

Cato-Meridian Central School District

Reopening Plan – Fall 2020

Revised 9.2.2020- All revisions are in RED font.

Revised on 9.16.2020- All revisions are in Blue

Revised on 10.7.2020- All revisions are in Green

Revised 3.23.2021-All revisions are in Orange



Recovering, Rebuilding and Renewing: The Spirit of New York's Schools

This reopening plan is specifically designed for the following school buildings: Cato-Meridian Elementary School and the Cato-Meridian Junior-Senior High School in the Cato Meridian Central School District. The plan will continue to grow and change as the guidance and orders to the public health crisis dictates.

School District Information:

Superintendent Dr. Terry L. Ward

Contact Information: Phone: (315) 626-3319 Email: tward@catomeridian.org

Letter to Community: Sent on July 20, 2020

Good Evening Parents,

I hope this email finds you and your entire family well. As you know, we have approximately two and a half weeks to create a re-opening plan to the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Many parents and students have been wondering what school will look like in Cato-Meridian starting September 8, 2020. Our team spent hundreds of hours reading NYSED guidance documents. Also, we had over 500 parent comments to consider as we made our district schedule. As we created the new Cato-Meridian School District schedule our goals included:

- Maximize safety for all students and staff
- Create a district schedule to maximize in-person learning
- Prioritize in-person instruction at Cato-Meridian Elementary School
- Create a schedule that provides flexibility to offer families an online learning option
- Create a hybrid schedule combining in-person and online learning
- Create a schedule that allows students to take off their masks once they are seated in the classroom

- Limit movement of students during the school day
- Reduce child care needs for families
- Create uninterrupted instructional time during in-person learning
- Create time for teachers to collaborate
- Consider needs of both in-person and online learning students
- Give families plenty of time to plan before school begins in September

Thus, during our BOE meeting this evening I shared our COVID-19 District schedule for the 2020-2021 school year. Please see the attachment in this email.

Next week we will produce a video which will have several other details about our entire re-opening plan. The video is an attempt to answer most of your questions identified in the parent survey. At the end of the video viewing, you will be able to ask our administrative team any questions you might have. Detail of this video event will be shared sometime late next week.

I hope you are having a wonderful evening. Be well and stay healthy.

Sincerely,

Dr. Terry L. Ward

Superintendent of Schools

Stakeholder Involvement: The Cato-Meridian Central School District believes stakeholder involvement is extremely important. Through a district survey our parents provided over 500 comments to consider when developing this plan. The Cato-Meridian Teachers Union was consulted over several meetings with the superintendent of schools and the co-presidents. Also, the SEIU (Teaching Assistants) union president was consulted in developing this plan. The head of transportation was consulted during the decision making process. The administrative team took all comments and concerns into consideration when making final decisions about our Re-entry plan.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The health and safety of the children and adults in our schools is paramount. Health and safety considerations must always come first in every decision made and every action taken by our schools and districts.

Whether instruction is provided in-person, remotely, or through some combination of the two, schools have an important role to play in educating and communicating with school communities about the everyday preventive actions they can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Prevention is accomplished by following the recommendations of health authorities in the following areas:

- Daily Health Screenings (includes temperature checks before entering the buildings or on the bus, and health questions)
- Health Questions after holiday weekends when necessary
- Healthy Hygiene Practices;
- Social Distancing;
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Cloth Face Coverings;
- Management of Ill Persons; and
- Cleaning and Disinfection.

In each of these categories, schools should note those recommendations that are essential as they represent the minimum standards. Additional considerations are based on best practice or recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and should also be reviewed and included as feasible in reopening plans. We will continually monitor the CDC and DOH websites to keep current with the latest COVID information and guidance.

The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in our reopening plan:

- ☐ Districts/schools must review and consider the number of students and staff allowed to return in person. These factors should be considered when determining resumption of in person instruction:
- ☐ Ability to maintain appropriate social distance according to the CDC current recommendations.
- ☐ PPE and cloth face mask availability
- ☐ Availability of safe transportation
- ☐ Local hospital capacity – consulted local department of health.
- ☐ Districts/schools must engage with school stakeholders and community members (e.g., administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/legal guardians of students, local health departments, local health care providers, and affiliated organizations, such as unions, alumni, and/or community-based groups) when developing health and safety reopening plans. District/school plan should identify the groups of people involved and engaged throughout the planning process.
- ☐ District/school plan must include a communications plan for students, parents/guardians, staff, and visitors that includes applicable instructions, training, signage, and a consistent means to provide individuals with information.

