

# WPS REOPENING FAQs

August 6, 2020

## **MASKS – Discussed at August 3<sup>rd</sup> Parent Webinar**

**Could you please provide more information on face coverings, exceptions, requirements, and mask breaks?**

Masks are defined on page 27 of the district plan. A face covering is defined as a cloth, paper, or disposable face covering that covers the nose and mouth, may or may not be medical grade. On page 26 of our district plan, staff and students are asked to provide their own face covering. With that said, we will have face coverings on hand for staff and students who do not show up to school with one. Our face coverings comply with the CSDE and DPH definition of face coverings as defined on page 27 of our plan. This includes the bus. The district has acquired an adequate supply. Where specialized PPE masks are required, the district will ensure that staff have what is required.

Students in grades K-12 are required to wear masks all day long with the exception of eating and mask breaks. This is a requirement by the State of CT. Masks are no longer required for PreK students. Appropriate protocols and procedures will be consistently taught and reinforced with students. Students will be given multiple opportunities to practice and utilize these protocols. Students who do not comply will be redirected to do so. Students who do not consistently comply will be asked to engage in distance learning.

For students, masks can be removed 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. Per State of CT guidelines, if a teacher removes a face covering or mask during instruction, spacing should be increased beyond six feet. We have a designated teaching box at the front of the classroom for this purpose.

Mask breaks will be provided throughout the day. Teachers will monitor students and determine what is best for their class. This will be age-appropriate. These breaks will be scheduled and also based on students' needs. Mask breaks will take place outside or in spaces large enough for students to maximize social distancing (i.e. - gymnasium)

Medical exception to wearing masks per State of CT: 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. We would require specific medical documentation from a physician for these cases. In cases such as this, we would be requiring the student to wear a face shield and/or be social distanced from others.

Policies on Mask Usage for visitors – Policy #1075 C-19 Visits to Schools and Observations in the Schools. Visitors will be reminded of our Board policy and if they refuse to comply they will be asked to leave.

## **SOCIAL DISTANCING AND COHORTING**

### **How do you plan to maintain 6ft social distance?**

State of CT guidelines ask districts to maximize social distancing to the greatest extent possible and wherever feasible. 6 feet is not required at all times per the state plan and is not guaranteed in our plan. By removing classroom furniture and parents deciding to keep their child home, social distance from peers will vary. In addition, other large spaces may be used for instruction.

### **Will you be installing any barriers i.e. plexiglass?**

Plexiglass will be used throughout the district in a variety of ways. It is installed in all main offices where staff are interacting with others. There will be some plexiglass installed in classrooms mainly around teachers' desk. It will also be used staff and students are working in close proximity to one another due to the specific instruction being implemented.

### **What are the plans for keeping the students distanced in the hallways? Discussed at August 3<sup>rd</sup> Parent Webinar**

This is outlined on page 38 of the plan. All schools will designate patterns for directional foot-traffic within hallways and stairwells through clearly labeled markings on the floors to minimize face-to-face contact of students. Schools will develop plans to minimize the number of students in hallways and stairwells during passing periods through cohorting and staggered bell schedules.

### **How will cohorts be determined? Discussed at August 3<sup>rd</sup> Parent Webinar**

Cohorts in grades PK-8 will be primarily determined by alphabet ensuring 50% capacity in the building at any one time. Families with multiple students across multiple grades will have hybrid days that are the same.

### **How many kids per class? Have class sizes been reduced? Discussed at August 3<sup>rd</sup> Parent Webinar**

We anticipate a fair percentage of parents will opt for voluntary distance learning thus reducing class sizes. Given that, class sizes will be less than a typical year. Obviously in a hybrid model, class sizes will be further reduced as no more than 50% of students will be in the building at any one time.

### **Are the students switching classes? Discussed at August 3<sup>rd</sup> Parent Webinar**

Students PK-8 will not be switching classes during the day for the most part. We will maintain stable cohorts throughout the day. For some classes (i.e. PE) the entire cohort may move to another instructional space. In addition, smaller subgroups of the cohort may move to another classroom for small group instruction. With any movement, students will not be mixed with students from any other cohort, and appropriate cleaning measures will be implemented. High school students will switch classes.

