

**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 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 \$150,000. 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 spend down 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

Correspondence Report
06/16/2020 – 07/06/2020

Date	Name	Subject
6/17/20	Michelle Ku	Special Meeting – June 24 or 25
6/18/20	Cara Reilly	A call to action (diversity and equality in schools)
6/20/20	Rebekah Stites	(Thoughts from Rally for Change)
6/21/20	Karen Roszman	Race relations in Newtown Public Schools
6/23/20	Kathy June	June 25 BOE Meeting Agenda
6/24/20	Kiley Gottschalk	BOF 6-25-20 Agenda
6/24/20	Michelle Ku	Newtown Bee Forum
6/26/20	Lorrie Rodrigue	Letter to Parents and Staff (Governor's State Re-entry Plan)
6/26/20	Michelle Ku	BOF Meeting 6/26 Update
7/1/20	Michelle Ku	Fwd: 6/25/20 BOF Meeting Follow-Up
7/1/20	Kathy June	BOE Mailing – July 7, 2020
7/2/20	Desiree Vaiuso	Policy re: hospital stays
7/3/20	Lorrie Rodrigue	Additional BOE Materials – Resolution on Diversity & Equity
7/6/20	Kathy June	Enrollment Report

**Resolution
Newtown BOE – 7/7/20**

Promoting Diversity & Equity

WHEREAS, we believe that ALL students should be inspired to attain and apply the knowledge and skills and attributes that lead to personal success while becoming a contributing member of a dynamic global society;

WHEREAS, we know that every student in our care has the right to an equitable educational experience - regardless of race, religion, ability, ethnicity, identity, socioeconomic status, or gender;

WHEREAS, we agree that institutional racism and bias promote barriers to student learning, create academic gaps, and directly conflict with the core values and beliefs of Newtown Public Schools;

WHEREAS, we must vow to confront all incidents of inherent bias and racism in our schools and hold all individuals accountable for their actions;

WHEREAS, we value differences in others' beliefs, intellectual ideas, and backgrounds;

WHEREAS, we promote an appreciation of diverse cultures, groups, people, and perspectives;

WHEREAS, we celebrate the individual academic, social, and civic contributions of individuals within our school community;

WHEREAS, student, parent, staff, and community voices are integral in building a climate of trust, respect, and dignity while creating opportunities that minimize disparities in educational outcomes;

WHEREAS, we believe that continuous improvement requires the courage to change long-standing biases and institutional norms;

Now, therefore, the Newtown Board of Education RESOLVES to:

- support the development of academic pathways, instructional activities, extracurricular opportunities, and field experiences that promote a richer awareness of culture and racial diversity;
- review and monitor policies on diversity, inclusion, and equity;
- review curriculum in grades K-12 through the lens of multicultural and diverse perspectives;

- establish a clear protocol that records and reports incidents of racism occurring within the schools and holds all staff and students accountable for their actions;
- review and employ mechanisms (e.g., anonymous tips, trusted adults) to allow students and staff to share sensitive or confidential information that will help in the investigation of acts of bullying, harassment, and racism;
- continue to support best practices and social/emotional programs and resources to ensure that every student feels safe in a supportive environment;
- provide training for all staff aimed at maintaining a safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environment for all students, including students of color;
- support the Superintendent's initiatives in creating community conversations in diversity and equity that will lead to systemic improvements.

**NEWTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION
SUMMARY - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
2021/22 TO 2025/26**

**Recommended to the BOE
by the Subcommittee for 7/7/2020**

INITIAL FIVE YEARS

CIP Item #	Location	Description of Project	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	NO BONDING Year 4	Year 5	TOTALS
			2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	
1	Hawley Elem.	Ventilation, HVAC Renovations	\$4,199,720	\$0				
8	Hawley Elem.	Generator - 80KW <i>(whole school reduced to essential components only)</i>				\$0	\$250,000	\$4,449,720
9	Middle Gate Elem	Energy Project window modifications				\$0	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
6	Head O'Meadow	Boilers, water heater, VFD & pump replacements with LED lighting			\$850,000	\$0		\$850,000
3	Reed Intermediate	Install high efficiency gas boilers & LED lighting conversion		\$1,539,894	\$0			\$1,539,894
4	Middle School	Engineering for ventilation and A/C renovations		\$300,000	\$0			
5	Middle School	Ventilation, HVAC, Auditorium, Media center, replace rooftop units '98			\$3,782,228	\$0		\$4,082,228
2	High School	Replace/restore stadium turf field & track <i>(11th year)</i>	\$795,000	\$0				
7	High School	Create turf practice field rear of school					\$1,100,000	
-	High School	Rear Practice fields facilities and storage <i>(moved back one year)</i>					\$0	
TOTAL COSTS OF ALL PROJECTS			\$4,994,720	\$1,839,894	\$4,632,229	\$0	\$2,350,000	\$13,816,843
TOTAL TO BE BONDED			\$4,994,720	\$1,839,894	\$4,632,229	\$0	\$2,350,000	\$13,816,843

Previous BOE approved CIP amounts (November 6, 2019)	\$4,712,000	\$1,752,730	\$4,565,812	\$2,000,000	\$2,504,000	\$15,534,542
Difference to previously approved plan	\$282,720	\$87,164	\$66,417	-\$2,000,000	-\$154,000	-\$1,717,699

Eligibility for project inclusion on the CIP is that the cost must exceed \$200,000.
2017-18 Reimbursement rate 36.43%

Construction inflation estimate 6.0%

**NEWTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION
SUMMARY - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
2026/27 TO 2030/31**

**Recommended to the BOE
by the Subcommittee for 7/7/2020**

SECOND FIVE YEARS

CIP Item #	Location	Description of Project	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	NO BONDING Year 9	Year 10	TOTALS
			2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	
	Hawley Elem.	Classroom renovations '21 section (ceilings, lighting, floors, etc.) Repave entire parking lot, curbing, sidewalks Elevator to café	\$318,000	\$1,011,240 \$0	\$0 \$1,378,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,707,240
	Sandy Hook							\$0
	Middle Gate Elem	Repave entire parking lot, curbing, sidewalks Complete kitchen renovation Ventilation, HVAC Renovations		\$1,378,000	\$0 \$397,500	\$0	\$300,000	\$2,075,500
	Head O'Meadow	Replace/update A/C Re roofing/restoration		\$2,696,640	\$6,179,800 \$0	\$0		\$8,876,440
	Reed Intermediate	Repave entire parking lot, curbing, sidewalks Re roof entire building (solar remove & reinstall \$225K)	\$3,710,000	\$2,120,000 \$0	\$0			\$5,830,000
	Middle School	Repave entire parking lot, curbing, sidewalks Window replacements (front of building) Library and science lab renovations Complete kitchen renovation	\$795,000	\$3,710,000 \$0	\$1,685,400 \$0	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$7,190,400
	High School	Re roofing/restoration HVAC equipment replacements Athletic/Stadium field house and storage Rear Practice fields facilities and storage <i>(moved back one year)</i>	\$2,921,360 \$954,000 \$0	\$0 \$1,685,400	\$0	\$0	\$5,300,000	\$10,860,760
TOTAL COSTS OF ALL PROJECTS			\$8,698,360	\$12,601,280	\$9,640,700	\$0	\$6,600,000	\$37,540,340
TOTAL TO BE BONDED			\$8,698,360	\$12,601,280	\$9,640,700	\$0	\$6,600,000	\$37,540,340

NEWTOWN BOARD OF EDUCATION
SUMMARY - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
2021/22 TO 2025/26

Recommended to the BOE
by the Subcommittee for 7/7/2020

Notes:

- 1 All projects (with four exceptions) have been moved forward by one year with a 6% construction inflation factor added to the previously approved plan.
- 2 HAW Generator cost has been reduced from \$1Million down to \$250,000 for a reduced capacity (not entire building).
- 3 HS rear practice field facilities and storage was moved back for one year with the same estimated pricing.
- 4 MG HVAC renovations have been added to the second five years of the plan.
- 6 *The NHS fuel cell has been stricken as it would likely be funded by an incentive program, and space will be an issue.*
- 7 Year four of this plan represents last years year five, for which the Town had decided that "No Bonding" would occur, those two projects in that year were moved to year five.
- 8 Year nine will represent the next five year of no bonding. The HS HVAC equipment replacement was consequently moved to year ten.
- 9 A \$0 represents where the project was in the Board's November 6, 2019 approved CIP.
- 10 The HOM boiler and lighting project costs were refined and reduced by \$207,532.
- 11 The purchase of the vacant property at HAW has been removed from the plan.
- 12 The HOM gas and water lines have been removed from the plan.

FINAL 2020-21 BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

7/1/2020

<u>Acnt Number</u>	<u>Acnt Desc</u>		<u>LC Budget</u>	<u>Salary Adjustments</u>	<u>Recommended Budget</u>	<u>Notation</u>
CERTIFIED SALARIES						
001820820000 - 51111	DISTRICT - SUPERINTENDENT ADMINISTRATORS - CO		\$510,309.00	\$2,588.00	\$512,897.00	RATE INCREASE FOR DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES
001840860000 - 51111	DISTRICT - BUS SERV ADMINISTRATORS - CO		\$165,822.00	\$3,731.00	\$169,553.00	RATE INCREASE FOR DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS
				\$6,319.00		
001840880000 - 51151	DISTRICT - OTHER SERV CERTIFIED SALARY ADJ		\$50,146.00	(\$6,319.00)	\$43,827.00	DISTRIBUTION OF ALLOWANCE FOR SALARY INCREASES
				(\$6,319.00)		
NON-CERTIFIED SALARIES						
001940840000 - 51143	DISTRICT - CONT. ED. DIR OF CONTINUING ED		\$49,358.00	\$1,111.00	\$50,469.00	INDIVIDUALLY CONTRACTED RATE INCREASES
				\$1,111.00		
001770410000 - 51210	HEALTH/MED - ADMIN. SUPERVISORS/TECH STAFF		\$47,747.00	\$1,075.00	\$48,822.00	INDIVIDUALLY CONTRACTED RATE INCREASES
001810850000 - 51210	DISTRICT - TECH SUPERVISORS/TECH STAFF		\$511,066.00	\$4,973.00	\$516,039.00	INDIVIDUALLY CONTRACTED RATE INCREASES
001840860000 - 51210	DISTRICT - BUS SERV SUPERVISORS/TECH STAFF		\$133,763.00	\$1,848.00	\$135,611.00	INDIVIDUALLY CONTRACTED RATE INCREASES
001900920000 - 51210	B&G - ADMIN. SUPERVISORS/TECH STAFF		\$210,871.00	\$4,745.00	\$215,616.00	INDIVIDUALLY CONTRACTED RATE INCREASES
				\$12,641.00		
001820820000 - 51222	DISTRICT - SUPERINTENDENT SECRETARIAL SALARIES		\$291,092.00	\$4,196.00	\$295,288.00	INDIVIDUALLY CONTRACTED RATE INCREASES
001840860000 - 51221	DISTRICT - BUS SERV CLERICAL SALARIES		\$300,257.00	\$1,654.00	\$301,911.00	INDIVIDUALLY CONTRACTED RATE INCREASES
				\$5,850.00		
001770490000 - 51240	HEALTH/MED - H.S. NURSES SALARIES		\$138,703.00	\$578.00	\$139,281.00	INDIVIDUALLY CONTRACTED RATE INCREASES
				\$578.00		
001600320000 - 51261	H.S. - SPORTS ATTENDANCE/DISCIPLINE/ATH		\$53,451.00	\$1,203.00	\$54,654.00	INDIVIDUALLY CONTRACTED RATE INCREASES
001750510000 - 51263	SP ED - SP ED SERV THERAPISTS/BEH ANAL/SCH C		\$442,805.00	\$17,020.00	\$459,825.00	INDIVIDUALLY CONTRACTED RATE INCREASES
001750610000 - 51263	SP ED - PREK-8 SP ED THERAPISTS/BEH ANAL/SCH C		\$228,194.00	\$5,135.00	\$233,329.00	INDIVIDUALLY CONTRACTED RATE INCREASES
001750660000 - 51262	SP ED - TRANSITION JOB COACH/OTHER SPED/BUS		\$64,154.00	\$4,635.00	\$68,789.00	INDIVIDUALLY CONTRACTED RATE INCREASES
001840880000 - 51261	DISTRICT - OTHER SERV ATTENDANCE/DISCIPLINE/ATH		\$12,452.00	\$280.00	\$12,732.00	INDIVIDUALLY CONTRACTED RATE INCREASES
001850880000 - 51264	DISTRICT - SECURITY SECURITY/STUDENT WORK		\$293,027.00	\$7,767.00	\$300,794.00	INDIVIDUALLY CONTRACTED RATE INCREASES
001850880000 - 51265	DISTRICT - SECURITY ARMED SECURITY		\$294,745.00	\$7,467.00	\$302,212.00	INDIVIDUALLY CONTRACTED RATE INCREASES
001920870000 - 51262	DISTRICT - TRANSPORT JOB COACH/OTHER SPED/BUS		\$25,022.00	\$563.00	\$25,585.00	INDIVIDUALLY CONTRACTED RATE INCREASES
				\$44,070.00		
001840880000 - 51271	DISTRICT - OTHER SERV NON-CERT SALARY ADJ		\$120,272.00	(\$64,250.00)	\$56,022.00	DISTRIBUTION OF ALLOWANCE FOR SALARY INCREASES
				(\$64,250.00)		

Students

On-Campus Recruitment

Subject to the provisions of Subdivision (11) of Subsection (b) of Section 1-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the high schools of the school district shall provide the same directory information and oncampus recruiting opportunities to representatives of the armed forces of the United States of America and State Armed Services as are offered to nonmilitary recruiters, recruiters for commercial concerns and recruiters representing institutions of higher education.

The Board of Education (Board) will inform, at the middle and high school level, students and parents/guardians of the availability of (1) vocational, technical and technological education and training at technical high schools, ~~and~~ (2) agricultural sciences and technology education at regional agricultural science and technology education centers, and (3) inter-district magnet schools.

The Board shall also provide full access for the recruitment of students by technical high schools, regional agricultural science and technology education centers, inter-district magnet schools, ~~charter schools~~ and inter-district student ~~attendance~~ programs, provided such recruitment is not for the purpose of interscholastic athletic competition. ~~The Board shall also post information about these school options on its website.~~

Directory information or class lists of student names and/or addresses shall not be distributed without the consent of the parent or legal guardian of the student or by the student who has attained majority status.

Military recruiters or institutions of higher learning shall have access to secondary school students' names, addresses, and telephone listings unless ~~a secondary student or~~ the parent/guardian of the such student submits a written request that such information not be released without their prior written ~~parental~~ consent. A student, eighteen years of age or older, rather than his/her parent/guardian, may request in writing that such information not be released without his/her prior written permission. The Board ~~of Education~~ shall notify parents/guardians and students of the option to make such request and shall comply with any request received. The objection shall remain in force until the district re-issues the annual notification referenced above, after which time the parents and/or secondary school student must inform the school district in writing again of their objection to the disclosure of the information described above.

~~ESSA requires the release of the student's name, address and telephone listing unless, after giving appropriate notice to parents/guardians and students 18 years of age or older, of their right to opt out and to require, after such opt out, written permission to release the information.~~

The school administrator may make the determination of when the recruitment meetings are to take place and reserves the right to deny such meeting where the holding of such meeting will materially and substantially interfere with the proper and orderly operation of the school.

Any person or organization denied the rights accorded under this policy shall have the right to request a review of the decision by the Board ~~of Education~~ by filing a written request with the Superintendent of Schools.

Students

On-Campus Recruitment (continued)

(cf. 5125 Student Records; Confidentiality)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

1-210 (11) Access to public records. Exempt records.

10-220d Student recruitment by a regional and interdistrict specialized schools and programs. Recruitment of athletes prohibited (as amended by P.A. 12-116, An Act Concerning Educational Reform)

10-221b Boards of education to establish written uniform policy re treatment of recruiters. (as amended by PA 98-252)

P.L. 106-398, 2000 H.R. 4205: The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001

~~P.L. 107-110 "No Child Left Behind Act" Title IX, Sec. 9528~~

Section 8025 of Public Law 114-95, "The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015"

Policy adopted:

Students

Activism and Dissent

The Board of Education recognizes the fundamental right of students to express their views on school property during the regular school day. This freedom of expression will be acceptable under the following conditions:

1. The activity is not disruptive.
2. The activity does not interfere with the rights of other students or staff.

Students must remain fully aware that guarantees of freedom of speech and press does not protect against legal challenges on issues of libel and slander.

The Board of Education encourages students to use student government and school publications to express concerns and opinions.

Students Rights and Responsibilities in Activism and Dissent

~~(Applicable to grades 9-12)~~

The Newtown Board of Education recognizes the students' rights to:

1. Carry or wear buttons, badges, or armbands on school property.
2. Distribute handbills, leaflet, or newspapers at times and in places approved by the Principal. The limitation is necessary to prevent interference with an orderly school program.
3. Collect signatures on petitions at times and in places approved by the Principal.
4. Seek redress from any decision of the school administration to the Superintendent of Schools. The appeal must be made within a period of five school days and the decision rendered within five school days thereafter.

In expressing dissent, students may not:

1. Use obscenities in any manner.
2. Practice disruptive activities ~~(sit-ins, strikes, walk-outs, etc.)~~
3. Issue false statements about persons or organizations.
4. Advocate violation of school policies and regulations. (They may, however, criticize these policies and regulations.)

Students

Activism and Dissent (continued)

5. Sell for individual or group profit any papers, handbills, or leaflets on school property.
6. Coerce others or interfere with another's freedom in collecting signatures on petitions.
7. Collect signatures in any class period, library, or study room.
8. Distribute any materials without prior review by the Principal.

Punishment for a violation of these guidelines will be administered by a designated staff member and may range from oral warning/reprimands to detentions, suspension or expulsion.