- ☐ District/school plan has a written protocol developed in collaboration with the district or school's director of school health services to instruct staff to observe for signs of illness in students and staff and requires symptomatic persons to be sent to the school nurse or other designated personnel.
- ☐ District/school plan has a written protocol for ~~daily~~ **periodic** temperature screenings of all students and staff, along with a daily screening questionnaire for faculty and staff and periodic use of the questionnaire for students.
- ☐ District/school plan requires that ill students and staff be assessed by the school nurse (registered professional nurse, RN) or medical director and that if a school nurse or medical director is not available, ill students and staff will be sent home for follow up with a healthcare provider.
- ☐ District/school plan has written protocol requiring students or staff with a temperature, signs of illness, and/or a positive response to the questionnaire to be sent directly to a dedicated isolation area where students are supervised, prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home.
- ☐ District/school plan has written protocol to address visitors, guests, contractors, and vendors to the school which **may include** ~~includes~~ health screening questions.
- ☐ District/school plan has a written protocol to instruct parents/guardians to observe for signs of illness in their child that require staying home from school.
- ☐ District/school plan has written protocol and appropriate signage to instruct staff and students in correct hand and respiratory hygiene.
- ☐ District/school plan has written protocol to ensure all persons in school buildings keep social distance of ~~at least~~ 6 feet whenever possible. **When 6 feet is not possible students must maintain 3 feet social distancing.**
- ☐ District/school plan has written protocol detailing how the district/school will provide accommodations to all students and staff who are at high risk or live with a person at high risk.
- ☐ District/school plan has written protocol requiring all employees, adult visitors, and students to wear a cloth face covering whenever social distancing ~~cannot be maintained~~.
- ☐ District/school plan has written protocol regarding students taking mask breaks.
- ☐ District/school has plan for obtaining and maintaining adequate supplies of cloth face coverings for school staff, students who forget their masks, and PPE for use by school health professionals.
- ☐ District/school plan has written protocol for actions to be taken if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school.
- ☐ District/school plan has written protocol that complies with CDC guidance for the return to school of students and staff following illness or diagnosis of confirmed case of COVID-19 or following quarantine

due to contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Return to school will be coordinated with the ~~local health~~ **New York State Health** Department.

- ☐ District/school plan has written protocol to clean and disinfect schools following CDC guidance.
- ☐ District/school plan has written protocol to conduct required school safety drills with modifications ensuring social distancing between persons. **The district will follow all CDC guidance about social distancing, this includes the recommendation of 6 feet to 3 feet social distancing when feasible.**
- ☐ District/school has written plan for district/school run before and aftercare programs.
- ☐ District/school must designate a COVID-19 safety coordinator (administrator) whose responsibilities include continuous compliance with all aspects of the school's reopening plan, as well as any phased-in reopening activities necessary to allow for operational issues to be resolved before activities return to normal or "new normal" levels.
- ☐ ***Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.***

Vulnerable Populations

Students, faculty and staff who are at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness, and individuals who may not feel comfortable returning to an in-person educational environment, should meet with the district superintendent to discuss their specific situation and the factors that make them vulnerable.

The superintendent will conduct an interactive dialogue with the student, faculty or staff member regarding accommodations or modifications that can reduce their risk and to allow them to safely participate in their work assignment or educational programming. The student, faculty, or staff member should provide Cato-Meridian Central School District (CMCSD) with any information from their medical provider regarding their increased risk and/or recommendations for accommodations or modifications to reduce their risk. **In conjunction with the local health department, staff members have given multiple opportunities to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.**

Accommodations may include, but are not limited to, modified educational or work settings such as additional social distancing, providing additional PPE to individuals with underlying health conditions, or modifications to work schedules and educational programming. Accommodations must be designed to address the individual's increased risk to COVID-19 and to allow the individual to participate in the in-person educational or work environment.