### **What is the plan for Specials?**

We are following the reopening plan from the CSDE. It is likely specials will be limited throughout the year. Students may not have the same number of frequency of specials throughout the year. With the exception of physical education, most if not all specials will be offered in the cohort classroom in grades PreK through 8.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### **What is your isolation protocol? Are all staff trained in this protocol?**

This protocol is outlined starting on page 32 of the district plan. Other citations include page 28, 35, 41. Staff will be trained on this protocol, and the entire plan for that matter, prior to the start of school. Our protocol has been reviewed by the three medical professionals listed in the front of the document.

### **Who will stay in the isolation room with the student?**

The isolation rooms will be staffed by personnel from the VNA of SE CT.

### **What is the communication protocol and containment plan if there is a positive COVID case in the school?**

Our communication protocol for a confirmed case is clearly outlined on page 14 of our district plan. Our action protocol for a positive case as well as the COVID-19 Decision Tree from the LLHD are outlined on pages 28, 30 and 32 of our plan. Our protocols have been reviewed by the three medical professionals listed in the beginning of the plan. The decision to quarantine a class/grade level/school/entire district will be made on a case by case basis in conjunction with the Ledge Light Health District and the DPH. With this said, we are awaiting further guidance from the CSDE and DPH for a common statewide protocol.

### **What benchmarks are you utilizing for levels of COVID spread resulting in shifts from one learning model to another? Discussed at August 3<sup>rd</sup> Parent Webinar**

DPH/CSDE set guidelines. Districts may self-select in-person/on-campus or hybrid based on a variety of factors. Distance learning can only be implemented with the express permission of CSDE/DPH.

**Table 1: Leading and Secondary Indicators of COVID-19 Infection Levels in Communities for Consideration of Learning Models for School Reopening in Connecticut.\***

Leading Indicator	LOW Favors more In-Person Learning	MODERATE Favors moving to Hybrid Learning	HIGH Favors moving to Remote Learning
<b>Number of new cases of COVID-19</b> (7 day rolling average of new cases per 100,000 population per day)	< 10 new cases per 100,000 population	10 to < 25 new cases per 100,000 population	25+ new cases per 100,000 population

  

Secondary Indicators	LOW Favors more In-Person Learning	MODERATE Favors moving to Hybrid Learning	HIGH Favors moving to Remote Learning
<b>Percent positivity rate</b> (# of positive tests/ # of total tests, 7-day rolling avg.)	<b>Direction of Change:</b> Secondary Indicators trending down to flat	<b>Direction of Change:</b> Secondary Indicators trending flat to upward	<b>Direction of Change:</b> Secondary Indicators trending upward
<b>Number of new COVID-19 hospitalizations per 100,000 population</b> (7-day rolling avg.)	<b>Speed of Change:</b> No statistically significant changes to Secondary Indicators	<b>Speed of Change:</b> Any statistically significant changes upward to Secondary Indicators	<b>Speed of Change:</b> Consistent, statistically significant changes upward to Secondary Indicators
<b>COVID-like and Influenza-like Illness (CLI and ILI) Syndromic Surveillance</b>			

\* Adapted from: the Harvard Global Health Institute's publication *The Path to Zero and Schools: Achieving Pandemic Resilient Teaching and Learning Spaces*. July 2020.

**Are you going to have a screening process?**

CSDE guidelines in the state plan do not recommend daily screening of staff and students. We will 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 or student presents with obvious symptoms. If screening is required it will be conducted by nursing staff and other properly trained staff. Of course, we will coordinate with our local health district.

**Has there been any discussion on widespread COVID testing for the school community (students and staff) prior to the start of in-person learning (and periodically throughout the year)?**

The school district will not be testing staff or students nor is it recommended or required per CSDE and DPH guidance. Staff and students/families will be directed to 211 for testing information. The COVID-19 Decision Tree on page 30 of our plan will be utilized if a staff member or student have symptoms consistent with COVID-19. We will coordinate our efforts with LLHD and DPH.

**Will you be contact tracing?**

The school district is not responsible for contact tracing. We will coordinate with the Ledge Light Health District to accomplish this. 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.

**How many nurses will be at each school site at any given time?**

Each of our schools has one nurse through the VNA. Other staff in the health office include health aides. In addition, the district is hiring additional health aides to help across the district.