Freedom of Speech/Expression

The school district shall assume no responsibility for the contents of any written material produced, posted, circulated or otherwise distributed, or of student conduct, taken in accordance with this policy, insofar as such matter or conduct may relate to any interests other than those of an orderly and efficient educational process and proper school environments.

In order to protect the educational process and school environment, printed material produced or distributed within the confines of school district property shall meet the following criteria:

1. Material shall be noncommercial.
2. Material shall not contain libelous or obscene language.
3. Material shall not advocate illegal actions.
4. Material shall not contain false statements or innuendoes that would subject any person to hatred, ridicule, contempt or injury of reputation.
5. Material will not imminently threaten to disrupt the educational process of the school.
6. Material shall not advocate action that would endanger the health or safety of students.
7. Material shall not invade the lawful rights of others.
8. Material published, posted or otherwise distributed shall bear the names of at least two students principally involved in the promotion of this material and, when applicable, the name of the sponsoring student organization or group.
9. Distributors of materials will be held responsible for cleaning up litter caused by such distribution.

Students

(cf. 1220 – Citizens’ Advisory Committees)

(cf. 1312 - Public Complaints)

(cf. 6144 - Controversial Issues)

(cf. 6161 - Equipment, Books, Materials: Provision/Selection)

Legal Reference: *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969).

Grayned v. City of Rockford, 408 U.S. 104 (1972).

Amendment of U.S. Constitution Article I.

Connecticut Constitution, Article First, Declaration of Rights, Sections 4, 5.

Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut State Board of Education, 9/9/81).

Policy adopted:

Preliminary Distance Learning Survey Results

July 1, 2020

Submitted by Anne Uberti

Assistant Superintendent

Barriers/Challenges

Questions:				
#5 Elementary Parents	What have been the greatest barriers for supporting your high school age child(ren) through distance learning?			
#11 RIS Parents				
#17 NMS Parents				
#23 NHS Parents				
#5 Students	What were the greatest challenges to for you as a student during distance learning?			
#8 Staff	While your online experience has evolved over the past 10 weeks, which issues remain as substantial barriers to effective online teaching?			
Barriers/Challenges	Over 60%	Over 50%	Over 40%	20%-40%
Elementary Parents	Family/Work Issues (66%)	Lack of opportunities for students to interact with peers (55%)		Instruction on new learning insufficient to support student (29%) Lack of proficiency with digital platforms such as Google Classroom or Seesaw (23.5) Not enough feedback on student work (22.4)
RIS Parents	Lack of opportunities for students to interact with peers (63.1%)		Family/Work Issues (42.4%) Instruction on new learning insufficient to support student (41.5%)	Not enough opportunities for asking questions or additional academic support (38.1%) Not enough feedback on student work (36.4) Not enough communication from teacher(s) (32.6%)
NMS Parents	Lack of opportunities for students to interact with peers (66.1%)		Not enough communication from teacher(s) (46.1%), Not enough opportunities for asking questions or additional academic support (45.1%), Instruction on new learning insufficient to support student (44.1%), Not enough feedback on student work (41.8) Not enough opportunities for asking questions or additional academic support (45.1%) Instruction on new learning insufficient to support student (44.1%) Not enough feedback on student work (41.8)	Family/Work Issues (27.6%)
NHS Parents	Lack of opportunities for students to interact with peers (65.3%)	Instruction on new learning insufficient to support student (54.5%)	Not enough opportunities for asking questions or additional academic support (46.3%) Not enough feedback on student work (41.9) Not enough communication from teacher(s) (40.1%)	
Students		Lack of opportunities for students to interact with peers (54.7%)		Not enough communication from teacher(s) (37.8%) Instruction on new learning insufficient for me to complete assignments (35.7%) Not enough feedback on my work (32.4%)
Staff			Lack of a daily schedule for students (47.6%)	Device issues (27%), Insufficient materials to effectively teach content (25.4%), Poor wifi (24.2%) Insufficient materials to effectively teach content (25.4%) Poor wifi (24.2%)

Would like to see more of...

Questions:				
#5 Elementary Parents	If distance learning were to be necessary in the future, what would you like to see more of?			
#11 RIS Parents				
#17 NMS Parents				
#23 NHS Parents				
#5 Students	If distance learning were to be necessary in the future, what would you like to see more of?			
#8 Staff:	If the schools were required to close again for some period of time next year, what one thing should the Alternative Learning Plan contain to improve the experience for students?			
	If the schools were required to close again for some period of time next year, what one thing should the Alternative Learning Plan contain to improve the experience for staff?			
Would like to see more of..	Over 60%	Over 50%	Over 40%	Over 30%
Elementary Parents	Live interactions with teachers (78.6%), Opportunities for students to interact with classmates (68.9%)	Pre-recorded lesson videos by student's teacher (52.2%)	A clearly defined student/class schedule (45.5%)	Pre-reorded video lessons either generic or by any teacher from the grade level (38.5%), Paper and pencil tasks (38.1%), Additional extra help sessions (33%), Graded assignments and/or assessments (31.5%), Set teacher "office hours" (26.6%)
	Oppportunities for students to interact with classmates (68.9%)			Paper and pencil tasks (38.1%) Additional extra help sessions (33%) Graded assignments and/or assessments (31.5%) Set teacher "office hours" (26.6%)
RIS Parents	Live interactions with teachers (85.9%)	A clearly defined student/class schedule (58.4%)	Set teacher "office hours" (45.9%)	Additional extra help sessions (38.8%) Graded assignments and/or assessments (38%)
	Pre-recorded lesson videos by student's teacher (67.8%)			Pre-reorded video lessons either generic or by any teacher from the grade level (35.7%)
	Oppportunities for students to interact with classmates (66.7%)			Paper and pencil tasks (34.5%)
NMS Parents	Live interactions with teachers (88.9%), Opportunities for students to interact with classmates (67.3%)	Pre-recorded lesson videos by student's teacher (58.4%)	Set teacher "office hours" (48.3%), Additional extra help sessions (44.4%)	Graded assignments and/or assessments (32.7%)
	Oppportunities for students to interact with classmates (67.3%)			Pre-reorded video lessons either generic or by any teacher from the grade level (30.2%)
	A clearly defined student/class schedule (60.3%)			
NHS Parents	Live interactions with teachers (86.2%), A clearly defined student/class schedule (65.8%), Oppportunities for students to interact with classmates (62.2%)	Set teacher "office hours" (53.2%)	Additional extra help sessions (42.5%)	Pre-reorded video lessons either generic or by any teacher from the grade level (32.1%), Graded assignments and/or assessments (26.8%)
	A clearly defined student/class schedule (65.8%)	Pre-recorded lesson videos by student's teacher (53%)		Graded assignments and/or assessments (26.8%)
	Oppportunities for students to interact with classmates (62.2%)			
Students	Pre-recorded lesson videos by my actual teacher (63%)		Oppportunities to interact with classmates (48.9%), A clearly defined student/class schedule (43.2%), Live interactions with teachers (41.8%)	Pre-reorded video lessons either generic or by any teacher from the grade level/department (31.5%)
			A clearly defined student/class schedule (43.2%)	Assignments through online platofrms (i.e. Kahn Academy, IXL, Lexia, etc.) (28%)
			Live interactions with teachers (41.8%)	
Staff (Improve for Students)	A clearly defined student/class schedule (19)	Set expectations, grades, accountability (13)	More opporitunities for live interactions with teachers and/or peers (11)	Technology - Better student devices and connectivity (9)
Staff (Improve for Staff)	PD/Quiet Fridays/Planning time with other teachers (18)	Technology - Better devices/Wifi (11)	Staff allowed to enter/work inside the building/school (7)	More full staff meetings/communications with full staff (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

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 - 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-Elem, 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

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

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting held virtually on June 16, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

M. Ku, Chair	L. Rodrigue
D. Delia, Vice Chair	A. Uberti
D. Cruson, Secretary	R. Bienkowski
D. Leidlein	2 Staff
J. Vouros	1 Press
R. Harriman-Stites	1 Public
D. Zukowski	

Mrs. Ku called the meeting to order at 7:01 with Board members joining virtually and members of the public joining on the phone line. The meeting was also being recorded. Those on video include Mrs. Ku, Mr. Delia, Mr. Cruson, Mrs. Leidlein, Mrs. Harriman-Stites and Ms. Zukowski. Mr. Vouros, Mr. Gerbert and a member of the public joined by phone. Also on video were Dr. Rodrigue, Mrs. Uberti, Mr. Bienkowski, Dr. Longobucco, and Board of Finance Chair Sandy Roussas.

Item 1 – Pledge of Allegiance

Mrs. Ku asked to move the discussion of the Board of Finance General Fund Balance Policy to after the reports.

Item 2 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mrs. Harriman-Stites moved that the Board of Education approve the consent agenda which includes the minutes of June 2, 2020 and the correspondence report. Mrs. Leidlein seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 3 – Public Participation - none

Item 4 – Reports

Chair Report: Mrs. Ku reported that the Regional Advisory Team has not been called upon to meet for several weeks. There is frustration with the lack of contact regarding returning to school in the fall. We will need to have another Board meeting in late July or early August with the changes that may occur for the school year. With this being the last day of school, she thanked all teachers and staff for being the consummate professionals that they are getting us through this. Mrs. Ku attended a CAFE workshop last week regarding diversity and she stressed the need to be kind to each other and as we lean into the discomfort of the conversations that are coming up. She stressed the importance of working together as a board. The Covid changes in education and discussions of racism will be challenging and rewarding in education.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Rodrigue sent a letter to parents and staff and will keep them updated regarding the plan for reopening in the fall. She thanked all staff and leaders, and parents and children. She also thanked Dr. Longobucco and Mr. Einhorn and their entire staff for putting together the truly memorable experience for moving up and graduation. The students in the other schools loved seeing their teachers in the parades at their schools. We will be sharing resources in reading and math to support ongoing student engagement over the summer. Some specialists will also be contacting parents over the summer. She met with two Newtown High School alum to discuss how we can review our curriculum in regards to race and diversity. We will also be including current students in the conversations. Congratulations to Janice Gabriel, Newtown's Teacher of the Year and Dawn Egelson, our Anne Marie Murphy Para of the Year and thanked the Board members for their support this year.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites appreciated Dr. Rodrigue's comments that we can always do better and always have room for improvement and appreciates the conversations with the students and hopes they will continue.

Mrs. Ku thanked the high school and middle school for the moving up and graduation ceremonies as special celebrations students will remember forever and the principals in the other schools with the special events they had for their students. The Newtown Bee is doing a series on some of the issues we are facing which will include the Police Commission and Dan Rosenthal and they asked if we would be willing to participate.

Committee Reports: Mrs. Harriman-Stites said the Policy Committee was going through the 4000 series and is also looking at a distance education policy to be sure its applicable now and in the future. She is the liaison to the high school and helped with graduation. It was a truly wonderful experience and she was grateful to be part of it.

Financial Report:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the financial report for the month ending May 31, 2020. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mr. Bienkowski reported that we received the second installment of excess cost grant on a state calculated rate of 70.89% which amounted to \$350,905. It was \$238,494 more than budgeted. Supplies were purchased including Verkada cameras which will leave a balance of approximately \$800,000.

Ms. Zukowski asked if this included the other funds from the CARES Act and Novo balance. She heard the CARES Act thought of redistributing money.

Mr. Bienkowski said this report does not include grants and is purely the operational budget. We are waiting to hear from the Department of Education to see how to apply the CARES Act.

Motion passes unanimously.

Item 6 – New Business

Board of Finance Fund Balance Policy:

Sandy Roussas, Board of Finance Chair, thanked the Newtown schools, staff and Dr. Rodrigue for their work on the distance learning. The purpose of this policy is to state the percentage of the fund balance the town should carry which helps lower borrowing costs, maintains our rating with Moody's and benefits the town. She also addressed the section that refers to the Board of Education non-lapsing account.

Ms. Zukowski asked if our non-lapsing account would be a restricted fund balance.

Mrs. Roussas said it was not a restricted fund balance but a Board of Education account.

Ms. Zukowski stated that the lawyer said it was a restricted fund balance and asked if the funds count toward the 8% to 12% of the town budget.

Mrs. Roussas stated that those funds don't count as part of those percentages.

Mr. Bienkowski said it's a restricted fund for educational purposes. It's not on the overall town balance. Fund balance results from the operating budget approved year to year.

Mrs. Ku said the Board of Finance referred to it as the Board of Education non-lapsing account. The State calls it an unexpended fund account which is now a capital nonrecurring fund.

Mrs. Roussas said the purpose of the account is statutorily defined. She looked at older meeting minutes regarding this account and there was a spirit of setting money aside for the Board of Education to cover capital costs.

Ms. Zukowski stated that we have \$63,000 in the non-lapsing account for special education which is not a capital expense and not recurring. If people feel this account is the same as the towns to use it for smoothing out special education spikes in expenses it would be harder for us make it seem the proper fund for it. She asked to refer to it as the language in the Board of Education policy.

Mrs. Roussas asked if there was a policy that defines the purpose of the non-lapsing account in that way.

Mrs. Ku reported that we just approved one policy and another one tonight that discusses how the transfer occurs and she would send them to her.

Mrs. Roussas said she has to change the title of that portion of their policy to streamline it with the Board of Education Non-lapsing Education Account.

Ms. Zukowski also suggested removing it from number two which is about capital projects and capital and non-recurring funds because it's broader than that.

Mrs. Ku agreed with Ms. Zukowski that by lining it up side by side with the municipal capital and non-recurring funds is not the same thing

Ms. Zukowski said that would explain that the town capital and non-recurring funds would be for town's capital items and the Board of Education capital and non-recurring funds for their capital items which is not the case.

Mrs. Leidlein asked if somewhere else in the Board of Finance policies it talks about the process when money is deposited in the account or money is taken out of the account.

Mrs. Roussas said no other policy speaks to this. Ned Simpson remarked that there is no defined way money is taken out of the Board of Education non-lapsing account. She anticipates this discussion will start this summer in conjunction with the anticipated request to transfer the Board of Education surplus from this year's budget to the non-lapsing account.

Mrs. Leidlein said that as of now there are no requirements or set methodology that's being used. It is our decision solely.

Mrs. Roussas stated that by statute once funds are deposited in the non-lapsing fund it's the Board's purview to spend the money. There is also a policy that the Board of Education comes to the Board of Finance for approval to spend the money.

Mrs. Ledlein clarified that we are asking for approval but are not required to get approval.

Mrs. Roussas agreed but that was by statute.

Mrs. Ku thanked Mrs. Roussas who stated that the Board of Selectmen looked at their policy last night but had no input. The Board of Finance meets next week and she will discuss this with them and it will then move onto the Legislative Council. She was happy to answer any questions before their meeting next Thursday.

Item 5 – Old Business

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the Creative Writing curriculum.

Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the Journalism curriculum.

Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mr. Delia looked at the digital newspaper and would love to see it promoted more. It was very well done.

Motion passes unanimously.

Budget Adjustments:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education adjust its February 2, 2020 requested operational plan as follows:

- o Increase the allocation for turnover savings by \$100,000;
- o Decrease the allocation for Technology equipment by \$115,000 under the technology section of the budget; and
- o Decrease the allocation for Building and Site Maintenance Projects by \$335,000 under the Plant Operation and Maintenance section of the budget;
- o Decrease the allocation for classroom teachers at Hawley School by \$61,961;
- o Decrease the allocation for classroom teachers at Sandy Hook School by \$61,961;
- o Increase the allocation for classroom teachers at Middle Gate School by \$61,961;
- o Increase the allocation for classroom teachers at Reed Intermediate School by \$123,922;
- o Increase the allocation of Special Education teachers at Newtown High School by \$37,177; and
- o Increase the allocation for turnover savings by \$99,138.

Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mr. Bienkowski said the net result is a reduction to the budget of \$450,000. The Board of Finance reduced the budget by \$100,000 and then the Legislative Council further reduced it by \$450,000. The balance of the adjustments is for the current staffing. We are reducing a full-time staff member at Hawley and Sandy Hook Schools, adding one full-time teacher at Middle Gate School, two full-time teachers at Reed, and a .6 special education teacher will be needed at the high school for a total of \$99,138 to be taken from the turnover line item. We will have to find that money during the year. Recommendations for transfers will come to the Board in September and October.

Dr. Rodrigue spoke about the staffing changes. We are finding some areas we anticipated growth but we are not seeing it. At Reed they are well over what we anticipated for enrollment. At Hawley there are three sections in grade two but they are over the guidelines. We feel confident we can move a teacher to grade two. At the high school, the current special education staff can cover all but three co-taught classes. At Middle Gate, the 1.0 request is to maintain four sections in third grade. We are watching the kindergarten numbers at Head O'Meadow. We wanted to bring you this before the summer begins but there could be additional needs and won't know until we get the final plan from the State of Connecticut.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites appreciated this information now. She has some concerns around reducing the staff that was requested such as the kindergarten teacher at Hawley and Sandy Hook. There is so much unknown now because we may have to hire more teachers based on health considerations.

Dr. Rodrigue said she has been watching Sandy Hook School for a while. She doesn't have room now so we would add a para. Regarding hiring teachers, we can work with a distance

model using paras for support. If the Sandy Hook and Hawley class sizes increase we would add teachers. We have to look at the needs we know we have.

Ms. Zukowski agreed to make sure all classes are right-sized and if they are not, try to deal with the extra resources in the school system. What are the class sizes for the kindergarten we are reducing? Reed was right at 25 when we did the budget.

Dr. Rodrigue said Reed is now at 295 and there may be more unanticipated new students. Hawley class sizes for kindergarten is 50 which is four sections of 18 students. At Middle Gate there are 74 going into third grade. Reed has over 60 incoming fifth grade students with IEPs under special education.

Mr. Delia asked the budgeted amount for the turnover account now.

Mr. Bienkowski said it was \$624,138.00. This is a challenging number and bigger than we've ever had going into the school year. It will be watched very carefully and we won't know until November or December if we achieve it.