CMCSD will identify and describe any modifications to social distancing or PPE that may be necessary for certain student or staff populations, including individuals who have hearing impairment or loss, students receiving language services, and young students in early education programs, ensuring that any modifications minimize COVID-19 exposure risk for students, faculty, and staff, to the greatest extent possible.

Any agreed upon accommodation or modification will be placed in writing and provided to the student, faculty or staff member and shared with faculty and staff at the school building deemed necessary to implement the accommodation or modification.

~~COVID-19 RETURN TO WORK/SCHOOL PROTOCOLS~~ Revised see the end of this document

See flow chart at the end of this document

~~1. Employee/Student Has Tested Positive For COVID-19~~

~~Employee/Student is to remain quarantined and may return to work/school if:~~

- ~~• 10 days have passed since employee/student exhibited symptoms or since they tested positive if they are asymptomatic; and~~
- ~~• at least 24 hours have passed since employee/student had a fever ($\geq 100.0^{\circ}$ F) without the use of fever-reducing medications; and~~
- ~~• at least 72 hour period where employee's/student's symptoms have improved~~

~~2. Employee/Student Is Symptomatic And Has Had Close Or Proximate Contact¹ With Someone Who Has Tested Positive For COVID-19~~

¹ Within 6 feet of an infected person for more than 10 minutes starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the infected person was isolated.

If employee/student is symptomatic, the employee/student is to remain quarantined and may return to work/school if:

- ~~10 days have passed since employee/student exhibited symptoms; and~~
- ~~at least 24 hours have passed since employee/student had a fever ($\geq 100.0^{\circ}$ F) without the use of fever reducing medications; and~~
- ~~at least 72 hours have passed where the employee's/student's symptoms have improved~~

3. ~~Employee/Student Is Symptomatic But Has Not Had Close Or Proximate Contact With Person Who Has Tested Positive~~

If employee/student is symptomatic, the employee/student is to remain quarantined and may return to work/school if:

- ~~14 days of quarantine have been completed~~
- ~~OR~~
- ~~at least 24 hours have passed since employee/student had a fever ($\geq 100.0^{\circ}$ F) without the use of fever reducing medications, and the employee/student has felt well for 24 hours~~
- ~~OR~~
- ~~the employee/student has been diagnosed with another condition and has a note from their healthcare provider indicating they are clear to return to work/school~~
- ~~OR~~
- ~~the employee/student has a negative test result~~

4. ~~Employee/Student Is Symptomatic And Has Had Close Or Proximate Contact With Someone Awaiting Test Results~~

If employee/student is symptomatic, the employee/student is to remain quarantined and may return to work/school if:

- ~~the test result for the other person comes back negative~~

~~OR~~

- ~~the employee/student has a negative test result;~~

~~OR~~

- ~~10 days have passed since employee/student exhibited symptoms; and~~
- ~~at least 24 hours have passed since employee/student had a fever ($\geq 100.0^{\circ}$ F) without the use of fever reducing medications; and~~
- ~~at least 72 hours have passed where the employee's/student's symptoms have improved~~

~~OR~~

- ~~the employee/student has been diagnosed with another condition and has a note from their healthcare provider indicating they are clear to return to work/school~~

5. ~~Employee/Student Is Not Symptomatic But Did Have Close Or Proximate Contact With Person Who Has Tested Positive~~

~~If the employee/student is not symptomatic, the employee/student is to remain quarantined and may return to work/school:~~

- ~~• after completing 14 days of self-quarantine; or~~
- ~~• the employee/student has had a negative test result after having had close or proximate contact with a person who has tested positive~~

~~Employees Only:~~

~~However, if the employee is deemed essential and critical for the operation or safety of the workplace, upon a documented determination by the District Superintendent in consultation with appropriate state and local health authorities, the exposed, asymptomatic employee may return to work so long as the employee adheres to the following practices prior to and during their work shift, which should be monitored and documented by the employer and employee:~~