**How will you deal with students who exhibit fall allergy symptoms, i.e. sneezing and runny nose. Will students who show any kind of "illness" be sent home?**

The decision to send staff or students home is outlined on page 28 in our plan. The COVID-19 Decision Tree on page 29 formalizes our protocol as well. Our containment plan on page 32 goes into more detail on those actually exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms.

**Your plan requires parents/students to self-report illness, what have you put in place to encourage this reporting?**

This will be a consistent theme in school discussion with students; messaged home consistently; signage in schools etc. Students sent to school with symptoms will be handled according to the protocol in our plan. We will continue to advocate the use of the How We Feel app for all families.

**If you do request the testing, will you require 2 negative test results 7 days apart?**

Our return to school (students) and return to work (staff) protocol is outlined on page 29 in our plan.

**Will there be some sort of arrangement or testing site where the parents can take their children?**

Parents are asked to call 211 or consult with their physician for testing sites.

**How is the fact that some people do not present with symptoms but test positive for COVID-19 being factored into the school re-opening plan?**

Our Prior to Coming School section on page 28 as well as the [CDC mitigation strategies](#) outlined throughout the plan are inclusive but not limited to our efforts in this area.

**Will students who travel out of state be required to quarantine a full 14 days prior to starting in school?**

This requirement is a function of state government and all citizens of CT are required to follow the Governor's executive orders in this area. The enforcement mechanism for this executive order lies with the state government.

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**Communication**

**What communication resources is WPS providing students to aid transition back to school?**

The district and schools will be employing a variety of communication and engagement strategies including pictures, videos, and written communications. The first several days of school will focus on reacclimation and high interest activities designed to reduce stress and anxiety as well as familiarizing students with the new procedures.

**Will pictures of signage be provided to parents/guardians prior to school reopening?**

Yes, this information will be available on the district reopening page. We ask that parents reinforce this information at home.

**Will there be a Spanish version of the Reopening Plan available on the district website?**

We are currently working on a Spanish version of the plan.

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**ATTENDANCE**

**Will students still be penalized if they are absent from school over a certain amount of days (in particular summer school and retention). Will the absentee policy change due to having to quarantine or becoming ill with COVID-19?**

All school districts are required to follow state statutes regarding attendance which is outlined in Waterford Board of Education [Policy #5010](#) which can be found on our website. We are awaiting further guidance from the CSDE to see if attendance regulations are changed for this school year.

**Will students be given flexibility regarding missed work if they have a protracted absence?**

As is the case every year, students with prolonged absences from school will be given ample time to complete the work.

## **CLEANING- Discussed at August 3<sup>rd</sup> Parent Webinar**

### **How frequently will classrooms be disinfected? What is the cleaning policy across all schools?**

Clarification of Daily Cleaning Protocols have been added to the Reopening Plan on page 36.

Disinfection and cleaning procedures will be initiated following student release in compliance with CDC guidelines. Classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized daily. The district will provide for the proper use and distribution of sanitizing supplies and a protocol for regular cleaning according to DPH and CDC Guidelines. The Director of Facilities will ensure compliance with current DPH guidelines and is prepared to modify plans in response to changing conditions. All staff will be provided with adequate supplies, including sanitizing wipes, to support cleaning and disinfection practices that will enable them to clean commonly used surfaces (i.e. desks, keyboards) before use. In school daily sanitization of handrails / sink handles / door handles and knobs / light switches / and bathrooms will occur. Regular evening daily cleaning will consist of: Cleaning / Disinfecting / & Sanitizing in accordance with guidelines stated above. Custodial staff will be trained in the appropriate health and safety practices and will adopt procedures for disinfection as outlined by the DPH and CDC . All disinfectants and sanitizers will be in accordance with the green cleaning Policy #1240 C-19.

### **How frequently will bathrooms be cleaned? How can you ensure they are disinfected between use?**

Bathroom surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected twice per day in times of full building occupancy in accordance with DPH guidance for cleaning and disinfecting of schools. The full protocol for bathrooms is outlined on page 41 of our plan. Additional strategies can also be found on the bottom of page 40.