Mr. Delia asked if this could be an unexpected expense.

Mr. Bienkowski said he wouldn't go to the non-lapsing account for this. There are other areas of the budget we can look at and manage through it.

Dr. Rodrigue reminded everyone that we saved \$125,000 for Verkada cameras which is available.

Mr. Vouros agreed with Mrs. Harriman-Stites about these positions. We don't know what's going to happen in the summer or fall and we have these positions already. It's better to have teachers working with the students and we shouldn't be deleting.

Mrs. Ku said this is about moving things around in the budget. We are adding staff that wasn't there previously. She heard the real estate market is booming in Newtown and to keep that in mind. She also heard that Sandy Hook School has no room to add classes and look at how we will deal with enrollment increases in the future. In a conversation with the Board of Finance about the \$100,000 cut, it had something to do with cutting the special education contingency line which one of their board members brought up but there was no consensus. She didn't agree with doing that.

Mr. Vouros commented, "Imagine if Hawley were closed?"

Motion passes unanimously.

Policy 3160:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve Policy 3160 Budget Procedures and Line Item Transfers. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said the Policy Committee didn't feel comfortable editing this policy without having Mr. Bienkowski's input first and the committee didn't feel comfortable discussing it without his input so she sent the Board members the comments and suggested new language. The reason this is coming to the Board is to make the language be in line with the non-lapsing policy we passed at the last Board meeting.

Mr. Bienkowski said the language here clarifies further what the non-lapsing fund can be used for and the process to use for designating the funds. The language fits and will work for the purposes we want it to work for.

MOTION: Mrs. Zukowski moved to amend the policy to add the following words following the first sentence. The first sentence reads "The Board will vote to forward a request and explanation to the Board of Finance for use of funds from the Non-Lapsing Education Account."

At the end of that sentence insert the words “for review and approval.” Then continue to insert “The Board may also request that an amount of funds be designated for a specified purpose and, if approved, the Board may use all or some of the designated funds for the specified purpose at any time without further approval(s). If funds are no longer needed for the specified purpose, the Board may remove the designation from any remaining funds, and inform the Board of Finance of the change.” End with the final sentences in that paragraph.

Mrs. Ku made a friendly amendment to add the words “by the BOF” at the end of the first sentence and Mrs. Zukowski agreed.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites clarified that this is being added to the first paragraph on the last page of the policy.

Mrs. Zukowski read the motion with these additions.

The Board will vote to forward a request and explanation to the Board of Finance for use of funds from the Non-Lapsing Education Account for review and approval. The Board may also request that an amount of funds be designated for a specified purpose and, if approved, the Board may use all or some of the designated funds for the specified purpose at any time without further approval from the Board of Finance. If funds are no longer needed for the specified purpose, the Board may remove the designation from any remaining funds, and inform the Board of Finance of the change. Consistent with the Connecticut Statute 10-248a, the use can be for any educational purpose. If appropriate, this request will also include a financial impact sheet.

Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mrs. Leidlein asked why we feel it is necessary to have the word “approval”.

Ms. Zukowski said we need to ensure the boards what we are asking for. We generally ask for their approval and to make sure the expectations among the boards are clearly stated.

Mrs. Leidlein prefers to not use the word “approval.”

Mr. Delia had the same question. The approval refers to what the funds are used for. He thought the Board of Finance would approve putting the money in the budget but thought we decided what we use the funds for.

Mrs. Leidlein stated Mrs. Roussas said the state statute didn't require approval by the Board of Finance.

Dr. Rodrigue said the statute refers to not having to be approved when we ask for the funds. Their authority is placing the funds in the account. This puts more approval on taking out funds.

Mrs. Leidlein said nothing in their policy talks about putting money in and nothing about taking money out.

Mrs. Ku said their policy doesn't address it but the statute does.

Dr. Rodrigue said our practice is forwarding the explanation to the Board of Finance for the use of the funds from the non-lapsing education fund. Their practice has been taking some action. We only went to them once or twice.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites felt that made a lot of sense. We can't put what another board is supposed to do in our policy.

Ms. Zukowski asked what would happen if you sent it the Board of Finance and they took action not approving and it comes back. There is nothing in this policy that says we don't agree and we will do it anyway. That would be allowed if we removed the words “approval.”

MOTION: Mrs. Leidlein moved to amend the amendment to remove the words “for review and approval” from the amended version and similarly in the second sentence of the amended version to remove the words “if approved.” Mrs. Harriman-Stites seconded.

Mr. Delia made a friendly amendment to Mrs. Leidlein’s amendment to remove the words “at any time without further approvals.”

Mrs. Leidlein was fine with that along with Mrs. Harriman-Stites.

Ms. Zukowski wanted to add a friendly amendment to add the words “at anytime” which means it doesn’t have to be spent at once.

Mrs. Leidlein didn’t know why we needed to say “at any time” She assumed as long as it’s there we can use it and doesn’t see the need to specify any time. She wasn’t accepting the amendment.

Mrs. Ku read the final amendment to the motion.

The Board will vote to forward a request and explanation to the Board of Finance for use of funds from the Non-Lapsing Education Account. The Board may also request that an amount of funds be designated for a specified purpose and the Board may use all or some of the designated funds for the specified purpose. If funds are no longer needed for the specified purpose, the Board may remove the designation from any remaining funds, and inform the Board of Finance of the change.

Vote on amendment to the amendment removing the wording about approvals:
6 ayes 1 nay (Mrs. Zukowski) Motion passes.

Vote on amendment just read. Motion passes unanimously
Vote on the policy: Motion passes unanimously.

Item 6 – New Business (continued)

Renewal of HVAC Contract for Newtown High School and Reed Intermediate School:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education renew the HVAC contract for Newtown High School and Reed Intermediate School with Harry Grodsky & Co. for the remaining two years as previously bid, based on their successful performance in year one, in the amount of \$135,750 for year two and \$139,700 for year three. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mr. Gerbert and our maintenance staff were very pleased with the contractor. We’re getting excellent service.

Mrs. Ku asked if it was possible to use them for all of our schools.

Mr. Gerbert said for Head O’Meadow and Sandy Hook we have service agreements with Trane because the equipment at those schools are Trane branded and they are part of a larger network. We could look at potentially doing a similar bid for those but Newtown High School and Reed have more complex equipment. Maintenance at Sandy Hook and Head O’Meadow is not as heavily needed.

Motion passes unanimously.

Curriculum Development Guide

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the Curriculum Development Guide. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mrs. Uberti stated that this guide is the cumulative effort of a group of people that comprised the Curriculum Development Council. There was no clear process in place for curriculum

development and not a lot of feedback during the writing process. Other changes were made to building in steps such as adding curriculum coaches to help and units approved by someone in concept-based curriculum work. The main difference with this version is previous versions focused on the concept-based design and this one provides that as well as the practical steps in the design process. We felt it needed to be focused on the steps in the process and is a more practical guide.

Ms. Zukowski said phase four of the document talks about evaluation and asked if it made sense to include the Board in terms of what worked for the new courses or what didn't. Mrs. Uberti felt that would be cumbersome to bring to the Board. The role of the principal will be to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum. However, sometimes the Board will request an evaluation of a pilot course. New curriculum is reviewed on an ongoing basis. Major changes would come to the Board.

Dr. Rodrigue added that a lot will come through Curriculum and Instruction so there are checks and balances and sometimes there are minor changes.

Mr. Delia referred to the reimplementation and asked if there was a document to guide people through the steps.

Mrs. Uberti said it depends on the course. A lot of curriculum this year was being taught to a certain degree. We were just formalizing them to bring to the Board. New curriculum would be a big rollout.

Mrs. Ku said it was nice to see the process as we only see the end product.
Motion passes unanimously.

District Highlights Newsletter:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the District Highlights Newsletter for July 2020. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mr. Cruson said this was the first newsletter this year which will be sent to the school community and the community at large including other boards, the Rotary Club, Board of Realtors, the Municipal offices and Community Center. The issue addresses the alternative learning plan. He appreciates the time the staff spoke to him and Ms. Zukowski.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites thought this was incredible with a cross section of teachers and student voices. She was concerned that it included the percentage of students needing devices or hotspots because it could make someone feel uncomfortable. She would vote for the newsletter if they were removed.

Mr. Delia felt the newsletter was phenomenal but also agreed to those changes. Ms. Zukowski did not object to changing the language. One other change since the student newsletter addressed the Corona virus we could give a plug to that under Student View. Mr. Delia said there were just a few articles on that as well as other subjects but his point was that it was really well done. Mr. Cruson said regarding the connection to the Hawkeye, our goal was to give the Board a voice to the public and was not sure if we should link it to the student newspaper. He has no problem changing the technology language.

Mrs. Ku said the Student Voice was from the student Board members and it isn't clear in the newsletter.

Mr. Cruson can put that information in their byline.

MOTION: Ms. Zukowski moved to amend the motion to include revisions for the devices and hot spots to lessen the language so that it doesn't point out actual numbers or percentages and to add a descriptor to the byline for student voices that these students were the 2019-2020 student representatives to the Board of Education.

Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Vote on main motion: Motion passes unanimously.

Tuition for the 2020-2021 School Year:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the increase in the tuition rate to \$20,200 for the 2020-2021 school year. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mr. Bienkowski said this amount is for students not connected to Newtown. The staff members get the discount. We only had one outside student in the last 10 years that paid the full tuition rate.

Motion passes unanimously.

Healthy Food Certification:

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education Board of Education will not comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Such certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeteria, and fundraising activities on school premises, whether or not school sponsored. Mr. Cruson seconded.

Mr. Bienkowski said Newtown High School is not part of the National School Lunch Program so if we were to comply we wouldn't be able to sell foods we sell at the high school which is making money. There is only one option to comply or not to comply.

Motion passes unanimously.

First Read of Policies:

Mrs. Harriman-Stites reported that Policy 5145.14 On-campus Recruitment is an edit of a current policy based on CABE and legal guidance and includes recruiting for vocational and technical high schools and the military.

Policy 5145.2 Activism and Dissent is a combination between two policies around freedom of speech and activism.

Ms. Zukowski asked where the language came from.

Mrs. Harriman-Stites said CABE sends a few versions and we combine those into what works best for us.

Mr. Cruson said the policy CABE sent over matched what we had.

Item 7 – Public Participation - none

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education go into executive session to discuss non-union wages for 2020-2021 and the evaluation of the Superintendent and invite Dr. Rodrigue. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 8 – Executive Session

Executive session began at 9:32 p.m.

Item 9 – Public Session for Vote on Executive Session Item

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education approve the salary adjustments for all non-union employees for 2020-2021 as per the Superintendent's recommendation. Mr. Cruson seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

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

Item 10 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Daniel J. Cruson, Jr.
Secretary

**Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education special meeting held virtually on June 25, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.

M. Ku, Chair
D. Delia, Vice Chair
D. Cruson, Secretary
D. Leidlein
J. Vouros
R. Harriman-Stites
D. Zukowski

L. Rodrigue

Item 1 – Call to Order

Mrs. Ku called the special meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

MOTION: Mr. Delia moved that the Board of Education go into executive session for the purpose of a discussion of the Assistant Superintendent's contract and Superintendent's evaluation and invite Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue. Mr. Cruson seconded.
Motion passes unanimously.

Item 2 – Executive Session

Mrs. Harriman-Stites left the meeting at 4:15 p.m.
Executive session ended at 4:40 p.m.

Item 3 – Public Session for Action on Assistant Superintendent's Contract

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

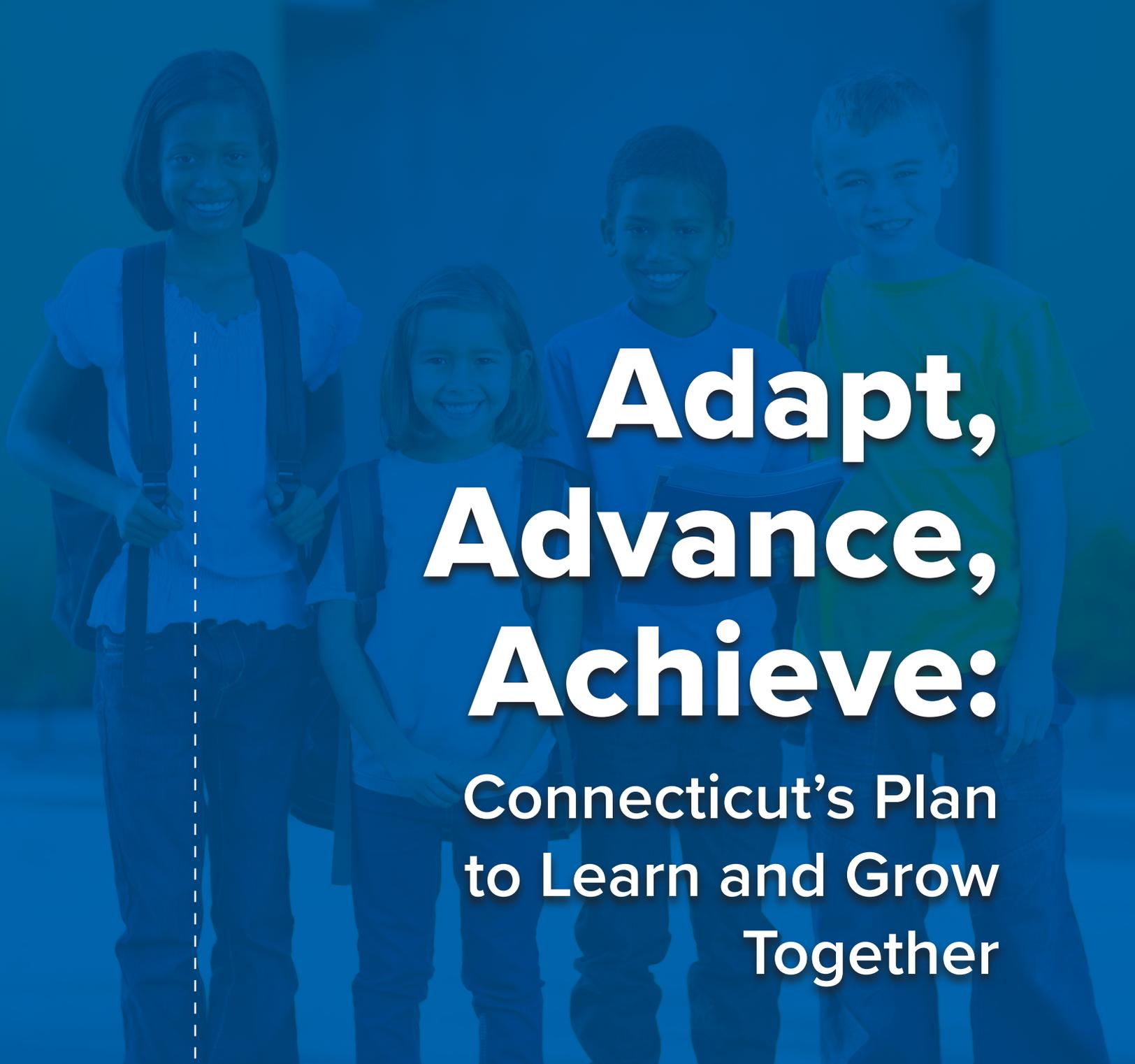
MOTION: Mr. Delia moved to adjourn. Mr. Vouros seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 4 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Daniel J. Cruson, Jr.
Secretary

A photograph of four diverse children of various ages, all smiling and wearing backpacks, set against a blue background. The image is partially obscured by a white dashed vertical line on the left side.

Adapt, Advance, Achieve:

Connecticut's Plan
to Learn and Grow
Together

Connecticut State
Department of Education

June 29, 2020



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1. Acknowledgments

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and members of the State Board of Education would like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to this document. This work reflects the input of classroom teachers, school counselors, principals, superintendents, parents, students, and facilities leaders across the state of the Connecticut. Their input was instrumental in the development of this document. Specifically, we would like to extend our appreciation to:

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

Additionally, the leadership of the CSDE would like to acknowledge the incredible work of the entire department staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. The creation of the materials compiled in this document would not have been possible without the contributions of each member of the CSDE team. We also recognize that this pandemic will forever change the way public education looks in our state and across the nation. The success of our districts going forward will depend directly on the work of our dedicated leaders and staff.

State of Connecticut

Ned Lamont, Governor

Connecticut State Department of Education

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2. Foreword

It has been 100 years since educational, public health, and governmental leaders have had to grapple with the challenges we are facing today, and have been facing for the last several months. When the effects of the pandemic required that schools across Connecticut cancel in-school classes during March, it took moments to realize that education in Connecticut would be forever changed. Connecticut has long been focused on providing all students with equity and excellence in education, and this pandemic has forced us to further focus on the inequalities that still exist within our system and to begin to address them with renewed fidelity.

For the last several months, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has been working hand in hand with the Office of the Governor, educational stakeholders, and philanthropic leaders to identify the technological needs of students across our state, and we've begun to address the issues of device access and internet connectivity. Eliminating those obstacles will bring us one step closer to leveling the playing field for all of our students in the event that we find ourselves in a similar remote learning situation in the future.

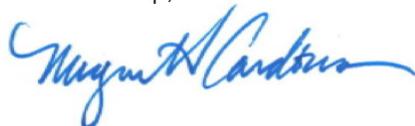
Similarly, access to universal high quality online curriculum has also been a barrier for our students in under-resourced districts. We recognize that in order to create future-ready learning environments, teachers, students, and families require access to high quality, high impact resources and curricular materials. Beginning June 30, 2020, the CSDE will launch the CT Learning Hub. This will be a place for universal access to curated high-quality, high-impact online learning content for math, English language arts, science, social studies, the arts, physical education and more anytime, anywhere. The CT Learning Hub is a free and interactive webpage of digital resources to support online and offline learning that will provide one more component to achieving true equity for our learners whether they are inside or outside of the classroom.

We must work together towards a collective goal to ensure that our students have highly effective and innovative instructional plans whether in school, in a hybrid environment, or through remote learning. Instruction must remain student-focused, flexible, and take advantage of the strengths of our communities, families, students, and teachers.

