online instruction.

Initial Re-Entry	
1.	The Newtown Public Schools are planning a fall reopening that includes a full-time instructional model with 100% student return to physical classrooms. (See <i>Newtown Public Schools, Modes of Learning.</i>)
2.	Parents and students may voluntarily and temporarily choose not to participate in the return to school. Those students will be required to participate in remote learning.
3.	Students not participating in the initial return to school, or who decide to shift to distance learning during the school year, will receive synchronous instruction via Google Meet by their regular teacher. While this will be the primary model for instruction, in some cases, it may be necessary to designate a "distance learning teacher" to provide primary instruction to at-home students of a particular grade or subject area.
Identifying Learning Gaps, Equity, Inclusion, and Access	
4.	Upon return to school in the fall, teachers will meet in vertical grade level and/or subject specific team meetings to discuss student academic engagement during the 2019-20 distance learning timeframe. Professional development time prior to the start of school will be designated for this purpose.
5.	All students in grades K-9 will be administered the NWEA Fall assessment. Protocols will be developed to ensure both in-school and virtual administration of the assessment.
6.	All students in grades K-9 will have access to IXL Learning ELA and Math which includes a real-time diagnostic that will be used to identify gaps in learning. All students in grades K-8 have access to Lexia Learning which also includes a real-time diagnostic component to aid in identifying gaps in reading skills.
7.	All students in grades K-9 will be provided with a Chromebook that can be utilized any time distance learning is implemented. Students in grades 10-12 will use personal devices; however, any student in grades 10-12 needing a device will be provided one. WiFi Hotspots will be provided to students and families previously identified as having issues with online access.

Instructional Materials	
8.	In most cases, sharing of materials will be discouraged; younger students will be provided individual contained items. In situations where materials must be shared, they will be cleaned and sanitized following CDC Guidelines. In school, students will use either an assigned or personal computer.
9.	Students will not use lockers in any building; school materials should be carried with the student in a personal backpack.
10.	Books handled by students or staff will be quarantined for 72 hours before redistribution.
Specials	
11.	Participation in specials will be required regardless of the mode of learning. Strategies will be employed in each special class to reduce crowding and maximize social distancing in on-site settings.
12.	When possible, music curricula that pose health risks, such as singing or playing certain instruments, will take place in spaces that allow for a minimum of 12 feet of distance between students (including outside spaces). When not possible, modifications will be made to specific curriculum to provide related foundational skill work or educational experiences.
13.	Physical education curricula will be modified to ensure that instructional design is appropriate to the space and ensures separation and distancing between students during activities.
14.	Physical education will focus on activities, exercises, and sports that are teacher-led, but performed individually using marked off areas, stations, or staggered participation to ensure separation of students.
15.	Book borrowing from school libraries will follow the guidelines as outlined in #10 in the Instructional Materials section above. In addition, on-line resources that allow for student use of electronic books and audiobooks will be available.
Paraeducators	
16.	Paraeducators are integral members of the instructional team and will be fully utilized and engaged in the instructional plan as outlined in this document.

Special Education

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 17. | In accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidelines, this plan is prepared with the understanding that there has been no waiver of requirements under the IDEA for provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). During COVID-19 school closures, schools were required to provide FAPE consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students, as well as those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students. Schools may not have been able to provide all services in the same manner that they are typically provided. Federal disability law allows for flexibility in determining how to meet the individualized needs of students receiving special education services. |
| 18. | In accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidelines, students eligible for special education and other special populations will be treated as general education students first. Guidance and policies related to school reopening plans apply to all students, including students with special needs who qualify for individual education programs under the IDEA and accommodation plans for eligible students under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If students with disabilities are unable to access the mode of instruction outlined in the Re-Entry Plan, individualized and alternative means of re-entry based upon student need, present levels of functioning, developmental levels, and student/parent input will be facilitated. |