### **Will disinfecting products be given to teachers?**

All staff will be provided with adequate supplies, including sanitizing wipes, to support cleaning and disinfection practices that will enable them to clean commonly used surfaces (i.e. desks, keyboards) before use. We are also planning for safe access to materials which may include individual kits, gloves and increased sanitization between all uses. High touch surfaces will be cleaned regularly throughout the day.

### **Has WPS considered/investigated the use of ultraviolet disinfecting technology to kill surface viruses on a larger scale (as a supplement to wiping down high touch surfaces) perhaps after school dismissal and/or overnight?**

As recently as last week, the CT DPH is not recommending this as a method of cleaning schools. Their studies indicate it is not as effective as manual cleaning. Manual cleaning is required by the state.

## **LOGISTICS AND OTHER**

### **Food handling and preparation - What will be happening with this for safety precautions?**

Food service staff will be provided with relevant PPE including but not limited to gloves, facial coverings, and physical barriers at serving stations. Food handling and preparation will meet all Ledge Light Health District and DPH food handling guidelines. All meals will be pre-packaged by a certified food handler and will be distributed with clean gloves. Temperatures of foods will be recorded.

### **Will lunch be held in the cafeteria or will they eat in their classrooms? Where will high school students be eating lunch?**

This is outlined on page 44 of our district plan.

### **When can parents expect to receive a detailed description of what the day will look like for their student, specifically for elementary school? Discussed at August 3<sup>rd</sup> Parent Webinar**

Principals will be sharing information specific to their schools in the coming weeks. The district plan will be their guiding document.

### **Were staff involved in the development of the plan?**

We had over 70 staff involved in the development of this plan. Staff were and are an integral part of reopening. We remain in daily contact with leaders of the various unions to address their questions and ideas. In addition our plan was reviewed by three medical professionals, listed on page 6 of the plan.

### **Will before and aftercare still be available? Discussed at August 3<sup>rd</sup> Parent Webinar**

We anticipate offering before and after care in accordance with our district protocols. Spaces may differ from previous years and enrollment may be limited.

### **Will there be recess on the school playground? Will there be more of an effort to get the students outside throughout the day for play/instruction when possible? Discussed at August 3<sup>rd</sup> Parent Webinar**

There will be recess. The playscapes will be closed to start the year. Recess guidelines are stated on page 38 of our plan. If a teacher can conduct a lesson outside she / he is allowed to as well.

### **Are there any extra supplies the teacher may need that as parents we can start to purchase for our classrooms to help them? Or even supplies for our kids desks?**

If there are any materials the classroom teacher feels their students need; they will communicate that to their classroom.



## **BUSES & DROP OFF AND PICK UP**

**How will the buses be made safer for students?** **Discussed at August 3<sup>rd</sup> Parent Webinar**

Pages 42-43 outline our transportation and transportation safety plans in accordance with CSDE guidance.

**Why would school busses be allowed to be at full capacity but the classrooms are not?** **Discussed at August 3<sup>rd</sup> Parent Webinar**

The CSDE and DPH have determined bus capacities for all schools in the State of CT. This is outlined on page 15 of the state plan and is reflected in our document.

**When the policy is to load back to front, what if the first stop is a preschooler? Are they expected to sit in the back of the bus?**

This is the general protocol. We will be placing the Pre K and K students in the front seats. If a student has particular difficulty with this protocol we will address that on a case by case basis.

**How is the bus driver expected to make sure that students are sitting properly and safely on their seat while also keeping their mask on while also making sure the rest of the students are doing the same while safely driving?**

We ask for parental support in reinforcing the bus protocols. The protocols will also be reinforced in school. We stand ready to employ bus monitors should a particular run need it.

**How will social distancing work in a school bus?**

Since we are encouraging parents to drive their children to school, we expect significantly less ridership on the buses. We anticipate being able to spread students out. Students will only be permitted on the bus to which they have been assigned in order to minimize cross-contamination of student groups. Students will be expected to ride the same bus to school in the morning and the same bus to home in the afternoon. Bus railings and doors will be wiped down between each run and will be sanitized twice a day.