The thought of returning to schools is daunting for many teachers, students and parents alike. A fear of the unknown is natural. The CSDE has engaged repeatedly with state and local educational and public health experts to craft the following plan, keeping both the educational and public health needs of our students and educators in mind. We realize that going back to school will not look exactly the same in every schoolhouse across the state. Districts will be operating within their community and school buildings' unique circumstances. As such, this plan provides districts with a roadmap — guardrails to operate within - while allowing districts some flexibilities to create reopen plans that will most effectively serve their unique communities.

This document is intended to be a fluid document that will evolve based on the public health data trends as well as the understanding of the best way to mitigate spread. As we proceed toward the fall, we will continue to receive input from our educational partners, students, and families and will continue to work toward providing the best opportunities for our greatest resource—the students in the State of Connecticut.

In Partnership,



Miguel A. Cardona, Ed. D.
Commissioner of Education

3. Introduction

Guiding Principles

The following document is provided for local educational agencies (LEAs) as they begin planning for the fall. Because experts are continuing to learn more about COVID-19 and the conditions surrounding the pandemic are continually changing, this preliminary guidance will likely evolve and be amended or supplemented. Individualized considerations based upon unique circumstances in each school district may also be needed. Each LEA should use this document as a guide and consult with all relevant stakeholders to determine the best way to proceed consistent with the requirements.

As Connecticut schools plan to reopen, the guidance and considerations outlined in this document are grounded in six guiding principles:

1. Safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff;
2. Allowing *all* students the opportunity to return to school *full time* starting in the fall;
3. Monitoring the school, students, and staff and, when necessary, potentially canceling classes in the future to appropriately contain COVID-19 spread;
4. Emphasizing equity, access, and support to the students and communities that are emerging from this historic disruption;
5. Fostering strong two-way communication with partners such as families, educators, and staff; and
6. Factoring into decisions about reopening the challenges to the physical safety, social-emotional well-being, and the mental health needs of our students when they are not in school.

LEAs should enter into planning understanding that health developments may influence decisions to transition to a different instructional model.

Specifically, LEAs must balance their planning with contingency plans to provide robust blended learning or remote blended learning for all grades in the event that a school, district, or region has to cancel or limit in-person classes due to health precautions. Guidance on standards for quality blended learning is being developed and will be available on the CSDE website.

While the guiding principles of this document will require all LEAs to approach this with a certain level of consistency, LEAs retain discretion in implementing the approach to full time reopening. School boards are encouraged to develop local teams and secure input from all members of the community regarding the complex approach to resuming classes in the fall. The CSDE will stand ready to provide technical support and anticipates that this document will be followed by ongoing support documents, resources, and a variety of templates to assist local planning.

Equity

“What if we use this time to re-purpose our leadership structures to build our leadership muscle to be strategic equity leaders instead of reactive leaders. Strategic equity leaders identify education challenges through an equity lens and engage others in collaborative inquiry to figure out what to do to address the challenges. Strategic equity leaders build the competencies of others to interrupt status quo ways of doing things that perpetuate inequities...”

— Vasquez, [The National Equity Project](#)

During the fall of 2019, Connecticut education leaders representing the CSDE, the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), and the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) issued a joint statement due to a number of high profile acts of racism and anti-Semitism involving students in Connecticut schools. That statement emphasized our mutual commitment to providing all students with school environments “where they do not feel threatened regardless of their race, gender, gender identity or expression, religion, nationality, status of citizenship, or sexual orientation. It is our core responsibility as educators to do everything we can to foster environments that ensure equity, diversity and inclusion.”

The return to school is being contemplated amidst a global pandemic and national demonstrations generated by the recent, yet too familiar, acts of racial and social injustice against communities of color. In the midst of this crisis, our students, educators, families, and communities are searching for the way forward. It is critically important that we deeply examine policies, practices, and pedagogy through a culturally responsive and racial equity lens. Further, inequities such as access to devices/technology, access to high quality curriculum, access to social-emotional and mental health supports, and issues of exclusionary discipline must be addressed.

In the voice of a student:

“Attention toward Mental Health — We are all experiencing one trauma together, instead of just forcing us through it, talk about it with openness. So many students are struggling, and so few are saying things. Have people check in on them, have someone reach out. A lot of students need it.”

(Connecticut Student ThoughtExchange June 2020)

Educators need to be self-reflective so we are not blind to discrimination, inequity, racism, implicit bias, and white privilege. Only by addressing these issues head-on, providing professional learning for all staff, explicit engagement of students and families, and having courageous conversations, will we make positive progress and create truly equitable schools.

The CSDE along with our partnering educational organizations throughout the state will continue to provide extensive resources, guidance, and support to LEAs in their work to reduce the negative effects of inequity and to assert our roles as equity leaders. Our students and their families deserve our commitment. While resources alone will not change personal attitudes, which is necessary to accomplish these goals, we must continue to learn together to forge our way forward.

Key

How to Use this Document

Each section contains three main components:

Introduction, if applicable



Requirements are defined as elements that the Office of the Governor, the CSDE, and/or the Connecticut State Department of Public Health have identified as necessary for the LEA to complete or comply with in order to open schools successfully in the fall.



Guidance is defined as considerations put forth by the CSDE or referenced entity rooted in best practice, experience, and research that will aid in the successful reopening of schools in the fall.

This document reflects preliminary guidance and considerations as of the date published, and should not be interpreted as mandates, except where there is indication of a requirement. This is a working document that may be revised as public health conditions evolve.

4. Priorities

The chart below addresses the priority requirements and considerations based upon questions and feedback received to date. These issues are addressed in more depth further in this document.

Fall Reopening Model

LEAs should plan to have all students, in all districts, return to schoolhouses for full-time instruction at the beginning of 2020–2021, so long as public health data continues to support this model. This model will be supported with more intensive mitigation strategies and specific monitoring, containment and class cancellation plans.

In addition to full-time instruction plans as indicated above, LEAs must be prepared to modify their plans to support a partial reopening or to allow for scaling back at a future date if the public health data changes.

Priorities:

Operational Model:

- Prepare to initiate in-school instruction accessible to the full student population.
- Plan for educational opportunities to be primarily in-person, but allow for students and parents to choose not to participate based upon individual considerations.
- Establish a continuum of strategies for implementation of in-person schooling that anticipates potential alternative programs and robust blended learning if future public health data requires class cancellations. This will require engagement of contingent plans for blended learning, including but not limited to a mix of remote blended learning, synchronous and asynchronous class meetings, and other educator and staff outreach to students. Remote learning is defined as situations where students and educators are not physically present in a traditional classroom environment, and where instruction is relayed through technology, e.g., learning management systems.

Equity:

- Identify gaps and develop action plans for reopening that specifically address inclusion, equity, and access for all learners with strategies and clearly defined action steps.

Cohorts:

- Emphasize grouping students by the same class/group of students and teacher (into a cohort) so each team functions independently as much as possible.
- Consider this methodology by grade levels. Placing students in cohorts is strongly encouraged for grades K–8, and encouraged where feasible for grades 9–12.

Facilities:

- Prioritize collection of data from families to confirm the intent to participate, as that may affect facilities and operations planning.
- Review building space and reconfigure available classroom space, such as gymnasiums and auditoriums, to maximize social distancing, consistent with public health guidelines in place at that time.
- Review community and municipal spaces with local stakeholders to determine additional capacity and availability if school building space is inadequate. Technical support will be available as needed.

Transportation:

- Plan for buses to operate close to capacity with heightened health and safety protocols, including requiring all students and operators wearing face coverings. Plans must be developed to activate increased social distancing protocols based upon community spread.

Health and Safety Policies and Protocols:

- Expect all students and staff to wear a protective face covering or face mask that completely covers the nose and mouth when inside the school building, allowing for certain exceptions.

Monitoring, Containment, and Class Cancellations Plan

- Develop robust monitoring and containment protocols, and class cancellation plans, in the event there are public health indicators that may require temporary closure of the building, such as evidence of community transmission in the school.
- If public health data requires partial reopening, or if schools' containment efforts require partial closure, prioritize the return of vulnerable learner groups, with specific protocols to increase the in-school population over time until full in person instruction is achieved.

Fall Reopening Model

In assessing the approach to a required operating model, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) considered input from school representatives, educators, families and students, educational stakeholders, advocacy organizations, and union representatives, and conducted a review of nationally and globally published school reopening plans for the 2020–2021 school year.

Due to positive containment efforts in Connecticut, reopening schools in person can be successfully achieved based upon current data. Connecticut has determined it is appropriate to plan a consistent approach to the operating model, but be prepared to modify plans as necessary. Ultimately, the importance of access to in-person schooling rose as a priority related to educational opportunities, student safety and well-being, and social-emotional learning. Maximizing in-person instructional time after the current period of disruption is critical. However, given the uncertainty planning for reopening months from now, schools must be prepared to modify their reopening model to support a partial reopening if the public health data changes.

LEAs made strong and often very successful efforts at safeguarding students' social-emotional learning opportunities, and emotional safety during the spring of 2020 when in-person classes were canceled. Nonetheless, isolation outside of the schoolhouse is not ideal for students over

longer periods of time. For different age groups, multiple variables support the need for full-time education in school. In some cases, physical safety and access to basic needs such as food, supervision, and shelter are also strong factors in opening schools to students in the fall.

Another top priority that supports a full-time in-school model is to ensure equitable access to education, and mitigating any barriers to education or opportunity gaps that increased during the pandemic. Efforts to support equity, close the opportunity gap, and provide a wide range of support for students in the state is best achieved with in-person schooling opportunities for all ages.

As noted herein, however, structuring a statewide approach to the operating model and scheduling will only be successful when implemented in conjunction with a strong monitoring and containment strategy, which may ultimately result in schools, districts, or regions making individualized decisions in response to specific student/staff diagnoses, or changing public health data in a particular school or region. The CSDE and Department of Public Health (DPH) understand the importance of consistent decision-making should public health data require either modification of the reopening model, or that in the future students return to remote learning. Therefore, LEAs should expect forthcoming guidance from DPH to establish a tiered system to guide decision-making if additional public health and safety restrictions are required.

Temporarily Choosing Not to Participate



Requirements

- Plan for parents and students who may temporarily choose not to participate in the return to school. There are defined requirements when participation of a student in the schoolhouse is limited due to a verified medical reason. However, parents and guardians may also voluntarily choose for students to temporarily engage in learning from home for a variety of other reasons. LEAs should develop temporary support options for students who continue remote learning from home, including but not limited to offering families the robust educational support options outlined in [Academics on page 28](#). In developing these plans, options include but are not limited to:
 - Consider how retired teachers and/or teachers who voluntarily identify as “high risk” or otherwise need to be accommodated outside of the school house may support operational needs via remote learning, including but not limited to the following:
 - Working with students (virtually) who are unable to attend school;
 - Developing and implementing district professional development (PD) (virtual or in person);
 - Assisting with continued PD to train teachers who need assistance with best practices for virtual teaching and learning. [See also Staffing and Personnel, page 44.](#)
 - Serving as online tutors for those who need additional assistance.
- CSDE, in consultation with stakeholders, will continue to support LEAs in developing options for students and families choosing not to participate, including by issuing future guidance.

School Liaison, Communications Plans, and Data Collection

Having a central contact and effective communications plan will be important for schools to perform effective outreach to stakeholders, families, staff, advocates, and other community partners. Schools should plan active communication before and during reopening, and cover a variety of topics, including but not limited to, COVID-19 related cleaning and hygiene protocols, prevention action items, and distribution of information if there is a need to cancel classes in whole or in part. This should include feedback from the school community, particularly as you begin implementation of different policies and protocols. A variety of communication resources related to COVID-19 are available on the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](#).



Requirements

School Liaison:

- Designate an employee to serve as a COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison. This designated person will be responsible for engaging with students, parents, faculty, staff, and administrators to answer questions or concerns about health and safety requirements regarding COVID-19 concerns (e.g., school nurse). All school staff and families should know and have the contact information for the designee. This role can be assigned to an administrator or someone with the authority to address compliance issues.

Communications Plan:

- Put systems in place to communicate the most up to date policies and protocols related to the considerations herein, for staff, students, and families. Schools should leverage multiple communication methods (mail, e-mail, phone calls, text messaging, social media, LEA and school websites). Ensure all policies and protocols are clearly marked with version and date, as they may change over time. Consider a COVID-19 landing page in which communication and guidance can be updated regularly.
- Make communications plans available in relevant languages of families in the community, as well as accessible to those with visual and/or hearing impairments.
- Ensure the development of plans for ongoing two-way communication with the school community (staff, families, and students) about any new policies and/or protocols *prior* to reopening, any time there is a significant policy change, and upon re-entry if a school closes temporarily during the year. This should include feedback and consultation regarding the implementation of those policies.
- Develop expectations around frequency of communication, and ensure detailed updates are provided any time critical information regarding policies, protocols, or health data changes.
- Put in place a plan for how the community will be notified of any changed policies, need to cancel classes, or other changes or restrictions. [See also Cancellation of Classes, Remote Learning, and Reopening Plan, page 24.](#)
- Make plans easily accessible, including but not limited to being visible on the main landing page of the LEA and school websites.
- Ensure these baseline requirements related to communication are the overarching principles applied to other communication plans referenced in this document.

Data Collection:

- Prioritize gathering information from families prior to reopening. Collect information from families to properly plan for resuming classes in the fall. For example, assess whether certain families will choose not to participate and instead continue with remote learning, and, if so, how that may affect facilities and operations planning.

5. Operations Plan

Before July 24, 2020, LEAs and all school operators, including but not limited to choice programs, charter schools, and endowed academies will be expected to submit a plan to the CSDE addressing the requirements outlined in this document. Connecticut Unified School District 1 (USD #1) and Unified School District (USD #2), provide unique programming including classes in residential settings, and measures necessary to protect the health and safety of students and staff in these districts may require flexibility of these guidelines, and working strategically with the CSDE and DPH related to submission of these plans. While the CSDE will not approve such plans, they will be retained and best practices communicated and will allow CSDE to provide technical support for those LEAs who require it. School administrators should work closely in consultation with local health officials and municipalities to develop appropriate plans that comply with the current public health guidance.

[The Connecticut LEA School Reopening Template](#) is provided here as a compilation of the critical requirements identified within this document needing to be addressed for each local educational agency (LEA) or school operator in submitting their reopening plan.

Facilities

Classroom Layout



Requirements

- Maximize social distancing between student workstations, achieving 6 feet when feasible, when determining the classroom layout. Desks should face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), or students should sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.
- Where necessary, assess other space that may be repurposed for instruction in the school, in municipal or other community space, or if the school will require additional modular space.
- Maximize space between the teacher and students due to the risk of increased droplets from teachers during instruction. If a teacher removes face covering or mask during instruction, spacing should be increased beyond six feet. For teachers who stay seated, a physical barrier may be an effective option.



Guidance

- Determine the exact student-to-teacher ratio based upon individual student needs and available space. Both students and additional support professionals should be considered when assessing the appropriate density for a room.
- Install floor markings to illustrate social/physical distancing.
- Use outdoor instruction where health and safety conditions and physical space allow, considering, for example, allergies and/or asthma symptoms.
- Ensure the classroom cohort will have access to washing stations, and if necessary, plan for temporary washing stations or hand sanitizer dispensers.

Reopening of Facilities Before First Day of Classes



Requirements

- Comply with DPH [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting of Schools](#) during COVID-19.
- Comply with DPH [Return to Service Guidance](#) for Building Water Systems.



Guidance

- Review floor plans, consider space, and perform any facility maintenance required.
- Ensure that every school building has a health room with running water.
- Ensure that an isolation room has been identified in every school building.
- Ensure that all [water](#) and [ventilation](#) systems are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown.
- Perform any necessary deep cleaning that may help prepare the building for students to return in-person.
- Consider allowing small cohorts to enter school prior to reopening to give them time to understand the new policies and protocols, and practice the changed routines and rules.

Signs and Messages



Requirements

- Ensure all signs and messages related to stopping the spread are accessible for students with disabilities and in languages appropriate for the school population.



Guidance

- Focus on distribution of information and regular communication about the actions school communities can take to [stop the spread](#). This includes posting [signs](#) in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, staff areas, and restrooms) that [promote everyday protective measures](#), and providing instruction related to [properly washing hands](#) and [properly wearing a cloth face coverings](#). Educate students about how coronavirus is spread, and how preventative actions help avoid the spread (for example, that masks keep droplets out of the air and hand hygiene keep the virus out of one's mouth/nose/eyes).
- Broadcast regular [announcements](#) related to stopping the spread on school intercoms, and ensure related resources (e.g., messages and [videos](#)) are distributed when communicating with staff, students, and families (such as on school websites, in emails, and on school [social media accounts](#)).
- Place signs near sinks reminding students and staff to wash hands before and after using the restroom.
- Find free CDC print and digital resources in several languages on CDC's [communications resources](#) main page.

Ventilation



Requirements

- Comply with DPH [Guidance for School Systems for the Operation of Central and non-Central Ventilation Systems](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Guidance

- Plan to inspect building systems regularly to ensure they are operating properly. This includes but is not limited to developing a schedule to perform preventive maintenance, remediation (including necessary filter replacements), and repairs before opening and promptly when needed.
- Refresh stale indoor air by opening windows. Consider, however, how to avoid circumstances where opening a window may pose a health threat, such as exacerbating asthma or allergy symptoms or creating fall risks for young students where the open window is accessible.

- For facilities with central ventilation systems, increase ventilation rates and increase the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system where possible. For facilities where a central ventilation system is not used, window air conditioning units should be adjusted to maximize fresh air intake into the system, blower fans should be set on low speed and pointed away from room occupants to the extent possible.
- Ceiling fans should be adjusted so that fins are rotating in a direction that draws air up toward the ceiling rather than down onto occupants. Window fans should be turned to exhaust air out of the window in the direction of the outdoors. Window fans that blow air into a room or free-standing fans that only serve to circulate existing air around a room should not be used.