- ~~• Regular monitoring: While at work the employee must self-monitor for a temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit every 2 hours and symptoms consistent with COVID-19 under the supervision of the Health and Safety Coordinator; and~~
- ~~• Wear a mask: The employee must wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure; and~~
- ~~• Social distance: The employee must continue social distancing practices, including maintaining, at least, six feet of distance from others.~~
- ~~• Clean and disinfect workspaces: The employer must continue to regularly clean and disinfect all areas, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared electronic equipment.~~
- ~~• Maintain quarantine: The employee must continue to self-quarantine and self-monitor for temperature and symptoms when not at the workplace for 14 days after last exposure.~~

6. Employee/Student Is Not Symptomatic And Has Had Close Or Proximate Contact With Someone Symptomatic And Awaiting Test Results

If the employee/student is not symptomatic, the employee/student is to remain quarantined and may return to work/school:

- after completing 14 days of self-quarantine; or
- the employee/student has a negative test result; or
- the person whom the employee/student had close or proximate contact with has a negative test result

Employees only:

However, if the employee is deemed essential and critical for the operation or safety of the workplace, upon a documented determination by the District Superintendent in consultation with appropriate state and local health authorities, the exposed, asymptomatic employee may return to work so long as the employee adheres to the following practices prior to and during their work shift, which should be monitored and documented by the employer and employee:

- Regular monitoring: While at work the employee must self-monitor for a temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit every 2 hours and symptoms consistent with COVID-19 under the supervision of the Health and Safety Coordinator; and
- Wear a mask: The employee must wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure; and
- Social distance: The employee must continue social distancing practices, including maintaining, at least, six feet of distance from others.
- Clean and disinfect workspaces: The employer must continue to regularly clean and disinfect all areas, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared electronic equipment.
- Maintain quarantine: The employee must continue to self-quarantine and self-monitor for temperature and symptoms when not at the workplace for 14 days after last exposure.

7. ~~Employee/Student Has Traveled To A State Designated As Having Significant Community Spread~~

~~Employees/students who travel to a designated state with significant community spread must notify their supervisor/principal of their travel plans including the state being traveled to, along with the departure and return date.~~

~~If an employee/student has traveled from within one of the designated states with significant community spread, he/she must quarantine upon re-entering New York for 14 days from the last travel within such designated state.~~

~~The requirements of the travel advisory do not apply to any individual passing through designated states for a limited duration (i.e., less than 24 hours) through the course of travel. Examples of such brief passage include but are not limited to: stopping at rest stops for vehicles, buses, and/or trains; or layovers for air travel, bus travel, or train travel.~~

~~Employees/students may return to work/school after completing 14 days of quarantine.~~

FACILITIES

When students and adults return to their school buildings for in-person instruction, it will be vitally important that the physical spaces they occupy are configured and maintained in a way that provides the maximum possible protection from spreading the coronavirus.

School districts will follow health guidance related to social distancing and other safety measures that must be put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19. To meet the requirements of that guidance, CMCSO will use existing extra classroom space at Cato-Meridian Elementary. We are meeting fire code compliance and if necessary we will require code review by the New York State Education Department's (NYSED's) Office of Facilities Planning.

Many questions will arise as districts or other applicable schools balance fire safety and building security needs with efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19. NYSED's team is in consultation with other state agencies to ensure that all factors are fully considered, and the risks to building occupants are minimized across the full range of potential concerns.

The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:

General Health and Safety Assurances

- ❑ CMCSO must follow all guidance related to health and safety. This will include meeting social distancing requirements and cleaning frequently touched spaces regularly to prevent spread of

infection. These requirements will be addressed in more detail in other parts of the NYSED Re-Opening Guidance. The Facilities portion of the district's, or other applicable school's, reopening plan will seek assurance that school districts or other applicable schools will meet all requirements associated with building space related changes that they may elect to make.

- Daily disinfecting in all student buildings with the Clorox 360 machine. The Clorox 360 has Electrostatic technology. This disinfects the top and bottom of surfaces.
- Hospital grade disinfecting spraying on busses between bus runs.
- Hand Sanitizer dispensers located outside each classroom door.
- Sanitizing wipes available for each classroom.
- Signage added to promote mask wearing, social distancing, washing hands, etc. throughout the school buildings.
- Air handler units adjusted to increase outside air flow.