English Language Learners

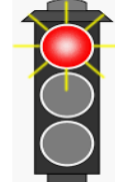
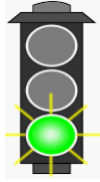
- | | |
|-----|--|
| 19. | In accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidelines, during school closures due to COVID-19, English Learners will continue to receive their supplemental EL instructional program in addition to their general education program of mainstream, grade-level, and content-area instruction. Such language instructional education programs may consist of a range of services, including bilingual education, English as a Second Language (ESL), Sheltered Instruction and others. When returning to school buildings, language instruction education programs will continue. |
| 20. | In accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidelines, communication with parents and guardians that have limited proficiency in English will be provided as needed in a language they understand as required by Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. As during traditional schooling, communications during school closures due to COVID-19 may be provided through translation and/or interpretation, if needed. |
| 21. | In accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidelines, ELs who are also identified as students with disabilities will receive support for their EL needs, as well as support for their disabilities. During COVID-19, these dually identified students will continue to receive these supports. |



Newtown Public Schools Modes of Learning:

Newtown Public Schools is committed to preparing for full on-site learning for all students in the Fall. However, if community transmission of COVID-19 increases, Newtown Schools are prepared to provide remote blended learning opportunities in a Hybrid Learning Model, with 50% of students experiencing either onsite or distance learning on an alternating basis, or Full Distance Learning model with all students receiving instruction and support in a virtual online environment. Decisions on which learning mode to implement will be informed by forthcoming guidance from the Connecticut Department of Public Health in consultation with local health officials. The decision to shift to the Hybrid or Full Distance Learning Models will be significantly impacted by the level of community transmission of COVID-19 at any given time. Please see the graphic below outlining the various levels of COVID-19 transmission and the corresponding shift in learning models.

Levels of COVID-19 Community Transmission



Little to No Community Transmission - Minimal Spread of the Virus/No Spread of the Virus

Minimal or Moderate Community Transmission - Moderate Spread of the Virus

Substantial Community Transmission - High Spread of the Virus



Corresponding Shifts in Learning Modes



On-Site Learning

Hybrid Learning*

Full Distance Learning*

Fall 2020 Reopening - Plan for most students to return to school for on-site learning, while distance learning is provided to students who opt to stay home from the onset.

Plan for a 50% reduction in student attendance in school. Students attend school for on-site learning on an alternating basis. Students grouped into A and B cohorts.

Plan for no student attendance in schools with 100% of instruction and support being provided to students at home online through distance learning.

Students in the cohort off-site will receive instruction through distance learning.

Implemented to start the school year assuming the sustainment of the current low levels of COVID-19 transmissions.

Implemented after the start of the school year in response to a moderate increase in COVID-19 community transmissions.

Implemented after the start of the school year in response to a substantial increase in COVID-19 community transmissions.

Teaching staff delivers instruction onsite in classrooms.

Teaching staff delivers instruction onsite in classrooms to 50% of their students, either Cohort A or Cohort B on an alternating schedule.

Teaching staff delivers instruction via distance learning to all students.