No-Touch Usage



Guidance

- Enable no-touch usage of items such as doors, trashcans, and bathroom fixtures, where possible.
- Where no touch technologies are not available, prop open doors in accordance with fire and safety codes, and remove trash lids.

Training Related to Facilities



Requirements

- Identify the training needs of staff related to health and safety protocols; perform such training prior to the first day of classes.
- For consistency and to facilitate refresher trainings, consider designating 1-2 people in each building to serve as trainers.
- Plan an in-person or online training that includes: social distancing; cleaning protocols; and hygiene practices. Require attendance by all students and staff, and make available to families who are interested. Consider repeating this training during the first months that school reopens, and as needed.
- Ensure training is provided to substitutes or others who may enter the school outside of the first day or typical calendar start.



Guidance

- Consider having training days and days to practice new protocols with staff only prior to having students enter the building.

Bathroom Protocols



Requirements

- Comply with DPH [guidance for cleaning and disinfecting of schools](#) during COVID-19.
- Maximize use of disposable towels in lieu of hand dryers, due to ventilation considerations. Turn off and avoid use of hand dryers.



Guidance

- Review the school floorplan and consider ahead of time the best way to use, assign, and access bathrooms.
 - Identify at least one separate bathroom near the isolation room, preferably single stall, that would be used in conjunction with any individual who began experiencing symptoms while at school.
 - Plan and communicate ways to maximize social distancing in multi-stall shared bathrooms.
 - Assess ways specific bathrooms should be assigned to student cohorts, if possible.

- Increase cleaning and disinfection of bathrooms consistent with CDC [disinfecting and cleaning guidelines](#). Set up policies and protocols for bathroom use to minimize contact with surfaces.
 - Optimize ventilation and fresh air intake.
 - When consistent with fire code, privacy considerations, and health and safety requirements, consider propping doors open.
 - Place a trashcan and paper towel roll by the bathroom door to allow students and staff to use in order to prevent from touching the handle with their hands.
 - Install touch-free single-use paper towel dispensers, garbage bins, faucets, urinals, and toilets if possible.
 - Discourage storage of any personal items within the bathroom (including staff bathrooms).

Daily Operations

Flexibility and Compartmentalization of Protective Measures



Requirements

- Develop the policies and protocols related to facilities and operations with the understanding that schools may need to react quickly to changing conditions.
- Ensure options to increase, or relax restrictions are available throughout the school year to respond effectively to changes in public health data. This requires compartmentalized solutions that can be deployed or recalled in a timely and organized way. [See also Cancellation of Classes, Remote Learning, and Reopening Plan, page 24.](#)

Class Groups and Teams (Cohorts)

The purpose of cohorting is to limit the number of students who are exposed to or may be diagnosed with COVID-19 if there is community transmission in a school. Maintaining stable cohorts helps to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19.

A “cohort” is a group or team of students and educators with consistent members that stay together throughout the school day.



Guidance

- Implement the key strategy of establishing stable cohorts within the school population, when feasible. Placing students in cohorts is **strongly encouraged** for grades K–8, and **encouraged where feasible** for grades 9–12.
- Develop a system for cohorting and logging for the purposes of contact tracing, if necessary, if there are interactions between different cohorts.
- Ensure cohorts are not based upon any specific demographic or disability criteria.
- Educate students, families, and staff on the value of cohorts. Ensure they understand that other health and safety guidelines remain important to minimize the risk of infection.
- Restrict the mixing of cohorts. Pay particular attention to eating times, open periods, and study halls.
- Assign classroom groups with teams of teachers and support personnel, and as much as possible restrict mixing between teams.
- Notify families of the cohorts so that they can use that information when scheduling any activities, carpools, or other engagement outside the schoolhouse.
- When possible, have teachers of specific academic content areas rotate, instead of student groups.

- Maximize other safety precautions where cohorts may have contact, such as more closely monitored use of facial coverings, hand washing and sanitizing between cohorts.
- When assessing the best approach to restriction of mixing teams, consider eating periods, open periods, and study halls.
- Where schools have different entrances, assign cohorts a specific entry and exit that remains consistent day-to-day. Consider similar design for assignment of restrooms, classrooms, and outside space where it is possible to restrict primary use to a single cohort, or consistent group of cohorts.

Foot Traffic, Hallways, and Shared Areas



Guidance

- Limit face-to-face encounters by designating foot-traffic patterns — such as one-way hallways and staircases — and by designating entrance-only and exit-only doors, when feasible.
- Install markings on floors to illustrate foot-traffic expectations.
- Consider staggering passing in hall by changing schedules around periods to ensure students change rooms, if necessary, at different times.
- Keep traffic moving in stairways and halls.

Outside Time and Playgrounds



Guidance

- Schools should assess ways to minimize exposure from playground and fitness equipment use, including but not limited to ensuring only the team cohort uses it at the same time, hand washing before and after use or use of hand sanitizer, and disinfecting fitness equipment or other smaller outside equipment after each group of students' use.
- Consider staggering recess times for each class/cohort.
- Plan increased supervision to monitor social distancing, as appropriate.

Other Individuals Entering the School Building



Requirements

- Develop consistent policies to address when clubs, before- and after-school programs, or other voluntary groups may be allowed to use school space. Include ways to safely allow access for before- and after-school and childcare programs.



Guidance

- Consider limiting or restricting nonessential volunteers and visitors, and activities held in the school such as assemblies or larger gatherings. Have a clear policy defining essential building access for parents, such as for PPT meetings, or consider virtual meetings when possible.
- Assess how parent access to buildings can be structured to facilitate compliance with CDC and other public health recommendations.
- Plan effective ways to communicate cleaning and hygiene protocols [as recommended by the CDC](#).
- In addition to full [cleaning and disinfection](#), plan to spot-disinfect high-touch surfaces throughout the day. These surfaces include soap and paper towel dispensers, doors within toilet stalls, and toilet handles.
- Consider delaying cleaning when school is not in session such as over the weekend, when possible and particularly if there is a suspected case, to allow for passive decontamination. For example, schedule deep cleanings on weekends for Sunday, not on Friday afternoon immediately after students and staff leave.

Choice Programs



Guidance

- Consider the unique characteristics of choice programs in planning for the year, particularly since students participate from various towns and regions. Plan to work strategically with the CSDE to make plans to adhere to these guidelines while also allowing flexibility if required to facilitate the programs.

Child Nutrition



Requirements

- Schools and institutions that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program, and Special Milk Program (SMP) as applicable, must continue to determine eligibility for and make available free and reduced-price meals and snacks and free milk to all eligible students.
- Schools and institutions must comply with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) regulations and policies for school meals and milk including the meal pattern requirements.
- Schools and institutions that participate in the NSLP are required to claim meals/milk provided to eligible students using accurate counting and claiming methods. Additionally, the number of free and reduced-price meals served and claimed for reimbursement must have adequate documentation on file to support the claim.



Guidance

- **On-site Meal Service (for students while in school):** Determine the appropriate meal distribution method(s) (i.e., Cafeteria [or alternate] Pick-up Model, Classroom Delivery Model, or a Hybrid Delivery Model) of meal service based on social distancing, physical location, student traffic, space, staffing, etc.
- **Off-site Meal Service (for days students who are remote learning or for unanticipated school closures):** Determine model(s) of meal service delivery options to be implemented (i.e., Parent/student Pick-up on Remote Learning Days; Dismissal Time Distribution, and School Bus/School Vehicle Delivery).
- **Simultaneous Operation of Congregate and Non-Congregate meal Service:** Assess needs around work stations, social distancing of staff, the availability of food, equipment and supplies, storage space, staffing, etc.
- **Financial Considerations:** Determine the probability of increased costs to operate the school nutrition programs and the financial impact to the LEA if there is a decrease in revenue because of the inability to offer a la carte sales, catering and a potential decrease in meal counts and increases in expenses related to the costs of food, supplies and labor.
- **Cleaning and Sanitation:** Work in consultation with the appropriate local health departments on updated safety protocols, including standard operating procedures for sanitation of school kitchens, cafeterias, food warehouses, alternative meal distribution locations, and central production kitchens.
- **Communication with Families:** Notify parents and the school community about school meal service and options. Use a variety of communication methods such as social media, newsletters, and school websites.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Assess the need for PPE in food service operations such as masks, gloves, physical barriers in serving areas, etc.

Transportation

Providing student transportation to schools is an important legal mandate that requires ensuring that all students have access to education at school.

The CSDE will work strategically to plan for the fall with LEAs, and particularly with school choice programs, which face the additional challenges of multi-town transportation for students as plans are developed which adhere to these guidelines.

Preparation



Guidance

- Consider gathering data from families to properly plan for resuming classes in the fall, including an assessment of the number students expected to attend, and whether parents or guardians plan to transport their children.
- Consult with municipal leaders, including public safety officials, to assess the approach if the school determines parents/guardian transportation is an option, including whether the school can safely accommodate the traffic, and whether local streets will be impacted.
- Understand that parents or guardians generally cannot be compelled to transport their children if they choose not to, in which case the LEA maintains responsibility for transporting the student.
- Include all transportation providers, including public and contracted bus company representatives where applicable, in planning a return to service.

Pick Up/Drop Off



Guidance

- Assess if a staggered arrival and drop off, properly communicated, will enhance safety protocols in place.
- Plan vehicle flow and logistics particularly if there are more family transport vehicles.
- Consider arrival/departure procedures that limit unnecessary entrance of parents and guardians into the building.

Family or Guardian Transport



Guidance

- Consider ways to encourage parents and/or guardians to transport their children to schools. If parent and/or guardian transport is likely, schools should plan to safely accommodate new traffic patterns and foot traffic.
- Keep in mind the feasibility and availability of alternate transportation by parents/guardians.

Buses, Vans and Student Transportation Vehicles



Requirements

Protective strategies for bus transportation should align with the forthcoming tiered system established by DPH to assist leaders define the decision-making approach applied to individual school districts.



Safe Status

Bus transportation can operate with no restrictions.



Low Status

Bus transportation can operate up to full status with mask requirements and loading and unloading restrictions.



Moderate Status

Bus transportation can operate with seating and spacing restrictions, mask requirements, and loading and unloading restrictions.

Where either a vaccine is available or effective treatments for COVID-19 are available, bus transportation can operate as it did prior to the pandemic, with no restrictions.

Where there is low transmission risk in the community and some restrictions are in place in schools, buses will be able to operate up to full capacity. LEAs who believe they may need to operate buses at high capacity levels should prioritize assessing alternative options and increase monitoring of the mitigating strategies. Passengers will be required to wear a face mask or cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth during transit. The passenger's face covering must be in place prior to boarding the bus and must be kept in place until they are completely off the bus. Passengers should load into the bus from the back row to the front (where the first passengers onto the bus sit in the back row) and then unload the bus in a controlled manner upon arrival at the school from front to back by seat. This will reduce the number of people passengers walk by as they get on the bus and will prevent crowding in the center aisle when the bus arrives for unloading.

Passenger density should be significantly reduced when there is moderate spread, because schools will be employing remote blended learning when in this status. Bus passengers should be spaced with family members sitting together and non-family members should be spaced 6 feet apart utilizing alternating diagonal seating. Passengers will be required to wear a face mask or cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth during transit. The rider's face covering must be in place prior to boarding the bus and must be kept in place until they are completely off the bus. Students should load into the bus from the back row to the front (where the first passengers onto the bus sit in the back row) and then unload the bus in a controlled manner upon arrival at the school from front to back by seat. This will reduce the number of people passengers pass by as they get on the bus and will prevent crowding in the center aisle when the bus arrives for unloading.



Guidance

- Assess whether a temporary monitor on student transportation at the beginning of the school year will best facilitate successful compliance with school health policies as these new protocols are implemented, particularly for younger students.
- Provide back-up masks if students do not have face coverings when boarding the bus or van.
- Develop clear expectations for drivers and bus monitors related to face coverings and other safety measures.
 - Include a plan for instances where a student is waiting, and illustrate symptoms associated with COVID-19 that are observable to the bus operator.

- Do not allow passengers to change seats during the route.
- Plan to increase cleaning and sanitizing for all vehicles, and keep associated logs. Effectively communicate cleaning protocols to all staff, including measures to prevent harmful human exposure to chemicals.
- Magnet Schools, Charter Schools, Open-Choice Districts, and Connecticut Technical Education and Career System schools should consider the complexities of regional travel, and develop scenarios for how safe inter-district transportation will occur. Additional technical support from the CSDE will be provided for such unique transportation requirements.

Fiscal and Budgetary Considerations

The CSDE strongly encourages LEAs to work cooperatively in developing their budgets, with their local municipality and their local health departments, or in the case of regional boards of education with the participating municipalities. Regular, open lines of communication will allow limited resources to be shifted to critical priorities in a timely fashion.



Guidance

Securing Funding and Planning:

- Develop funding scenarios to support the multiple areas that may require increased funding, including but not limited to student equipment, protective materials and cleaning supplies, increased staffing and physical changes to school buildings to enhance health and safety measures. Consider whether a regional approach will help streamline securing items.
- Maximize access to available federal funding first through application for Elementary and Secondary Education Emergency Relief funds and Coronavirus Relief funds, then through application to the local municipality for FEMA and Coronavirus Relief Funds. Guidance on accessing these funding sources is available on the CSDE's website.
- Maximize the use and braiding of current federal program funds, as permitted, for which federal waivers have been secured to support LEA priorities.

Engaging Stakeholders: Consider a proactive approach in communicating with local unions, student service contractors, including private special education providers, contractual suppliers of equipment and supplies, transportation vendors, and have contingency plans in place for contractual modifications that may be necessary during the course of the school year.

Funding Priorities: Assess how funds can best support efforts to provide equity and access to all students. As LEAs develop spending plans for the year, review and consider the [state level priorities established by the Commissioner of Education](#). This includes:

- Equitable Access to Technology:
 - Survey families to collect information about devices and connectivity in their homes to support blended learning.
 - Update policies for school-owned devices. Consider allowing broader use to address families' need for telehealth access and other state agency support if school device is the only one in the household.
 - Prepare for the possibility a student, class, or school will require robust blended learning at some time during the school year.
 - Assess if funding would be appropriate to support training adult family members more effectively in accessing Internet and digital resources used for blended learning opportunities.
 - Consult the CT Learning Hub, [See Academics, page 28](#).

- Equitable Access to High Quality Online Curriculum Including Necessary Supports
 - Use funding to support further development, in consultation with state-provided resources, of high quality online curriculum, including necessary supports.
 - Unlike the initial wave of the pandemic during spring 2020 where there was little time to prepare, schools should be well equipped to provide robust learning opportunities to students in the event additional class cancellations occur during the 2020-21 school year.
- Education Recovery and Reopening Schools
 - Ensure fiscal and budgetary planning includes support for education recovery, including but not limited to funding for staffing for extended day/afterschool remedial programming; summer school or extension of the school year; and additional instructional supplies/equipment.
- Social-Emotional Well-being
 - Review the detailed content of this document related to social-emotional learning (SEL) needs of students, staff, and the school community, and plan financial support for a heightened need.

Reserving Funds: Reserve and plan funding to support the school board's contingency plans to support students in cases of class cancellations, including but not limited to the required budgeting to provide meals, address digital access issues, engage in robust blended learning, and support SEL.

Contracting, Insurance Policies, and Internal Protocols: Assess with board counsel if contracts need revisions to align with the district's approach to reopening. Also, consider any other insurance policies, internal processes, and money-handling policies to determine if changes, additional spending controls, or available budget balancing strategies will be necessary.

6. Health Practices And Protocols

Standard Public Health Practices and Adequate Supplies



Requirements

- Ensure that students are educated and engaged in the new expectations related to all public health policies and protocols. As part of this requirement, assess the best approach to communicating the information for the age group, and plan to set aside time at the beginning of the school year, as well as frequent reminders, to review the new policies and protocols.
- Familiarize all participants of the standard public health practices used to prevent the spread of diseases. These practices include, but are not limited to:
 - social distancing,
 - frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer,
 - use of face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth,
 - respiratory and cough etiquette, and
 - enhanced cleaning/disinfection of surfaces.
- Provide 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.



Guidance

- Educate and train the school community in the standard public health practices, to help them make appropriate decisions and comply with school health policies and practices. The CDC has [more detailed information on](#) this topic. Related to schools as workplaces, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has also provided important [measures for control and prevention](#) that should be communicated to the school community.
- Provide frequent reminders to students and staff of the importance of these precautions. Consider weekly refreshers on the key public health strategies.

Immunizations and Health Assessments



Requirements

- **Immunizations:** [Guidance from the Department of Public Health was issued dated June 17, 2020](#) emphasizing the importance of protecting students by staying up to date on immunizations.
- **Health Assessments:** [Guidance from the CSDE was issued dated June 26, 2020](#) outlining the requirements for [Health Assessments](#) prior to students enrolling in school.

Reporting Illnesses and Addressing Vulnerable Populations



Requirements

Staying at Home

- Instruct students and staff to inform the school if they are sick with COVID-19 related symptoms, particularly if they had a known contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 and have also had contact with the school population. They must stay home when they are sick, especially if they have COVID-19 symptoms such as fever and cough. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has provided [guidance](#) that confirms that, during a pandemic, it is permissible to ask employees if they are experiencing symptoms of the pandemic virus (such as fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat.) Employers must maintain all information about employee or student illness as a confidential medical record.
- Develop consistent protocols for information reporting, and a point person to appropriately receive and safeguard this information, such as the school nurse, district nursing supervisor, or principal.
- Educate staff and families about when to [stay home](#). Schools should properly communicate the content of this or any updated guidance.
 - Instruct staff and students (or their parents and guardians) to perform a self-assessment prior to leaving for school to identify fever and other possible COVID-19 symptoms. Communicate this expectation and provide parents with reminders about the [symptoms consistent with COVID-19](#) that require keeping their students at home. Examples include a check-list for parents or a web-based application such as Connecticut [How We Feel](#).
- Establish and communicate school-wide sick protocols, including signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and temperature thresholds requiring students or staff to stay home.
- Consistent with the applicable laws and school policies, offer options for school and work to staff and students with special healthcare needs (e.g., remote learning options, alternate or modified job responsibilities).