Fire Code Compliance

- Changes or additions to facilities require review by the Office of Facilities Planning (OFP), since all spaces to be occupied by public school students and staff must meet the requirements of the 2020 New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (BC) and the State Energy Conservation Code. In their plans, districts or other applicable schools will provide assurances that, should alterations be made, districts and other applicable schools will submit the proposed changes to the OFP for review and approval - just as with any other project.

Doorways

- Many stairs and corridor doors have closers with automatic hold opens. These doors are normally held in the open position and are automatically released by the fire alarm system. The function, position, and operation of those doors must remain unchanged. Fortunately, they need not be touched during normal use.

Emergency Drills

- Districts or other applicable schools shall conduct standard operations and procedures to the best of their abilities without deviating from current requirements. Fire (evacuation) Drills and Lockdown Drills are required by Education Law and regulation and the Fire Code and they must be conducted without exceptions. Fire Code Section 404 requires that schools maintain Fire Safety, Evacuation, and Lockdown Plans and these plans include how lockdown and evacuation drills are conducted. Methods to promote and provide for social distancing during the evacuation drills are ultimately the district's or other applicable school's decision and responsibility. Those changes must be included in the Fire Safety plans.

Inspections

- ☐ Statute has not been changed to provide an extension to the submission deadline for the Building Condition Survey or Visual Inspections. Our Building Condition Survey will be completed by the fall of 2020.

Lead Testing due in 2020

- ☐ At present, the statutory requirement that lead testing occur in 2020 continues. NYS DOH regulation 67-4, Lead-In-Water Testing, DOH requires lead-in-water testing to be conducted when the building is “normally occupied.” Sampling should not be conducted when the building is vacant or has been vacant for an extended period due to COVID-19 closure. Simulation of “normally occupied operation” for the purpose of lead-in-water testing is not permitted. NYS DOH advises that schools follow recommended procedures to the extent possible to provide clean and safe drinking water upon reopening.

Cato-Meridian Central School District follows all guidance related to health and safety, including Fire Code compliance and requirements regarding doorways, emergency drills, inspections and lead testing.

Changes to Space Utilization and/or Alterations

Mandatory Requirements for Alterations:

If districts/schools expect to make space alterations to the physical space or the building, these items will be required:

- ☐ Alterations to the configuration of existing classrooms or spaces or the introduction of temporary and/or movable partitions, the change must be submitted to OFP, the local municipality and/or code enforcement officials for review.
- ☐ Means of egress, fire alarm system, ventilation, and lighting may be affected and must be indicated on all submitted plans.
- ☐ Consult your architect and submit floor plans to OFP for approval.
- ☐ COVID-19 Projects shall be indicated as “COVID-19 Reopening” when submitted to the OFP. This will allow NYSED to expedite those reviews.
- ☐ The installation of movable partitions (gym, cafeteria, Library classroom dividers) and queue barricades shall require an abbreviated submission consistent with the Form FP-AU Request for Approval of Use of a Facility.
- ☐ Use of Cafeterias, Libraries, Auditoriums and Gymnasiums: A floor plan of the entire room showing the furniture layout with egress aisles shall be submitted to OFP for approval. Lighting, ventilation, means of egress, and fire alarm coverage must be indicated.

Districts or other applicable schools can utilize available space in the cafeteria, gyms, auditorium, and libraries (or sections thereof), as classroom space. Minor alterations and the use of space dividers may be utilized in existing classrooms. The need for social distancing may be enhanced by alterations to a lobby or corridor and /or interior spaces/rooms.

- ☐ *Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

Cato-Meridian Central Schools does not expect space alterations to be made to the physical space or buildings.

Space Expansion

Mandatory Requirements for Space Expansion:

If districts or other applicable schools choose to expand their square footage in order to enable improved social distancing (e.g. building additions, lease space, transportable classroom units or spaces such as tents) the following requirements apply for all spaces to be occupied by school district staff and students:

- ☐ Code Review: Per statute, NYSED's Office of Facilities Planning must review and approve the above types of projects to ensure that the proposed spaces meet the fire code.
- ☐ Offsite Lease Requirements: For offsite facilities, the district or other applicable schools must contact their project manager at NYSED Office of Facilities Planning (OFP) and submit a Temporary Quarters (TQ) Project submission.