<p>Provisions will be made for students who temporarily opt to stay at home to start the school year.</p> <p>Those students opting to learn at home will participate primarily in synchronous instruction, blended with asynchronous instruction, via Google Meet with their teacher, whenever possible.</p> <p>Alternative work plans will be developed for teachers who are unable to be on-site that may include co-teaching with a substitute teacher, providing support to other teachers or providing support to other students.</p> <p>In some cases, it may be necessary to designate a “distance learning teacher” to provide primary instruction to at-home students of a particular grade or subject area.</p>	<p>Grouping for Cohorts will be made with family consideration as a priority.</p> <p>Those students opting to learn at home, as well as the Cohort A or B students when learning from home, will participate primarily in synchronous instruction, blended with asynchronous instruction, via Google Meet with their teacher, whenever possible.</p> <p>If students have been designated a “distance learning teacher”, they would continue with that same teacher in the hybrid model, whenever possible.</p>	<p>“Wellness Wednesday” protocol is instituted for teacher professional development, collaboration, and online preparation.</p> <p>All students will be at home and will participate primarily in synchronous instruction, blended with asynchronous instruction, via Google Meet with their teacher, or designated “distance learning teacher” whenever possible.</p>
<p>Students primarily will use hard copy texts and instructional materials supplemented with online programming.</p> <p>Teachers will identify material to be taken home in the event of a shift to Hybrid Learning or Distance Learning.</p>	<p>Students will use a balanced combination of hard copy texts and online programming.</p> <p>Students in grades 3-12 will take mobile devices back and forth to schools when their cohort is onsite. Students in grades K-2 leave mobile devices at home. Hard copy texts and instructional materials are updated for home use throughout the Hybrid Learning period.</p>	<p>Students primarily use online programming supplemented with hard copy texts and instructional materials.</p> <p>Students in grades K-12 will use mobile devices at home. Hard copy texts and instructional materials remain home with the students.</p>

*Feedback from families, students, teachers, and leaders on experience with remote learning was collected via surveys in June and July 2020. Priority areas and commonalities in the survey results were identified by the Instruction and Technology Re-Entry Subcommittee and incorporated into the Hybrid Learning and Full Distance Learning Modes.



Pillar IV: Social/Emotional Learning



The focus of the Social/Emotional Learning (SEL) Pillar is to create a plan to best support the social/emotional needs of all students, parents, and staff as we transition back to school. Newtown Public Schools will maintain a climate that is highly supportive, and which focuses on optimism, hope, wellness and emotional support for students, families, and staff during the initial re-entry and throughout the school year. School teams will identify and provide support to students, staff and families that need focused support upon re-entry and beyond. Each student will be part of a nurturing and supportive classroom environment that provides information and opportunities that allow students to collectively process their shared experience and partake in mindful activities to mitigate stressors.

School Re-engagement	
1.	Each school will ensure that all students are regularly engaged in existing SEL programs and practices: Newtown SEL Webpage
2.	Existing SRBI (Scientific Research Based Interventions) teams will collaborate with teachers to develop support plans for any student or family in need.
3.	Each school will communicate specific information and resources available to support families struggling with COVID-19 related issues: Family Resource List Trauma Warning Signs for Staff Trauma Warning Signs for Parents
4.	SRBI teams will proactively review data, including anecdotal data, in order to identify students in need of extra support due to COVID-19 related issues or school re-entry issues.
5.	Outreach plans will be developed by schools' teams in order to reconnect with students who were disengaged during the prior period of distance learning and for those who remain on distance learning and are at risk.
6.	Wellness and self-care opportunities will be provided by each school for staff: Article about helping staff heal upon re-entry Support Staff List
7.	Safe School Climate Committees will meet regularly to plan opportunities for students and staff which promote a culture of hope, wellness, and optimism.

8.	All students will engage in at least one developmentally appropriate lesson that addresses the pandemic and the return to school.
9.	SEL programs/practices/lessons that are implemented in classrooms will be adapted, as possible, for students learning from home
SEL Staff Training	
10.	Staff training will be provided through an online platform in order to provide guidance in identifying abuse and neglect in the context of the pandemic and in the distance learning model.



Pillar V: Facilities



The focus of the Facilities Pillar is to identify practices and resources to protect the health and safety of students and staff. The subcommittee worked to develop clear safety expectations including, but not limited to, safety devices, PPEs, cleaning and sanitizing, signs, and ventilation.