**What will be the drop off pick up protocol across all schools? Will there be staggered times?**  
**Discussed at August 3<sup>rd</sup> Parent Webinar**

We will be doing a transportation survey next week asking all families to select district transportation or not. Once we know that information we will finalize our drop-off and pick-up procedures. The school district in concert with the Waterford Police Department will plan to accommodate the expected increase in vehicles from parental provided transportation. Principals will develop arrival/departure procedures that limit unnecessary entrance of parents and guardians into the building. Each school will allow for minimal contact of parents with school personnel and students while dropping off and/or picking up students during the day. Students will be supervised at all approved drop off and pick up times.

**Will the students on the bus be allowed to sit with other students? Or do they have to space apart? Will there be a monitor on the bus to make sure all children keep masks on? Who will make sure students keep face masks on when riding 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. Students from the same family should sit together. 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. We also expect significantly less ridership on the buses. The initial survey in early



July indicated about half of the students of a normal year will ride the bus. This will allow us to spread students out. We ask for parental support in reinforcing the bus protocols. The protocols will also be reinforced in school. We stand ready to employ bus monitors should a particular run need it.

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## **VENTILATION - Discussed at Parent Webinar August 3, 2020**

**We received a variety of questions around ventilation, air quality and filtration.**

This is outlined in detail on page 40 in our plan. We have complied and will continue to comply with all DPH Guidance for Ventilation. <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Coronavirus/20200622-DPH-Guidance-for-School-Systems-for-the-Operation-of-Central-and-nonCentral-Ventilation-Sys.pdf>

All schools currently have controlled systems that filter 100% of outside air entering the building. The system monitors CO2 levels and modulates outside air accordingly. Fresh air is continually brought into the building during occupied times. Ventilation and fresh air intake will be optimized during occupied times. Fans and blowers are modulated by Variable Frequency Drives that adjust air volume within the parameters of the Building Management System. Primary filters are MERV 8 and secondary filters are MERV 13 and 14. All five of our schools use at least MERV 13 filters. The MERV of a filter is determined with laboratory tests according to ASHRAE Standard 52.2. The test uses an aerosol generator and synthetic dust specified by ASHRAE, and particle counts are measured upstream and downstream from the filter. The testing procedure for the MERV rating uses 6 measurements and 12 particle sizes, which results in a total of 72 data points. To help prevent coronavirus infections in buildings, ASHRAE recommends air filters in HVAC systems to be at least MERV 13, which all five of our schools use. All filters are changed with strict adherence to a preventive maintenance schedule which varies by filter type. In addition, filters have sensors which are monitored.

<b>MERV</b>	<b>Avg. Arrestance</b>	<b>Particle Size Range</b>	<b>Applications</b>
MERV 13-16	>95-99%	0.30-1.0 microns	Smoke removal Hospital inpatient care General surgery Superior commercial buildings

## LEARNING

**Discussed at August 3<sup>rd</sup> Parent Webinar** - Why is it so imperative to start in school when not much has changed from when they began distance learning?

Every school district in CT is required to start school in on-campus or hybrid model. Distance learning is only allowed with express permission of the CSDE and DPH and will be based on health metrics in our area as set by DPH.

**What will happen to students of essential workers in a hybrid or distant learning model?**

CT has set up a 211 hotline for families of essential workers to acquire childcare. You can also visit <https://www.211childcare.org/>.

**Is there a plan where kids go to school for 2 hrs?**

No this is not one of the options outlined in our plan nor is allowable by the CSDE at this time. Districts are still required to educate students the requisite 180 days and 900 hours per year. The State Department of Education did reduce the 180 days to 177, but kept the 900 hours of required instruction for the school year.

**What were the deciding factors for choosing the hybrid schedule presented?**

The Monday/Tuesday (cohort A) and Thursday/Friday (cohort B) schedule has several advantages over other models. It allows for continuity of instruction with teachers seeing students two days in a row. It allows for deep cleaning of the building on Wednesdays. It allows for cohort isolation (cohorts are offsite for 5 consecutive days). From a family consistency perspective, if we did alternating days, it would not be the same days each week. If we did a morning cohort and afternoon cohort, that would be difficult for families and transportation logistics as well. Our hybrid model has also been adopted on a regional basis.

**How does one notify the district of intention to either send students for in person learning or keep them home for distance learning?** **Discussed at August 3<sup>rd</sup> Parent Webinar**

Families that select voluntary distance learning during periods of on-campus or hybrid learning will be asked to fill out the district's Distance Learning Form. It goes out August 6<sup>th</sup>.