To ensure that these sites meet all requirements, TQ submissions require submission of:

- ☐ OFP Form FP_AU-Request for Approval of Use of a Facility;
- ☐ architectural quality floor plan;
- ☐ site plan;
- ☐ AHERA Plan;
- ☐ Fire Safety Report;
- ☐ Confirmation of Americans with Disabilities Act compliance;
- ☐ Local Code Authority Certificate of Occupancy; and
- ☐ Approval of use of space.

- ☐ Please note – if a Change of Occupancy in the Existing Building Code applies (e.g. office or B-occupancy to E-occupancy) code requirements such as rescue windows; accessibility; fire protection systems such as sprinkler or emergency voice alarm communication systems; ventilation – may make it infeasible.
- ☐ Districts or other applicable schools should identify COVID-19 Projects as “COVID-19 Reopening” when required materials are submitted to OFP for review.
- ☐ Consult with OFP for a preliminary evaluation of all facilities under consideration for leasing. All leased facilities must be submitted to OFP for review and approval.

Please consult with your architect/engineer of record.

Districts or other applicable schools should identify COVID-19 Projects as “COVID-19 Reopening” when required materials are submitted to OFP for review.

- ☐ *Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

Cato-Meridian Central School District does not expect to expand our square footage in order to enable proper social distancing.

Tents for Additional Space

Mandatory Requirements for the use of Tents for Additional Space:

If tents are used as alternate spaces, then the following requirements apply:

Tents, both temporary and permanent are regulated by code and must be submitted for a building permit.

- ☐ Temporary structures and tents are those erected for 180 days or less. The Building Code Section 3103.1 indicates, “tents and membrane structures erected for a period of less than 180 days shall comply with the Fire Code of NYS”.
- ☐ The Fire Code (FC) Chapter 31 contains extensive requirements for Tents and Other Membrane Structures. FC Section 3103.2 indicates that a permit and approval of temporary tents is required. FC Section 3103 contains requirements for temporary tents and Section 3104 has requirements for permanent tents. They include requirements for construction documents, access roads, location, seating plans, means of egress, illumination, exit signs, construction, use.
- ☐ Permanent tents are considered a membrane structure and are regulated by Building Code Section 3102 and other applicable sections.
- ☐ Districts or other applicable schools must consult their design professional to prepare submission drawings for approval by OFP.

- ☐ The following information must be shown on the drawings: Dimensions, Minimum separation distance to other structures, Tent sides (yes) (no), Duration of use, Type of use/activity, Anchorage, Number of Exits, Width of each exit, Table/Chair/Contents, layout, Fire extinguisher Location, Occupant load, Heating or Cooking equipment, Utilities, Exit signs, NFPA 701 testing/label/certification.
- ☐ If the tent is used for E-occupancy, consult with local municipalities and/or code enforcers provide code-compliant design for mechanical heat and ventilation; lighting; emergency lighting; power; fire alarm; plumbing; etc. as required.
- ☐ Districts or other applicable schools must consult their architect and submit to OFP for approval. The district, or other applicable school, must provide an architectural quality floor plan, which clearly indicates existing and proposed use of space showing the furniture layout with egress aisles. Lighting, ventilation, means of egress, and fire alarm coverage must be indicated.
- ☐ *Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

Cato-Meridian Central School District does not expect to utilize tents for additional alternative space.

Plumbing Facilities and Fixtures

Toilet and Sink Fixtures: Districts or other applicable schools may consider reducing the number of toilet fixtures in a building in order to facilitate frequent cleaning. However, the minimum number of toilet fixtures that must be available for use in a building is established in the building code.

The usual minimum requirement may be reduced by certain circumstances that may be relevant: (1) the building's aggregate number of toilet fixtures already exceeds the minimum amount required by the Building Code or (2) the building occupancy is reduced using partial remote learning or reductions.

Reminder: frequent handwashing is a key component to avoiding the spread of COVID-19, so sinks and soap must be available to building occupants at all times.