Classroom Health and Safety	
1.	Each school has removed furniture and nonessential materials from classrooms in order to maximize spacing. Proper storage for items removed from classrooms is provided by each school's custodial staff and the Director of Facilities.
2.	Each school has identified and removed shared use objects and/or materials.
3.	Each school will have an adequate supply of PPE, as well as individual barriers and plexiglass dividers in necessary locations. Hand sanitizer stations will be available at every school.
4.	All Department of Public Health guidelines for the operation of central and non-central ventilation systems will be implemented in each school and MERV 13 filters installed in all ventilation devices.
5.	Air purifiers have been ordered for each classroom in buildings without HVAC.
6.	Each school will identify cooling stations and allow access for classes in a building without HVAC. Fans will be provided to those buildings without HVAC as well to push warm air out of windows as recommended by the CDC. Each school is also investigating the acquisition of outdoor enclosures/tents to provide additional spaces with increased air flow.
7.	All Department of Public Health guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting schools for the maintenance of building water systems will be strictly followed.
8.	A custodial checklist detailing cleaning protocols will be available for every room. In addition, cleaning of eating areas, bathrooms and general daytime cleaning will follow a predetermined and set schedule. Cleaning logs will be posted outside of all bathrooms and cafeterias. Teachers will work with younger students to clean up areas after eating snacks or lunch in classrooms.

9.	Should the District move to the Hybrid Learning model, Wednesdays (“Wellness Wednesdays”) will be used to disinfect and deep clean all school buildings between cohorts.
10.	The Director of Facilities will create a custodial substitute list and/or investigate the use of a supplemental cleaning company.
11.	The Director of Facilities in coordination with each school’s custodial staff will utilize cleaning agents aligned with CDC guidelines.
12.	Spaces may be repurposed for instruction in each school, if necessary. Municipal or other community spaces may also be utilized.
Signage and Messaging	
13.	Through the use of school signage, reminders for hand washing and mask usage will occur throughout the school day.
14.	All school entrances will display a notice of requirement to wear masks before entering.
15.	All school bathrooms will display hand washing signs.
School and Campus Security	
16.	Under the supervision of the Director of Security, each school campus will continue to deploy and maintain armed and unarmed school security personnel during the school day.
17.	The Director of Security will facilitate fire drills and other emergency response drills at each school as appropriate, under guidance provided by the Newtown Director of Health, Newtown Fire Marshal, and the State of Connecticut DESPP/DEMHS Region 5 Coordinator.




Pillar VI: School Operations



The focus of the School Operations Pillar is to create a logistic plan that supports a safe, organized transition back to school. This includes planning for building usage, outdoor spaces, athletics, and transportation.





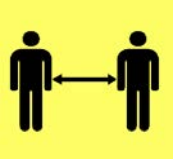



Building Usage	
1.	School clubs and activities that take place before or after school will follow all requirements outlined in this document as applicable, including but not limited to the use of face coverings and maximizing physical distancing.
2.	After-school care through EdAdvance will resume and will follow all requirements outlined in this document as applicable, including but not limited to the use of face coverings and maximizing physical distancing.
3.	Town organizations that provide clubs and activities to Newtown students will be allowed if the activity has been approved by the Newtown Health Director and the organization/activity adheres to all requirements outlined in this document, as applicable, including but not limited to the use of face coverings and maximizing physical distancing.
4.	Use of schools by outside organizations will be informed by the current state of health conditions in the community and will be at the discretion of the Superintendent.
5.	Visitors, including parents, will not be allowed in school. Parents will drop off materials in the vestibule.
6.	All parent meetings, including parent conferences, 504 meetings and PPTs will be held virtually.
State and Federal Lunch Programs & Policies	
7.	Schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program, and Special Milk Program (SMP), as applicable, will continue to determine eligibility for and make available free and reduced-price meals and snacks and free milk to all eligible students.