Students learning from home may choose to return to campus at any time. School personnel will be available to determine a mutually agreed upon re-entry date. Parents are asked to provide a reasonable notification (up to 2 weeks) to the school office so that preparations may be made to accommodate all learners safely.

**For synchronized distance learning, how early and frequently will the supplies needed be posted to the parents to prepare or obtain materials?**

We will have all lessons posted on Google Classroom or SeeSaw for students to do their lessons. If there are any materials the classroom teacher feels their students need, they will communicate that to their classroom.

## **Who will be teaching distance learning? Are there specific teachers assigned to distance learning?**

All classroom teachers are expected to provide education to the students assigned to their class. This means that the teacher will:

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...continue to utilize the Learning Management Systems with all of our students; in the classroom or at home during distance learning. This will serve several purposes:

- To provide a consistent planning and teaching system for all students;
- To minimize or eliminate the back and forth of paper; and
- To have a system in place in the event we need to move to from in person instruction to a hybrid or full distance learning model; synchronous learning for all.

This change alone challenges us to think about the delivery of education differently, while at the same time trying to keep intact, to the best of our abilities, the teacher and student connection. So, synchronous learning for all means that the teacher will teach the class from wherever the students are (On Campus or Distance Learning) each day on a normal school schedule.

## **What is the plan for grading of distance learning?**

We have learned much from this past spring teaching remotely, and we will be using more formative and performance assessments to evaluate the learning going on this year, rather than the typical summative assessments.

Formative assessment is the on-going, planned process for eliciting evidence while students are learning. This evidence is used to provide feedback during the teaching and learning cycle. Formative assessment is sometimes referred to as “assessment for learning.”

Summative assessment is the gathering of evidence, typically at the end of a unit of study, to broadly signal what students learned as a result of instruction. Summative assessment is sometimes referred to as “assessment of learning.”

Performance assessments measure how well students apply their knowledge, skills, and abilities to authentic problems. Performance assessments require the student to produce something (e.g., a report, product, experiment, or performance), which is scored against specific criteria. A performance assessment may be designed to occur over a period of hours, days or weeks depending on the range and complexity of skills to be assessed.

## **If a family temporarily chooses distance learning, can the student participate in sports at CLMS or WHS?**

Per CSDE guidance, students who voluntarily opt for distance learning will not be allowed to participate in in-person after school opportunities including sports. Some clubs and activities may be offered virtually and students in distance learning may be able to partake in those activities.

## **If distance learning is chosen, will students need to come to school for labs in high school (Chemistry, Biology for example)**

No. Once a student voluntarily opts for distance learning, they remain in distance learning until the parent submits a form for them to return to campus.

**For families that decide on distance learning, is the classroom going to be live streamed to them? If that is the case what is the plan if parents don't want their child videoed for the live stream?**

We plan to stream live audio from the classroom and share the active learning board screen. Teachers may stream video portions of the lesson if they determine it to be integral to the lesson. No children in the classroom will have their image streamed into the home. Video streaming will focus on the teacher in the front of the classroom alone. Students at home do not need to stream their video but audio participation may be essential.

**What download & upload rate/speed will we need to have if we have two kids in different grades trying to participate in synchronous distance learning?**

Bandwidth Requirements - 2.0 Mbps up and down per computer.

**I am concerned about the amount of screen time required for distance learning.**

CSDE is recommending districts implement at least a 50% synchronous model for hybrid and distance learning. Parent feedback on the spring survey was overwhelmingly supportive of the district moving to a synchronous model for hybrid and distance learning. The decision whether or not a district goes to full distance learning will be made by and required by CSDE and DPH based on health metrics in our area. Arrangements for students who are struggling with device usage can be discussed with the teacher and alternative arrangements may be made.

**If a hybrid model or distance learning is being used, are young elementary students going to need to be on zoom at certain times for their instruction? Yes.**

**How is a teacher going to teach students both in classroom and on zoom at the same time?**

We plan to stream live audio from the classroom and share the active learning board screen. Teachers may stream video portions of the lesson if they determine it to be integral to the lesson. They will use the zoom feature of "raise hand" to see if a student from home has a question. Students can also enter information into chat or if the device is equipped with a microphone, the child can participate that way.