Mandatory Requirements for Plumbing Facilities and Fixtures:

- ☐ The number of toilet and sink fixtures must meet the minimum standards of the New York State Building Code. In order to ensure compliance, a design professional should be consulted prior to any modifications to layouts or number of fixtures.
- ☐ All temporary facilities must be approved through the Office of Facilities Planning.
- ☐ *Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

The number of toilet and sink fixtures must meet the minimum standards of the New York State Building Code in the Cato-Meridian Central School District.

Drinking Water Facilities: Districts or other applicable schools may wish to reduce number of drinking fountains available, in order to facilitate frequent cleaning. However, drinking fountains are a code required plumbing fixture. One fountain is required for each one hundred occupants.

In the event drinking fountains need to be taken out of service, the following should be considered to provide potable drinking water to all occupants of the building:

- Drinking fountains may be replaced with units with bottle fillers.
- Supplying students with bottled drinking water or water in disposable cups at specified locations is an acceptable alternative source.

Potable drinking water will be provided to all occupants of the building via Bottle Filling Stations. When necessary the district will provide bottles to fill for students.

Ventilation

Mandatory Requirements for Ventilation:

☐ Maintain adequate, code required ventilation (natural or mechanical) as designed. If other air cleaning equipment is proposed, submit to OFP for review and approval.

☐ *Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

Adequate required code ventilation will be maintained throughout the Cato-Meridian Central School District.

Districts and schools are encouraged to increase the fresh air ventilation rate to the extent possible to aid in maintaining a healthy indoor air quality. We recognize there are many different types of ventilation systems, natural or mechanical, that may be limited for increasing ventilation outside air due to available heat or fan/relief airflow capacity. We are considering installing a higher efficiency filters. A higher efficiency filter may require a larger filter housing and will create greater resistance to airflow, and the fan and HVAC system may require rebalancing to maintain the code required ventilation rate.

New Technology

Some school leaders may have been contacted by vendors promoting new technology that claims to purify air. Some of these systems may be proven over time to have merit, but the use of new technologies in school facilities must be stringently reviewed prior to the installation and issuance of permits for those technologies. Some of them could have a negative impact on the building occupants' health and safety. New technologies must be proven safe by independent and impartial studies by a nationally recognized governing body, and the equipment must be listed/labeled for the intended use by a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory.

NYSED Procedures

Projects that are labeled as "COVID-19 Reopening" will be expedited. Leased facilities, modular buildings, tents, additions, and alterations require an LOI and typical project submission requirements; prescreening will be waived. Questions can be directed to the OFP.

CHILD NUTRITION

A successful nutrition program is a key component to a successful educational environment. Children cannot focus on learning when they are hungry. School meals boost learning, and studies show that students perform best academically when they are well nourished. School districts around the State did an incredible job, with tremendous community support, in ensuring that students received nutritious meals while schools were closed this past year. No child should ever go hungry, and school reopening plans must provide for the feeding of all students who require food assistance.

As school food service operations transition from serving meals during unanticipated school closures and summer meals to serving school meals, School Food Authorities (SFAs) will need to consider national, state, and local health and safety guidelines. It is important that SFAs engage school food service directors in district or system wide discussions regarding plans for reopening schools to ensure that students participating in all learning models have access to healthy



meals.

SFAs will need to consider the resources and flexibilities necessary to transition food service operations to an onsite or off-site student meal delivery system or operate both at the same time. This includes utilizing state or nationwide waivers and updating school policies, standard operating procedures, and trainings to ensure compliance with Child Nutrition Program requirements.

The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:

- District/School Plan must provide all students enrolled in the SFA with access to school meals each school day. This must include:
 - students in attendance at school; and 5 students learning remotely.
- District/School Plan must address all applicable health and safety guidelines.
- District/School Plan must include measures to protect students with food allergies if providing meals in spaces outside the cafeteria.
- District/School Plan must include protocols and procedures for how students will perform hand hygiene before and after eating, how appropriate hand hygiene will be promoted, and how sharing of food and beverages will be discouraged.
- District/School Plan must include protocols and procedures that require cleaning and disinfection prior to the next group of students arriving for meals, if served in the same common area.
- District/School Plan must ensure compliance with Child Nutrition Program requirements.
- District/School Plan must include protocols that describe communication with families through multiple means in the languages spoken by families.
- *Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

~~--Students in Pre-K through 6th grade (Elementary building) who are attending in person will receive meals delivered directly to the classroom.~~ Some students will eat in the cafeteria 6 feet apart. Teachers will record student orders and send them to the cafeteria each morning for lunch and in the afternoon for breakfast the next day.