Guidance

Encourage staff members and teachers with concerns about individual risk factors to talk to their healthcare provider to assess their risk for working in an environment where social distancing might be difficult to maintain.

- Review and consider revising policies and procedures related to student and employee absences to ensure that policies do not incentivize coming into school even if sick (e.g., “perfect attendance” policies).
- Work with board counsel to properly apply and communicate any applicable leaves available for employees should they become sick, or have to quarantine due to exposure to COVID-19.

Returning to School

- Follow the relevant public health guidelines in place at that time and communicate with the local public health official related to the return. Review LEA policies to ensure they are consistent with those guidelines. At present, CDC's criteria to help inform when employees should return to work includes:
 - [If they have been sick with COVID-19](#)
 - [If they have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19](#)

Social Distancing



Requirements

- In conjunction with the considerations outlined above concerning classroom and hallway social distancing rules, assist staff and students to maintain social distancing between individuals to reduce the transmission of the virus per the public health guidelines at that time.
- Be prepared to adjust the approach to social distancing if guidance from the CDC or DPH changes due to shifting public health data or evolving understanding of COVID-19 disease, including transmission.



Guidance

- Maintain the recommended social distancing to the maximum extent possible.
- Prepare in advance for times when social distancing may be particularly difficult, including but not limited to:
 - Accommodating students with special health care needs or disabilities whose learning (e.g., direct instruction) or other needs (e.g., assisting with toileting or ambulation) may require closer proximity and/or direct contact.
 - Conducting health assessments or screenings when there is a suspicion that symptoms exist or there was exposure (e.g., the school nurse listening to lung sounds).

Material Sharing



Guidance

- Develop protocols to minimize the need to have multiple students sharing high touch materials to the extent possible. Plan in advance by determining if additional supplies are necessary. These materials include, but are not limited to books, computers, calculators, writing utensils, computer keyboards/headphones, and art supplies.
- Appropriately clean, disinfect, or sanitize materials at the end of each school day, consistent with [CDC guidelines](#).

Use of Face Coverings, Masks, and Face Shields



Face Covering

A cloth, paper, or disposable face covering that covers the nose and mouth; may or may not be medical grade



Face Shield

A clear plastic shield that covers the forehead, extends below the chin, and wraps around the sides of the face



Clear Plastic Barrier

A clear plastic or solid surface that can be cleaned and sanitized often



Requirements

- Adopt policies requiring use of face coverings **for all students and staff when they are inside the school building, with certain exceptions listed below.**
 - For anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance, face coverings and masks should not be required, [per CDC guidance](#).

- For anyone who has a medical reason making it unsafe to wear a face covering, masks should not be required.
- Be prepared to provide a mask to any student or staff member who does not have one.



Guidance

- Teach and reinforce use of [cloth face coverings](#).
- Frequently remind individuals not to touch the face covering and to [wash their hands](#) frequently.
- Provide staff, students, and students' families information on [proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings](#).
- Set clear guidelines regarding limited exceptions to use of face coverings when other mitigating practices are in place, such as:
 - For students, while eating, drinking, during PE, or when students are outside, and effectively practicing social distancing and any other possible mitigants. Exceptions may also be necessary for certain special education students or other special populations.
 - For teachers and staff, while teaching so long as they are properly socially distancing or remaining static behind a physical barrier as described herein, while eating, drinking, or when outside and effectively practicing social distancing and any other possible mitigants.
- Develop a consistent policy to address mask breaks throughout the day.
- Assess when face shields may be appropriate however, face shields alone are not a sufficient alternative to the wearing of face masks for source control, but rather both should be worn for additional protection. Educate staff on the fact that face shields protect the eyes, nose, and mouth from contamination from respiratory droplets, along with masks or respirators.
 - When medically appropriate, nurses should substitute use of metered dose inhalers and spacers for students with respiratory issues.
 - If aerosol-generating procedures cannot be avoided, address the need for additional protocols, including but not limited to use of face shields and increased protective equipment by staff (such as school nurses) who are involved in these type of procedures, such as provision of oxygen via high-flow nasal cannula, nebulizer treatments, and open suctioning.
 - Face shields worn with face masks may also be used by staff who support students with special healthcare needs (who are not able to wear masks and who may need assistance with activities of daily living, such as toileting, eating).
- If medically required or where services provided pursuant to an Individualized Education Program (IEP) would require it, including but not limited to for speech and language services, evaluations, language acquisition activities, etc., students and/or staff may wear face shields and clear masks, or remove masks when face coverings/masks are not appropriate for the activity. Any other possible mitigating strategy should be implemented in these cases, including but not limited to maximum social distancing.
 - Staff working with students who are not wearing face coverings due to one of the exceptions and also cannot maintain social distancing should be provided increased protective equipment, including but not limited to medical-grade masks and disposable gowns.

7. Health Monitoring Plan

Planning and Distribution of Information



Requirements

- Include in the LEA reopening plan written protocols for monitoring of symptoms that could be related to COVID-19, with the goal of decreasing the risk of spreading or contracting the virus and maintaining oversight related to the pandemic while complying with relevant privacy and health laws.



Guidance

- Review the most updated guidance on monitoring for COVID-19 and develop protocols consistent with the applicable recommendations.
 - As of the date of this document, [CDC guidance](#) provides that schools and childcare programs are not expected to daily screen students, students, or staff to identify cases of COVID-19. If a community (or more specifically, a school) has cases of COVID-19, local health officials will help identify those individuals and follow up on next steps.
 - While daily screenings by school staff are not required, be prepared if, at the recommendation of state and local departments of public health, screenings are initiated based on local factors such as a confirmed case or known exposures, or if a staff member of student presents with obvious symptoms.

Attendance Monitoring



Guidance

- Actively monitor staff and student absenteeism and track the reasons for their absences to identify any trends that would suggest spread of illness such as COVID-19.
 - Explore the ability to code student and staff absences with specific symptom codes within programs such as PowerSchool, fever or COVID-related symptoms are examples, compared to routine sick days.
 - Create a communication system for staff and families for self-reporting of symptoms, and for families to notify the school of known or presumed cases consistent with applicable privacy and confidentiality laws. [See Reporting Illnesses and Addressing Vulnerable Populations](#) section describing EEOC guidance.
- If, due to a containment plan, a school or region must cancel classes, be prepared to engage students and address attendance during periods of blended learning. [See Academics, page 28.](#)
- In forthcoming guidance related to parents and students who choose not to participate, attendance monitoring advice will be included.

8. Containment Plan



Requirements

- Include in the LEA reopening plan written protocols for containment and immediate response if an individual has signs or symptoms of COVID-19, there is a known exposure, or a member of the school community has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19. The purpose of containment plans are to decrease the risks of spreading COVID-19, and shall include the following:
 - Immediate coordination with the local health department, including being ready to comply with requests for information from the local health department to assist with contact tracing.
 - Identification of a response team within the school and LEA with specific responsibilities.
 - Consideration of what signs and symptoms exhibited by students or staff would require their immediate dismissal from school; for what period of time; and conditions for their re-admittance to school.
- If any person who has been present in school has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, the local health department must be notified immediately.
- Identify an “isolation room” (besides the health office) to accommodate students who exhibit symptoms consistent with COVID-19 until a parent or guardian arrives. Students should remain supervised in the isolation room. For the purposes of contact tracing, schools should log all persons who entered the room. The individual supervising the room must be equipped with proper PPE.
- Initiate recommended [CDC cleaning procedures](#) following a confirmed COVID-19 case.
- Review [CDC guidance](#) to ensure compliance with most up to date information regarding containment.
- Create a consistent policy for dismissal of students or staff who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 and must be dismissed from school. Include input, where appropriate, from the local health department, school medical advisor and school nurse supervisor.



Guidance

- Educate the school community about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19: see more information on the [CDC website](#). This will allow the community to best participate in observing, monitoring and when necessary, reporting symptoms.
- Provide resources to staff and families regarding local community testing, such as the contact information for [211](#).

9. Cancellation of Classes, Remote Learning, and Reopening Plans

Cancellation of Classes

LEAs must be prepared to adjust plans based on health indicators and guidance from health officials. Partial reopen plans must prioritize vulnerable populations, including but not limited to special education, those with barriers to remote learning, English Learners, and students in transition years.

LOW

- Schools operating up to 100% capacity, students/staff with underlying medical conditions should consider restrictions and blended/remote learning
- Buses up to full capacity with bus monitors recommended, facial coverings in place during transit, controlled loading/unloading of riders
- Face coverings for students and staff while inside school buildings
- Identification/isolation of sick students/staff
- Cohorting of students encouraged, particularly in younger grades, restrictions on congregating
- Maximize spacing of seating up to six feet when feasible
- Increased cleaning and sanitization protocols

DPH will be developing specific community and school-based indicators to assist leaders and define the appropriate decision-making approach.



MODERATE

- Schools operating at reduced capacity, with more reliance on hybrid model, blended/remote learning, prioritize access to school building for students who need the more learning support, including but not limited to those receiving special education, ELs or limited access due to devices or connectivity issues
- Buses at reduced capacity with bus monitors strongly recommended, facial coverings in place during transit, controlled loading/unloading of riders, spaced seating between unrelated riders
- Face coverings for students and staff while inside school buildings
- Maximize spacing of seating up to six feet or more when feasible with reduced class sizes
- Identification/isolation of sick students/staff
- Cohorting of students, restrictions on congregating, staggered start/stop times and hallway transit
- Indoor extracurricular activities should be suspended, sports and other outdoor activities should consider restrictions on activities
- Increased cleaning and sanitization protocols

DPH will be developing specific community and school-based indicators to assist leaders and define the appropriate decision-making approach.



HIGH

- Schools closed, 100% remote learning, bus transportation suspended, extracurricular activities, including sports, should be suspended



Requirements

- Develop a plan for school class cancellations and reopening to be implemented in the event that the superintendent, their designee, or state government suspends or cancels in-school classes for some or all participants.
- Notify and consult with the CSDE immediately if the LEA is contemplating class cancellations.
- Assume that any decision about school closure, reopening, or cancellation of school events will be made in coordination/collaboration with local health officials, and with the advice of the school medical advisor (if any) and school nurse supervisor.
- Anticipate that recommendations for the geographic scope (e.g., a single school, multiple schools, the full district, regionally), whether it will be partial or total, and duration of school dismissals will be made on a case-by-case basis using the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and the specific cases in the community.
- Include a communication plan and clear policies for faculty and staff regarding individual roles and responsibilities in the event of a shutdown occurring during the school year.
- Prioritize ongoing educational opportunities when drafting the plan for shutdown. Materials for continuity of learning must be made available to allow for school sessions to continue remotely.



Guidance

- Review the CDC's updated guidance to [K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs](#) regarding temporary dismissal of students or staff for two to five days, if they attended school before being confirmed as having COVID-19. Take into consideration advice from public health officials or municipal officials, where needed or requested.
 - Be aware that the initial short-term dismissal allows (1) time for the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation affecting the school and (2) for the necessary cleaning and disinfecting of the facility. Appropriate next steps, may include an extended dismissal duration after review of the circumstances and consultation with relevant experts.
- Ensure the plan addresses the impact of class cancellations on extracurricular activities and before- and after-school programs.
- Initiate recommended [CDC cleaning procedures](#) following a confirmed COVID-19 case. Decisions on which, if any, staff should be allowed in the school should be made in collaboration with your local health department and school medical advisor, if applicable. When possible, allow time to lapse between dismissal and cleaning procedures.

Future Planning for Remote Blended Learning



Requirements

- Be prepared to provide remote blended learning opportunities immediately upon cancellation of in-school classes.
- Develop a plan for extended absences and communicate it with parents or guardians in the event of a second extended closure. Particular attention must be placed on communicating the distribution of food and devices or learning materials. Materials must be modified for use by students who are differently abled or multilingual.



Guidance

- Be prepared to provide remote blended learning opportunities immediately upon cancellation of in-school classes. Blended learning is defined as learning that combines online digital media with classroom methods, with some element of student control over time, place, path, or pace. Blended learning can take place on site, on campus, in a single classroom, or in remote settings.
- Define remote learning for the community. Remote learning, where students are not physically present in a traditional classroom environment, may happen through various platforms, such as a learning management system.
 - LEAs should consider their ability to switch from onsite to remote learning based on need. This requires preparedness.
 - Remote learning provides an opportunity for students and teachers to remain connected and engaged with the content while working from alternate locations. The transition to remote learning can keep students on track so that when they return to physical, onsite school environments, they will not be required to complete an excessive amount of make-up work.
 - Many of the requirements for onsite learning can remain in place while teaching and learning in remote locations.
- Consult resources for teaching in a blended learning environment that is both synchronous and asynchronous which can be found in the [Plan to Reimagine CT Classrooms for Continuous Learning](#).
- Consult the [COVID-19 Resources for Educators](#) provided by the CSDE as a tool to support student learning during school closures. Topics found here include:
 - Content specific resources to support student learning organized by both discipline and grade band;
 - Resources around student data privacy, grading practices, assessment, and professional learning; and
 - Instruction for three-tiered model of SRBI (Scientific Research-Based Intervention), SRBI resources, and MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) behavioral resources.

Reopening Plan

If class cancellations were initiated and a determination must be made about the approach to reopening, consult the most up-to-date [decision tree related to schools](#) from the CDC. As of the date of this guidance, the decision tree is available [on page 27](#).

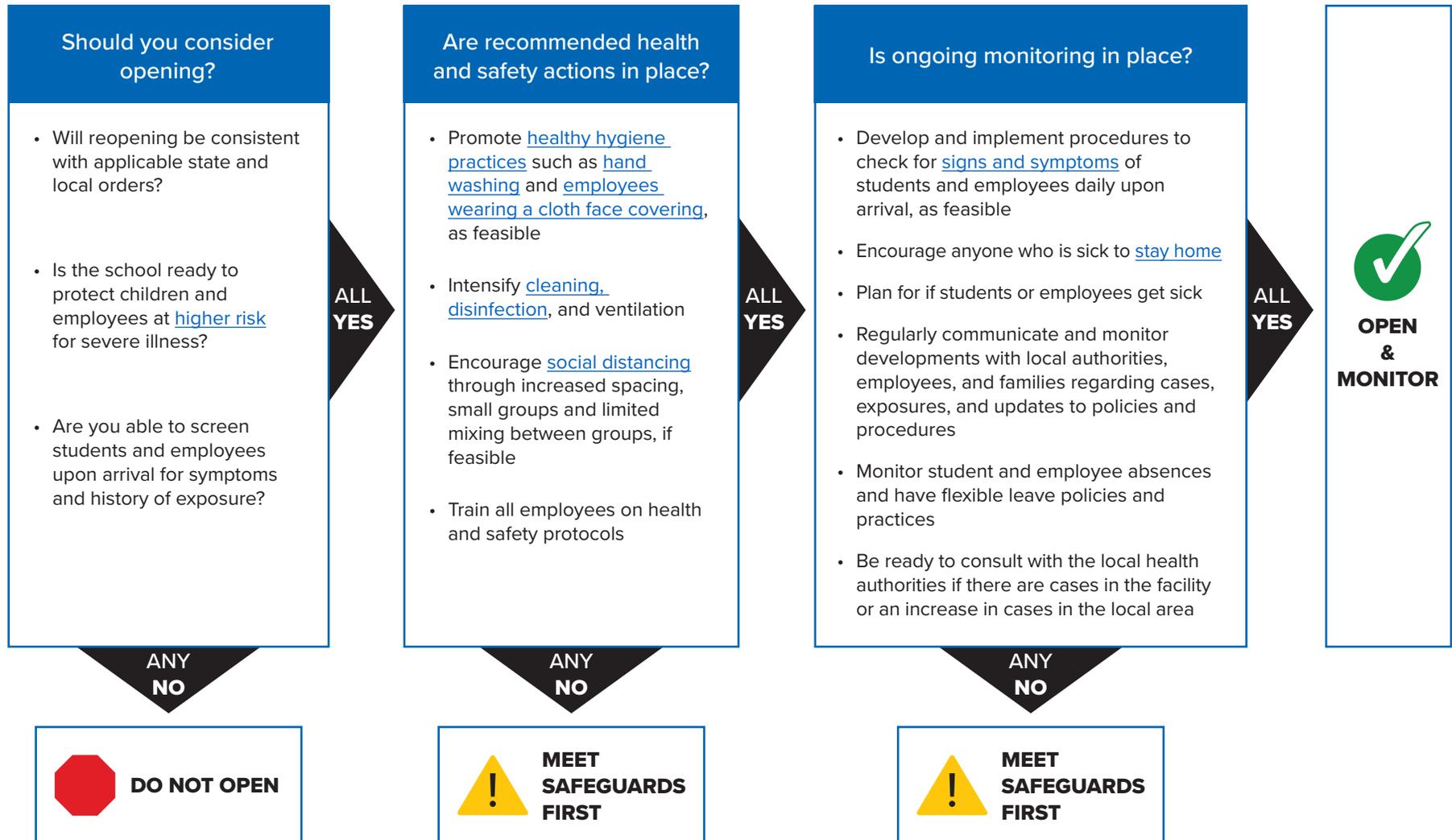
Also review the forthcoming DPH guidance.



cdc.gov/coronavirus

School Decision Tree

The purpose of this tool is to assist administrators in making (re)opening decisions regarding K–12 schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to check with state and local health officials and other partners to determine the most appropriate actions while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community.