**What is the plan if a child needs extra help? Is the teacher going to be able to get closer to the students to help them out?**

Students will receive the help they need through a variety of strategies. If a teacher needs to work more closely with a student, both parties will be wearing masks. Teachers will have access to face shields in addition to a mask. Plexiglass barriers are also being purchased for small group instruction such a teacher and student working closely together.

## **Social Emotional Learning and Mental Health**

**How will some of the most important lessons in the lower grades like sharing, following a routine and expressing emotions be accomplished through distance learning?**

The district has purchased video cameras for classroom teachers so that the lesson may be listened from a distance learning environment and the student will be able to see the Promethean Board in the classroom. There may be times where a teacher needs to share live video from the classroom too, but this needs to be limited as not to exceed the internet capacity of the district.

**What efforts will be made to ensure that elementary students have breaks to move and be energized throughout the day? Discussed at August 3<sup>rd</sup> Parent Webinar**

The students will stay in their classroom teacher's room for the majority of the day for cohorting purposes, but they will have an assigned area to play at recess (so as to keep the cohort) and will have mask breaks. Age-appropriate movement breaks are also commonly used pre-COVID-19 as well.

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Elementary: Class lists will serve as establishment of stable cohorts.

Elementary classroom cohorts will be assigned marked boundaries of the play area and toys specific to the cohort on a rotating schedule.

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School principals will pre-arrange scheduled "mask breaks" during the school day. Social distancing guidelines must be followed during these scheduled breaks.

**Addressing the SEL of students has been an important topic in getting the kids back to school. What is being done to address the needs of those who must stay home or who find that the significant changes needed in the classroom are more psychologically stressful than staying home?**

We currently have staff developing SEL lessons/activities for the start of the year. We know students will not have been in a school building for over five months. We will be front-loading a heavy emphasis on SEL, social skills, and relationship building the first several weeks of school. Beginning units of instruction will be intentionally built for a high level of success for all students as is the case any way. We are also cognizant that in order for learning to take place students' mental health needs need to be addressed. Our mental health staff are also readying a variety of approaches for students identified with IEPs and students without. We are also building a resource page of external resources for parents to access should a student's needs exceed what the school can provide.

As far as students who voluntarily opt for distance learning, the mere fact we will be employing minimally a 50% synchronous model will help to keep students connected to his/her classmates and teachers. Social isolation has been a sizable problem throughout the spring and summer and a synchronous model, where students are connected live to their classes each day, will help to include them in a real and meaningful way. Starting in a hybrid model, smaller classes in the initial onset of the year will allow us to target social/emotional resources and forge one-to-one relationships more efficiently with students due to less density on any given day.

## **ASSESSMENTS**

**What is the district's plan for ensuring this new learn material is a match to children's level? Will testing or assessments of learning level occur at beginning of school year even if they are remotely learning? How are you determining needs or progress during distance learning?**

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### **Classroom Learning**

Schools will continue to implement rigorous, high quality curriculum with appropriate instructional benchmarks for all students.

Prior to the start of school, teachers, interventionists, instructional coaches, and related service staff have the opportunity to participate in vertical articulation teams with their colleagues from the prior grade. They will learn about what content was covered pre-COVID and what was covered during distance learning and give them a perspective on the participation of students in the incoming class. Content will emphasize the important prerequisite standards for new learning in the current grade.

The vertical articulation teams will collaboratively plan what the incoming year's teacher should re-teach, to ensure a solid academic foundation for the year.

The First Unit of Instruction will be planned:

- 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
- Ensure that students have a high probability of success with that unit.

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The district will need to prioritize strategies for assessing the learning, gaps, and areas of emphasis for student instruction. Assessments should minimize testing times, increase instruction time, empower teachers, prompt vertical communication among teachers, use available information and implement differentiated instruction, personalized learning and formative assessment practices.

Teachers are to review available student information:

- This includes longitudinal data such as annual state tests, universal screenings, early reading assessments, district MAP assessments from fall and winter, English language proficiency assessment results for ELLs, IEP progress reports, student attendance patterns, disciplinary events, 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.