8.	Schools will comply with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) regulations and policies for school meals and milk including the meal pattern requirements.
9.	Schools that participate in the NSLP are required to claim meals/milk provided to eligible students using accurate counting and claiming methods.
Cafeteria Spaces, Lunches and Snacks	
10.	Building principals will create lunch plans that minimize crowding and maximize social distancing. Individual plastic barriers will be used when students are eating.
11.	Students will be allowed to bring their lunch/snack and drink from home or may purchase a bagged lunch at school.
12.	Students are encouraged to bring personal water bottles.
Athletics	
13.	CIAC recommendations and updates will inform all decisions regarding participation in all activities related to competitive athletics. Specific direction will be communicated by individual schools.
Recess and Play	
14.	Building principals will create recess plans that maintain cohorts and outline specific activities in which students may engage.
15.	Staff will actively monitor play, recess, and provide alternative activities when necessary.
Transportation and Buses	
16.	When feasible, families are encouraged to provide alternate transportation to buses.
17.	Bus seating will be assigned with family members grouped together and students will be required to stay in the assigned seat at all times.
18.	Bus drivers, as well as students, will be required to wear a face covering or mask at all times when riding the bus (one will be provided, if needed).



19.	Buses will run at full capacity under Low Risk conditions and 50% capacity under Moderate conditions, with maximum allowable spacing between students.
20.	K-6 bus monitors will ride buses for the first two weeks of school to ensure student compliance with safety and health protocols.
21.	When feasible, bus windows will remain open.
22.	Building principals will create plans for arrival and dismissal, including embarking and disembarking of buses and parent drop-off and pick-up that minimize crowding.
23.	Students will be expected to ride the same bus to school in the morning and the same bus to home in the afternoon every day.

Student and Family Responsibilities

	<p>Screening for Symptoms at Home: In order to prevent transmission among the school population, parents are instructed to conduct daily health assessments prior to leaving for school in order to identify fever and other possible COVID-19 symptoms. Anyone with a fever of 100 degrees (F) or higher will be excluded from school.</p>
	<p>Stay at Home if Feeling Ill: Students must stay home if they are feeling ill and have symptoms consistent with COVID-19. If there are questions about your child's well-being on a given day, please do not allow him or her to come to school and contact your physician for guidance immediately.</p>
	<p>Face Covering/Masks: All students must wear face coverings or masks that completely cover the nose and mouth while on buses and inside the school buildings with exceptions only for those for whom it is not safe to do so due to medical conditions or disability. "Mask Breaks" will be provided during the day. Students are encouraged to wear their own face covering or mask and schools will maintain a supply to provide one, if needed. Masks with a filtered valve will be prohibited.</p>
	<p>Water Bottles: Students are encouraged to bring their own personal water bottles.</p>
	<p>Social Distancing: Students must maintain social distancing to the greatest extent possible. Students are expected to practice social distancing when entering and exiting the building, in classrooms, and moving throughout the school.</p>
	<p>Frequent Hand Washing and Hand Sanitizing: Students must engage in frequent hand washing or sanitizing upon arrival, before and after meals, after bathroom use, and after coughing or sneezing.</p>
	<p>Student May Not Change Buses: Students will be expected to ride the same bus to school in the morning and the same bus to home in the afternoon every day. Face coverings or masks should be in place prior to entering the bus.</p>
	<p>Transportation: When feasible, families are encouraged to provide alternate transportation to buses.</p>

Keeping our schools open...is everyone's responsibility!

Thank you for your support!

Resources

Please see the links below for additional information regarding the State Department of Education's Plan for Reopening Schools, COVID-19 health and safety resources, as well as resources related to social and emotional health.

CSDE Resources:

[Adapt, Advance Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together](#)

Health and Resources:

[Connecticut COVID-19 Response](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.](#)

[American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

Social and Emotional Learning Resources:

[Newtown SEL Webpage](#)

[Family Resource List](#)

Disclaimer

The guidance and plans provided in this document are based on current guidelines and requirements issued by the State Department of Education and the current input of local entities and public health officials. The COVID-19 public health emergency continues to be a rapidly evolving situation, and consequently, the guidelines, requirements and plans described herein may change as the legal and regulatory landscape and the public health trends continue to change.