10. Academics

CT Learning Hub

The CSDE recognizes that in order to create future ready learning environments, teachers, students, and families require access to high quality, high impact resources and curricular materials. Beginning June 30, 2020, the CSDE will launch the CT Learning Hub. A place for universal access to curated high quality, high impact online learning content for math, English language arts, science, social studies, the arts, physical education and more anytime, anywhere. The CT Learning Hub is a free and interactive webpage of digital resources to support online and offline learning.

When a teacher, student, or parent clicks into the CT Learning Hub, they will be able to click on a menu of resources for core content (math, literacy, science, social studies, SEL), professional resources like lesson planning and blended learning templates, parent resources on how to support learning at home, and other digital and non-digital resources (online and offline).

Plan to Reimagine CT Classrooms for Continuous Learning

Continuity of learning, academic growth, and student connectedness are critical components of student well-being. Routines and connections with educators provide required stability, security, and structure that can keep our students happy, active, engaged, and healthy. The term “continuous learning” means establishing and maintaining connections with students and families to provide learning materials and supports using a variety of communication channels and modalities (e.g., email, phone, printed learning materials, and available online platforms).

The CSDE *Plan to Reimagine CT Classrooms for Continuous Learning* provides school systems with design principles as recommendations for how to assess capacity, analyze available instructional and technology resources, develop an approach to providing extended remote learning opportunities, and implement an extended remote learning plan. Each district must make local decisions in line with their needs and available resources, while aligning with the CSDE Plan to Reimagine CT Classrooms for Continuous Learning.



Guidance

- The CSDE strongly encourages *all districts to develop and implement the Plan to Reimagine CT Classrooms for Continuous Learning in partnership with teachers, families, and local education boards.*

The ***Plan to Reimagine CT Classrooms for Continuous Learning*** provides detailed strategies and resources for implementation. Resources include:

- Design principles for blended learning
- Role of families, students, educators and administrators
- Scheduling the school day and instructional time examples
- Recommendations for the design of the school day
- Guidance for supporting special populations (special education and ELs)

Assessment Practices for 2020–21

Resources to support the data analysis to inform instruction by the numbers and beyond the numbers can be found in the [CSDE Sensible Assessment Practice](#).

As schools plan for reopening in the fall and integrating their learners back into school, it is important to remember the following:

- Two-thirds of the 2019–20 school year was completed normally through in-person classes.
- During the remote learning period, nearly 75 percent of students participated fully though the quality of the learning experiences may have varied widely.
- Over 17 percent of students across the state experienced family, health, and trauma barriers to greater participation in remote learning.
- There is no single, “magic-bullet” assessment — whether screening or diagnostic or summative — that can meet the needs of all stakeholders and satisfy all purposes.
- For the vast majority of students who will enroll in Connecticut public schools in fall 2020, teachers already have a lot of longitudinal information available to them (e.g., annual state tests, universal screenings, early reading assessments, district benchmark tests from fall and winter, IEP progress reports, English language proficiency test results for ELs, student attendance patterns, disciplinary events, district and school mobility, course grades/failures, etc.).



Guidance

The CSDE recommends the following approach that is designed to ease students back into learning, fill any gaps, advance equity, minimize testing time, increase instructional time, and empower teachers (also see [infographic on page 31](#)). These practices are intended to apply to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. The unique needs of these learners must be considered in the planning of both assessment and instruction, including the provision of supports, accommodations, and modifications as required in a student's IEP, Section 504 plan, or other intervention/learning plan.

Summer 2020 — Prior to the Start of School

- **Review Available Information:** This includes longitudinal data such as annual state tests, universal screening, early reading assessments, district benchmark tests from fall and winter, English language proficiency assessment results for ELs, IEP progress reports, student attendance patterns, disciplinary event, district and school mobility, course grades/failures, etc. Teachers can also learn a lot about their incoming class of students by talking individually with peers from the prior grade or in vertical teams. To assess means to evaluate or estimate. One does not need to administer a new test to “assess” students in fall 2020. Using multiple measures in lieu of a single test will result in a stronger “assessment” and better inferences. Students who are new to Connecticut public schools in 2020–21 will likely need a screening and/or overall assessment.
- **Plan the First Unit of Instruction:** To reduce student anxiety and ease them back into learning, educators should design the first unit of instruction for the start of the school year to not only engage students but also ensure that students will have a high probability of success with that unit. While the first unit is ideally an on-grade unit, in some instances it may be necessary for this unit to review standards from the prior grade. If a review approach is chosen for the first unit, then the selected content should emphasize the important prerequisite standards for new learning in the current grade.
- **Support Professional Learning:** Teachers may need professional learning opportunities on assessment/data literacy; formative assessment practices; differentiated instruction and personal learning; learning progressions of the Connecticut Core Standards; and blended learning (i.e., class that combines in-person classroom teaching with online instruction) approaches/tools.

Start of the School Year

- **Build Community with the New Class:** Some students may have experienced family issues, health emergencies, grief, and/or trauma due to the pandemic. Therefore, it is especially important in 2020–21 to take time at the start of the school year to build community and establish norms in the new class through fun and engaging activities. This will prepare students mentally to engage with the learning and any assessment. As mentioned earlier in this document, part of building community must include robust communication and engagement with families as learning partners, and these relationships should continue to be nurtured so if remote learning resumes, relationships between teachers and families will be strong. Without such community building at the outset, any formal assessment may artificially depress student achievement.
- **Deliver the First Unit:** The first unit should not only be engaging, but also allow students to have a high probability of success in learning the material. This will help students to ease into learning in the new school year and experience success early. Teachers should differentiate instruction and utilize formative assessment practices to gauge the impact of their teaching and adjust instruction as necessary. To minimize student anxiety at the start of the school year, this unit should not require the administration of a separate test. For certain students, Tier 2 supports can be embedded within the classroom to accelerate learning and advance equity.

Rest of the School Year

- Shift fully to on-grade instruction with scaffolds and supports as illustrated in the [infographic on page 31](#). The same cycle then continues for each instructional unit for the remainder of the year.

End of the School Year

At the end of the year, the student is administered an on-grade summative assessment (which may be the state assessment for students in Grades 3–8 and 11) to evaluate overall achievement on the state standards.

Sensible Assessment Practices in 2020–21 and Beyond

1. Summer 2020

★ Review Available Information

In lieu of a separate assessment, what can we already know about our students from existing data/information?*

Vertical Teams for Teachers, Interventionists, Instructional Specialists, and Related Service Providers

- What standards were taught in-person pre-COVID and during distance learning?
- How does the previous teacher describe the student’s strengths and weaknesses?
- How well did the student engage in distance learning?

Longitudinal Data (Non-Assessment)

- Early Indication Tool support level (Low-Medium-High), attendance, discipline, mobility, course failures, etc.

Longitudinal Data (Assessment)

- K-Inventory, Smarter Balanced, NGSS, Alt. Assessments, LAS Links, IAB, F-IAB, Fall/Winter Benchmark, IEP Progress Reports

★ Plan the First Unit and Support Professional Learning

The first unit should not only engage students but also ensure that students will have a high probability of success. Teachers will need professional learning on topics such as assessment/data literacy, formative assessment practices, differentiated instruction, learning progressions, blended learning approaches/tools.

**Students new to CT public schools will likely need a screening and/or overall assessment such as the ICA or a local benchmark assessment.*

2. Start of the School Year

★ Build Community with New Class While Delivering the First Unit

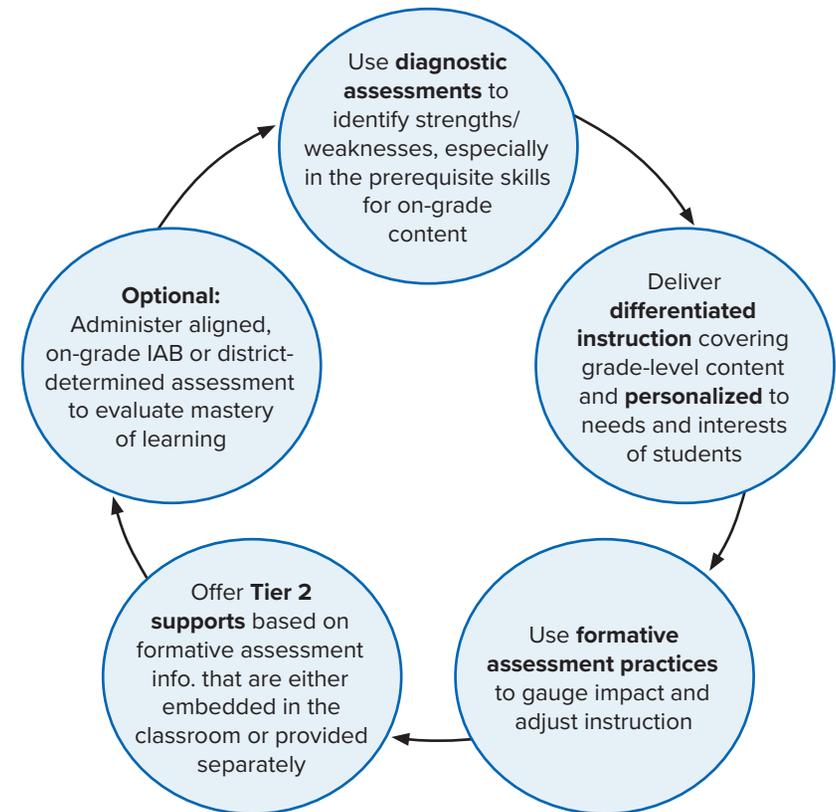
Acknowledge and address social-emotional learning needs and family/health/trauma issues due to pandemic. Start with a unit that is engaging and has high probability of success. Review key prior grade content if necessary.

- **Deliver differentiated instruction** by starting with engaging on-grade unit with high probability of success; review if necessary.
- **Use formative assessment practices** to gauge impact and adjust instruction.
- **Embed Tier 2 supports** in the classroom based on review of available information in the summer.

3. Rest of the School Year

★ Shift Fully to On-Grade Instruction with Scaffolds and Supports

If the first unit incorporates review, then the shift fully to on-grade instruction should occur within 2–3 weeks. Districts should identify prerequisite content for each instructional unit and the corresponding diagnostic assessment.



4. End

★ Administer End-of-Year Summative Assessment

Administer an on-grade summative assessment (which may be the state assessment for students in Grades 3–8 and 11) to evaluate overall achievement on state standards

Attendance and Discipline

Maximizing in-person instructional time after a lengthy period of disruption is critical. The CSDE, in consultation with stakeholders, will continue to support LEAs in developing options for students and families related to attendance and disciplinary issues in future guidance.



Guidance

- Address school attendance with parents, through teachers in the classroom, with community providers, and through all modes of communication.
- Ensure that systems are in place for early identification of students who are missing too much school, detecting the root causes, and implementing and monitoring effective tiered interventions for reversing a pattern of absenteeism.
- Revisit school discipline policies with a focus on re-engaging students in their building rather than removing them from school. Consider the unique circumstance students are facing returning to the structure of school after a period of disruption, and potentially factors such as grief or trauma that might influence behavior.
- Review the CSDE resource entitled [Improving Attendance by Addressing School Health Assessments and Immunizations](#), which provides strategies for schools, districts, and community health providers to work together to ensure that school health and immunization requirements are met prior to deadlines for school exclusion. Be reminded that on June 17, 2020, DPH confirmed the decision to require that all students be up to date on their immunizations when school starts.
- Further guidance for assessing student engagement and participation during remote learning and discipline in schools in the context of the pandemic is evolving and will be shared as it is released.
- Consider the following guidance:
 - [Attendance Guidance and Ensuring Student Engagement during School Class Cancellations Due to COVID-19, Memorandum, Commissioner Miguel A. Cardona, April 9, 2020](#)
 - [Attendance Playbook: Smart Strategies for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism in the COVID Era, FutureEd, Georgetown University, and Attendance Works](#)
 - [Guide to Using the Attendance Playbook: Smart Strategies for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism in the COVID Era, Attendance Works, June 2020](#)
 - [Monitoring Attendance in Distance Learning, a new data framework for monitoring attendance whether school is virtual or blended, Attendance Works, June 2020](#)

Special Education

While reopening may present challenges for all, students with disabilities may experience these challenges to a greater extent than their peers and take longer to remediate lost skills. Students with disabilities face many challenges, including health concerns and may be disproportionately affected by changes in their education, requiring flexibility in how their re-entry occurs.

To address the complexities of returning to school for our students who receive special education and related services, further guidance will be forthcoming and will be shared as it is released. See current [special education guidance](#) on the CSDE website.



Requirements

- Prepare 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.
- Treat students eligible for special education and other special populations 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 reopening plan as designed, facilitate individualized and alternative means of re-entry based upon student need, present levels of functioning, developmental levels, and student/parent input. Consider blended learning schedules if needed.
- Do not make programming decisions based on a student's disability category. However, the nature and/or severity of a student's disability may require unique considerations. Protocols should consider the student's developmental level and skills.



Guidance

- Anticipate flexibility with these guidelines for specific special education programs, so long as the program follows established standards as well as public health strategies such as proper hygiene, social distancing, and cleaning/sanitizing.
- Implement protocols to communicate safety guidelines to students, staff, and families to ensure that they feel safe within the school environment (use multiple means of communication in multiple languages to ensure equal access to the information).
- Communicate with families of students with a high level of need to develop transition plans to assist special population and special education students in their return to the school building. The use of social stories, visual cues, and other appropriate developmental strategies should be used to reinforce these new concepts and protocols.
- Work with local special education and McKinney-Vento staff and students/parents to develop a COVID-19 transportation protocol for each special needs and student.
- Identify students who have had the most difficulty accessing remote learning opportunities and prioritize access to in-person instruction, for example:
 - students who may require direct physical assistance for safety, health and self-care (feeding, toileting, activities of daily living [ADL]);
 - Staff/educators will continue to abide by all the OSHA guidelines.
 - Develop protocols for PPE and soiled clothing.
 - students who may exhibit significant behaviors that require de-escalation strategies and emergency safety protocols;
 - Training for staff in use of emergency physical interventions and use of PPE.
 - students that have significant communication and/or executive functioning deficits;
 - students with impaired vision, hearing, and/or other physical disabilities; and
 - students who have been unable to access related services.

- Identify students who are unable to wear protective personal equipment, practice social distancing, or adhere to other CDC or CSDE guidelines. In consultation with your local health department consider the following:
 - Environmental modifications
 - Use of alternative face coverings (clear)
 - Reduction of class size
 - Assign staff to specific students/instructional environments to limit exposure
 - Toileting/ADL protocols
- Consider protocols for community based learning opportunities including for students whose IEPs require transition services/activities.
- Be prepared that there may be certain high-risk students and/or families who may require continuing remote instruction full time due to underlying health conditions, undergoing disease treatment, or those with family members who are at-risk.

English Learners (ELs)

While returning to school will present challenges for all, English learners (ELs) may experience these challenges to a greater extent than their peers, as they transition back to a school setting from remote learning and continue to develop their English language proficiency concurrently while learning grade-level academic content. To mitigate these challenges, **schools must make every effort to provide support to ELs to allow them to access academic content as well as providing them with their supplemental language instruction program.** English language development is a part of universal instruction. It is paramount that grade level content provided with adequate scaffolds and supports, so that ELs may access the grade level content being provided in the classroom while developing language proficiency.



Requirements

- Understand that like all other students, ELs are entitled to FAPE. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IV, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (1974) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) provide guidance on the services to which ELs are entitled. ELs must have access to the general education curriculum as well as to a supplemental language instruction education program. During school closures due to COVID-19, ELs continue to be entitled 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 must continue.
- Comply with the requirement that eligible students in bilingual mandated districts are offered bilingual education programs. During COVID-19, school districts that are mandated to provide bilingual education remain required to offer a bilingual program to eligible students who have opted into the program. While program implementation may be altered during COVID-19 as compared to traditional in-building schooling, students in bilingual programs are still entitled to receive native language support as part of their school's designated bilingual program model. As with other language instruction education programs, when returning to traditional schooling, bilingual programs must continue.
- Communicate with parents and guardians that have limited proficiency in English 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.

- Provide ELs who are also identified as students with disabilities supports for their EL needs, as well as supports for their disabilities. During COVID-19, these dually identified students must continue to receive these supports. As in times with traditional schooling, dually identified students should have their language needs represented in their annual meetings about their IEP.



Guidance

- Consider that flexibility may be necessary for the implementation of specific supplemental language instruction education programs, but these programs must continue to be provided to ELs during remote learning.
- Establish systems for ongoing collaboration between Bilingual and TESOL teachers, EL support providers and grade-level and content-area teachers. Ensure that mainstream teachers embed accessibility tools, such as scaffolds, explicit vocabulary instruction and differentiated supports into their grade-level and content-area instruction.
- Develop and maintain ongoing communication with families of ELs regarding remote learning and returning to their school building. Create procedures for supporting translation and interpretation for families with limited English proficiency regarding remote learning, instructional methods and returning to school.
- Encourage the maintenance and development of students' home and/or native language, whether during remote learning or when learning returns to school buildings. Develop a school culture where multilingualism is seen as a rich asset that contributes to the school and broader communities. Initiatives such as the Seal of Biliteracy and the establishment of dual language bilingual programs offer strengths-based, asset-oriented perspectives on multilingualism.
- Offer web-based, on-demand professional learning on how to serve ELs effectively through the Pathways to Success for English Learners professional development series or other online, high-quality professional learning. Note that the Pathways online modules are free of charge and intended primarily for generalist educators.
- Establish a process for carrying out the required procedures for potential English learners and identified English learners including:
 - ensuring adherence to the statewide identification procedures (i.e., Home Language Survey, English language proficiency screener);
 - continuing to provide parental notifications (i.e., EL identification letter, EL continuation of services letter, EL exit letter);
 - adhering to annual English language proficiency assessment requirements;
 - offering translation and/or interpretation to parents/guardians with limited English proficiency.
- Attend to the SEL needs of English learners, understanding that ELs may have unique, individual needs from each other and from their non-EL peers.

Physical Education, Athletics, Arts, and Extracurricular Activities

Plan to balance the importance of engaging students in a well-rounded educational opportunity, including physical education, unified arts, and extracurricular activities, with the need for modifications to avoid any increased public health risk.



Requirements

- Follow all CDC, state, and local guidelines related to social distancing and disinfecting areas and equipment used for physical education and physical activity, including recess.

- Develop plans for the implementation of a physical education, fine arts, and music curriculum that consider the needs of all students, including focusing on activities, adaptations, and modifications of all education decisions to ensure the full inclusion by all students.



Guidance

Physical Education

- Provide physical education through a combination of in-classroom instruction and activities tailored according to available spaces, restrictions on gatherings, and use of shared equipment.
- Provide professional development for revising curriculum and instruction to align with necessary modifications due to changes in the instructional space, blended learning, and alternative physical fitness activities.
- Focus on activities, fitness, exercises, and sports that are teacher led but performed individually and focus on lifetime fitness, utilizing alternative environments, land-based activities, and individual sports/activities such as mindfulness, tai chi, meditation, taekwondo, fitness-based activities, step aerobics, Pilates, yoga, individual sports, strength development, target activities, backyard games, dance (creative/modern dance, aerobic dance, traditional dance), power walking, orienteering, geocaching, outdoor education, hiking/reading trail signs, hoop games, track and field, singles racket games, etc.
- Support social-emotional learning through classroom instruction and utilizing appropriate games and activities.
- Match the instructional design to the available space; use stations, marked off areas, and staggered participation to ensure separation and distancing between students during activities. For example, the use of hula hoops on the ground or floor provide visual cues for maintaining distance to engage in learning.
- Plan for regular cleaning and disinfecting of all indoor and outdoor facilities, playscapes, and equipment between use by students.
- Repurposing gymnasiums to serve as classrooms may limit the ability to deliver some physical education content especially in the skill-building area. Cognitive and affective content and limited skill/fitness content could be delivered in an alternate space such as a classroom. Consider reorganizing and prioritizing the sequence of units to provide content and learning opportunities that can be delivered outdoors in appropriate weather and other content delivered later in the year through a blended approach in homerooms or online.
- If health and hygiene measures limit locker room use, this may affect hygiene needs associated with vigorous physical activity, which may limit the ability to fitness train and/or test. However, fitness/training concepts can still be taught through didactic instruction and reinforcing skill development and individual fitness goals.
- Loss of water fountain usage could affect physical activity delivery as hydration is important for student health and safety. Allow students to use personal water bottles and provide water bottles as needed. Guard against sharing water bottles.
- Educators can incorporate additional opportunities for movement in and/or out of the classroom through stretching, seated yoga, and walking outdoor classrooms.
- For further considerations on interscholastic athletics and activities, consult the [guidance provided by CIAC](#).

Arts and Music Education

- Consult the resources provided by the [Connecticut Arts Administrators Association](#).
- For handling musical instruments, consult the [National Association for Music Education's COVID-19 Instrument Cleaning Guidelines](#).
- Provide sufficient instructional minutes to support standards-based curriculum, student learning expectations, and district goals.
- Add to class time for materials and tools to be distributed by teacher only or area designated for individual storage and to allow for proper cleaning of materials.
- Strive to maintain current program of studies and course offerings, within safety precautions.
- Maintain proper spacing of at least 12 feet when students are singing or performing wind instruments by scheduling large ensembles in auditoriums, outdoors, cafeterias, gyms or other large spaces. Focus on maximizing distancing for instruments that require blowing or for singing, compared with string and percussion instruments.
- Schedule large ensembles into smaller groups throughout the day. Shift curriculum focus to solo and small ensemble work. Shift from a concert format to a recital format. Create virtual performance experiences and assessments.
- Maintain small homogeneous groupings of instruments for lesson instruction.
- Continue full access to beginning instrumental music.
- Provide individual art supply kits for each student, or plan for increased sanitization between all use.
- Include tech devices as options for photography at home, storage of photos and exporting image files.
- Use on-line apps or platforms for student work (e.g., SeeSaw, Artsonia, Google Classroom, Flip Grid, SmartMusic, Sound Trap, Acapella, museum collections, painting/drawing platforms), video displays (e.g., YouTube), and slides (e.g., Google Slides, PowerPoint).
- Further guidance related to chorus instruction will be shared as it is released.

11. Family and Student Engagement

Reopening schools is an opportunity to deepen relationships and engage families in authentic partnerships to support evolving models of teaching and learning.

Family Support and Communication



Requirements

- Comply with all state and federal family engagement requirements (e.g., School Governance Councils and Title I requirements) during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Prepare to provide families with clear and ongoing communication about what to expect, during and prior to reopening. This includes, but is not limited to, guidance on the school protocols related to health and safety guidelines.
- Continue to engage with families and students as the reopening moves forward to ensure they are informed and have the ability to provide feedback.
- Make reopen plans available on the LEA website, accessible, and clearly identify the school liaison.



Guidance

- Align the reopening plan with evidence-based family engagement and, importantly, with families' perspectives on partnering with schools. [Connecticut's Framework for Family Engagement](#) provides a definition of family engagement that was co-created with families from across the state and is grounded in research and best practice:

“ Family Engagement is a full, equal, and equitable partnership among families, educators and community partners to promote children’s learning and development from birth through college and career. ”

- Provide training opportunities for families on device use and access to school platforms. Plan ways to engage in person at the beginning of the school year, following all health and safety rules, since the target audience may not be able to access training online.
- Use Connecticut’s [definition of family engagement](#) to frame the objectives for an effective approach to school-family partnerships.
 - *Create full, equal and equitable partnerships.* View families as full partners in education. Recognize that families bring valuable knowledge to the table and involve them in advance planning and decision-making. Empower families to work with educators, public officials, and community partners to remove systemic, structural, and organizational barriers that perpetuate inequities and injustice.
- Implement high-impact family engagement strategies by applying the [guiding principles](#) in Connecticut’s Framework for Family Engagement.
 - *Build collaborative, trusting relationships.* Recognize that all high-impact family engagement strategies are grounded in trust and respect. Create a welcoming atmosphere in school buildings and in all school communications. Establish reliable systems for two-way, personal and ongoing communication with families.

- *Prioritize what families say about their children's interests and challenges.* Consider monthly parent-teacher conferences or connections throughout the 2020–21 school year to support and engage families and gain their perspectives on their children's experiences during this time.
- *Model high-quality learning practices.* Consider webinars for families to demonstrate teaching techniques and other supports for learning that they can use at home.
- *Share information frequently with families about how their children are doing.* Consider how families might track their students' progress and provide opportunities for families to ask questions and understand the expectations for progress.
- *Engage students in conversations about how they want teachers and families to support their learning.*
- *Co-develop cultural competence among staff and families.* Create opportunities for families and staff to work together to build students' home cultures into programming and curriculum by centering families as authorities on their cultures and experiences.
- *Support parents to become effective leaders and advocates for children.* Empower parent-led groups to support families by providing timely and accurate information and resources. Invest in parent leadership training opportunities.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mental Health



Requirements

- Develop a detailed plan to reengage all students, staff and families. Particularly identify strategies to identify and engage populations and specific students that have been disengaged.
- Prepare staff to identify issues related to abuse and neglect in the context of the pandemic and comply with all mandated reporting requirements.



Guidance

- Provide a period of time for students to acclimate back to school. Focus on the whole child and use this period to reestablishing routines and relationships.
- Intensify communication efforts with all families and at the same time provide additional supports for students who are struggling or at risk.
- Communicate the importance of SEL as a foundational and necessary aspect of a highly functioning school community.
- Consult the available resources on SEL, for example, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) publication, [Leveraging the Power of SEL as You Prepare to Reopen and Renew your School Community](#).
- Consider staff in addressing SEL and mental health support.
 - Design opportunities for adults to connect, heal, and cultivate their own SEL competence. Work with school and district-based mental health staff, psychologists, counselors, social workers, and school nurses to lead these efforts.
 - Ensure access to mental health and trauma support for adults.

- Incorporate SEL and mental health support activities into online learning by employing activities such as wellness checks, discussion circles about important issues, and lessons that directly address SEL and mental health.
- Consult the multiple support resources related to SEL and mental health that may be accessed here: [COVID-19 Resources for Families and Educators](#).
- Review and incorporate the [Kindergarten through Grade 3 Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Habits Framework](#) as it represents the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that form an essential blueprint for college and career readiness to achieve academic success and social/emotional learning.

After-school Programming

After-school programs can play an important role in providing supports for students during traditional after-school hours, including days in which students are engaged in remote learning and not scheduled to be in class. Traditional after-school programs do not need to operate only after school dismissal and can support families on days when students are not scheduled for classroom instruction. As schools reopen and parents return to working outside the home, after-school programs can assist in providing safe places to provide care for students while simultaneously providing support and assistance to enhance remote learning.



Requirements

- Programs receiving funding from the CSDE through the State After School, Extended School Hours (ESH) and 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC) programs, consult with the CSDE for individual grant-specific guidance.
- Follow the requirements outlined in this document, as applicable, including but not limited to requiring the use of face coverings that cover the nose and mouth, and maximizing social distancing.



Guidance

- Consider the logistics of after-school program space utilization to ensure that social distancing requirements are maintained and students are exposed to the fewest practicable number of other students and staff.
- Consider utilization of classrooms for on-site after-school programming that minimizes students' exposure to other students and common areas. For example: staff participating in the after-school program use the same classroom that students are in during the school day and provide after school care from the end of the school day until 5 p.m.
- Partner with community-based organizations (YMCA/YWCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, faith-based organizations, etc.) to identify space outside the school to provide off-site after-school programming.
- Maximize social distancing and limit exposure to other students during classroom instruction, after-school activities, meals, bathroom usage and transportation.
- Apply the same cohorting recommendations for the school day, when feasible.

Adult Education



Guidance

- Create a set of policies and procedures to address the physical return of students and teachers to the buildings. All policies and procedures should be in line with this document, LEA policies, and CDC guidelines in order to ensure a safe and productive educational environment. [See also Cancellation of Classes, Remote Learning, and Reopening Plan, page 24.](#)
- Consider protocols that address specific times of entry and social distancing while waiting; registration policies and procedures; assessment, placement, and testing; and class structure such as options for blended classes or remote learning in addition to in-person classes.

12. Career and Technical Education

Connecticut's vision is that schools provide each student access to rigorous pathways and programs of study that result in students graduating with the essential knowledge, skills and employability expertise to successfully meet the demands of Connecticut's expanding economy. Connecticut Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are part of the comprehensive educational system and due to the nature of CTE programs and the hands-on approach that is necessary, additional elements must be considered as schools plan for a safe reopening.

CTE programs use a hands-on approach to develop job readiness skills and trade competencies. The core of the curriculum is experiential and students often work closely together in small groups. Many CTE programs require students to develop physical dexterity and motor skills through regular practice over significant periods of time. CTE instruction is maximized when it is delivered in-person through practical experience, whether in the classroom, at production sites or through work-based learning.

During CTE instruction, students may need to share tools, materials or equipment during the course of a school day. Although the guidelines prohibit this type of sharing, CTE programs may need to take unique precautions, such as providing students with gloves and other PPE, minimizing the amount of sharing, following an accepted protocol of cleaning and sanitizing and training both staff and students in COVID-19 related safety.

Flexibility with these guidelines is permitted for CTE activities as long as the CTE program follows established workplace industry standards as well as public health protocols.



Requirements

- Develop a plan for cleaning and disinfecting shared equipment in the shop or lab, before and after each use. Many CTE courses assign tasks to students who assist in cleanup at the end of class, and the students should be trained in all safety processes and procedures. Include a properly labeled spray bottle or disinfectant wipe near the equipment along with a small trash receptacle. Include a process for collection, sanitation, and logging of equipment and tools.



Guidance

- Apply the standards outlined above for cleaning and disinfecting high touch areas.
- Create a plan to address the public access to the building including Early Care and Education Programs as well as cafes in Culinary Arts.
- Anticipate that student run early child programs will need to comply with all relevant public health guidance outlining the enhanced cleaning, sanitizing, social distancing, face covering use, and hygiene requirements for these programs.
- Determine the appropriate safety measure for the Culinary Foods labs while food is being prepared and consumed. This may include, but is not limited to, staggered schedules, repurposing of space, use of gloves, increased hand washing protocols, and prioritizing "to go" options for food.
- Consider ways to minimize exposure when exchanging payment in any CTE program.
- Ensure students are actively accessing their CTE curriculum by considering the following:
 - Provide students with options for demonstrating their understanding.
 - Incorporate tools and materials that students can access at home.

13. Staffing and Personnel

Certification and Personnel Planning

The CSDE has maintained the timely processing of applications for certification during the pandemic. The CSDE will continue to provide support to LEAs to hire appropriately certified educators for the 2020–21 school year to help support equitable access to highly qualified educators.

The employment of appropriately certified, authorized and/or permitted educators remains crucial to the success of all students. To assist this goal, all LEA-based forms have been adopted to accommodate the timely processing of temporary authorizations and requests including Durational Shortage Area Permits (DSAPs), 90-Day Initial Certificates, Charter School Educator Permits (CSEPs), Long Term Substitute Authorizations, Emergency Coaching Certificates and Resident Educator Certificates. For additional information about processing these forms remotely, please see the following [CSDE educator certification newsletter](#).



Requirements

- Prepare with school human resources and board counsel to comply with legal and regulatory requirements related to personnel, including but not limited to the EEOC [guidance](#) related to the ADA and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Assess how to engage a full roster of staff, including potential substitute plan, and whether stipends or changes in substitute pay is required to support the needs of the school.



Guidance

- Engage certified and uncertified staff in surveying the experience from the Spring of 2020 during the period of school disruption, and request implementable ideas to support the LEA's approach the fall 2020 reopening.
- Assess if schools will require increased certified staff, additional support staff, or new positions related to care and cleaning of facilities.
- Utilize the [EdSight Active Endorsement Search Tool](#) to access Connecticut Educator Certification data for strategic recruitment and hiring information to maximize student access to qualified educators. For additional information, please see the [EdSight Secure FAQ](#).
- Plan to support staff health. Implement flexible sick leave policies and practices that enable staff to stay home when sick, have been exposed, or are caring for the sick.
- Engage with staff labor representatives and consider whether Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) are appropriate or necessary to define the role for different staff units in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Educator Evaluation and Support Plans

The CSDE, in consultation with stakeholders, will be issuing future guidance related to Educator Evaluation and Support Plans for the 2020–2021 school year.

Professional Development



Requirements

- Prioritize mandatory training for staff, before the beginning of the school year, that covers signs and symptoms of COVID-19, Standard Public Health protocols, Hygiene Practices, PPE, Reporting Illnesses, and supporting SEL. Plan ongoing trainings as changes occur in recommendations and public health data.



Guidance

- It is recommended that Professional Development & Evaluation Committees (PEDCs) meet (virtually or via phone) to make recommendations about professional learning, resources, and supports for paraeducators, teacher, and administrators.
- Beyond training for the health and safety related needs of the school community, plan to provide teacher and staff professional development related to use of technology platforms, training on supporting and giving feedback to students training on the accessibility needs of students with disabilities, and training on effective student engagement (by grade level) within online/hybrid learning environments. Include substitute teachers when possible.
- Provide professional learning to build educators capacity to support students' SEL and also support their own mental health and wellness. Sessions can be led by mental health staff on topics such as active listening, compassion, relationship building. One such mental health related training option is Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR).

Additional Resources

The pandemic has required greater flexibility for all Connecticut residents and the need to adjust to changes with limited notice, therefore, the CSDE plans to continue to develop and update guidance documents and support schools in their efforts to navigate educating our students while also prioritizing health and safety. Please review the [CSDE website](#) regularly.

Please also find the links below that were referenced throughout this document along with additional sites that were identified as useful.

CDC

[CDC Considerations for Schools](#)

[CDC Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#)

[CDC Cleaning & Disinfecting Guidance](#)

[CDC Symptoms of Coronavirus](#)

[CDC What You Do If You Are Sick](#)

[CDC Quarantine & Isolation](#)

[CDC Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)

[CDC When and How to Wash Your Hands](#)

[CDC Planning for K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs](#)

[CDC Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs](#)

[CDC Schools Decision Tree for Schools Reopening](#)

[CDC Guidance Keeping Students Healthy While School's Out](#)

CDC Communications & Print Materials

[CDC Communications Resources](#)

[CDC COVID Print Resources, Multiple Languages](#)

[CDC COVID PSAs](#)

[CDC COVID Videos](#)

[CDC COVID Social Media Toolkit](#)

[CDC Child Posters, Multiple Languages](#)

[CDC What you Need to Know About Handwashing VIDEO](#)

CSDE

[Connecticut LEA School Reopening Template](#)

[COVID Resources for Educators](#)

[State Level Priorities: Sustaining Local School District Capacity & Providing Equity and Access to a High Quality Education for All Children](#)

[Attendance Guidance and Ensuring Student Engagement during School Class Cancellations Due to COVID-19](#)

[Improving Attendance by Addressing School Health Assessments and Immunizations](#)

Plan for [Reimagining CT Classrooms for Continuous Learning](#)

[Sensible Assessment Practices 2020-21 and Beyond](#)

[Full, Equal and Equitable Partnerships with Families: Connecticut's Definition and Framework for Family Engagement](#)

[edSight Active Endorsement Search Tool](#)

Other

DPH: [Guidance for the Cleaning and Disinfection of Schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

DPH: [Return to Service Guidance for Building Water Systems](#)

DPH: [Guidance for School Systems for the Operation of Central and non-Central Ventilation Systems during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

[U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission COVID-19 Guidance](#)

[CIAC Resocialization of Interscholastic Athletics and Activities Programs Guidelines](#)

[NAFME COVID-19 Instrument Cleaning Guide](#)

[School Re-Entry Considerations: K-12 Physical Education, Health, Education & Physical Activity](#)

[Leveraging the Power of SEL as You Prepare to Reopen and Renew](#)

[Partner Resources](#) (multiple languages)