~~--Students in 7th through 12th grades will travel through the cafeteria lines one at a time (6 feet apart) and cafeteria staff will serve meal choices in a container/bag that can be taken to the classroom.~~

~~--Students in 7th through 12th grades will pick-up their lunch at the end of the hallways. They will eat in their classrooms 6 feet apart.~~

--Students who are attending online will have access to meals via a delivery/pick up system.

--All meals will contain components necessary for compliance with the Child Nutrition Program.

--Food will only be handled by cafeteria staff prior to service to the student, and cafeteria staff will wear masks and gloves as well as follow all required hygiene and sanitation guidelines.

--All meals purchased will be entered manually into our point of sale system so that students will not be required to enter a pin number or touch a keypad.

--Modified menus can be made for students with dietary restrictions, and all meals under modified menus will be clearly labeled with the students name for delivery.

--Plastic shields will be in place in the cafeteria lines where students will be walking through (Middle/High school building). Meals are delivered in the hallways. Some meals in the elementary school are consumed in cafeteria 6 feet apart.

TRANSPORTATION

The school bus is an extension of the classroom; therefore, many of the recommendations that apply to school buildings (like social distancing and frequent cleaning) should be applied to the school bus, as well. Pupil transportation also presents certain unique challenges, especially with regard to the transportation of homeless students, students in foster care, students in nonpublic and charter schools, and students with disabilities. So, it is critical that schools and school districts must be sure to include Transportation Department staff in all school re-opening planning.

School District Policies/Practices

The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:

- ☐ School districts and other applicable schools are expected to fulfill existing mandates regarding the safe and effective transportation of students who are homeless (McKinney-Vento), in foster care, have disabilities and attend non-public schools and charter schools. Although meeting these obligations will certainly pose challenges, these expectations continue to be in place. Districts and other applicable schools should plan accordingly.

Cato-Meridian Central School District will fulfill existing mandates regarding the safe and effective transportation of students utilizing our existing transportation system.

The School Bus

Mandatory Requirements for School Bus:

Assurances of the following will be required when submitting the Reopening Plan:

- ☐ Students who are able will be required to wear masks and social distance on the bus;
- ☐ All buses (conforming and non-conforming to Federal Motor Carrier Safety Standards, as well as type A, C or D) which are used every day by districts and contract carriers must be cleaned/ disinfected once a day. High contact spots must be wiped down after the am and pm run depending upon the disinfection schedule. (For example, some buses might be cleaned between the am and pm runs while other buses may be cleaned/disinfected after the pm run);
- ☐ School buses ~~shall not~~ **may be** equipped with hand sanitizer due to its combustible composition and potential liability to the carrier or district. School bus drivers, monitors and attendants must not carry personal bottles of hand sanitizer with them on school buses;
- ☐ Wheelchair school buses must configure wheelchair placement to ensure social distancing of 6 feet.

- ☐ ***Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.***

- Masks to be worn by drivers and students at all times on the bus and practice social distancing.
- Temperatures to be taken as students board the bus at the morning pickup.
- One student per seat. Siblings will be sitting together.
- Buses will be sanitized following the AM and PM runs.
- All students must get on and off at the same location everyday as student counts on the buses are monitored closely. We will not deviate from this rule.

School Bus Staff

Mandatory Requirements for School Bus Staff:

- ☐ School bus drivers, monitors, attendants and mechanics shall perform a self-health assessment for symptoms of COVID-19 before arriving to work. If personnel are experiencing any of the symptoms of COVID-19 they should notify their employer and seek medical attention;
- ☐ School bus drivers, monitors, attendants and mechanics must wear a face covering along with an optional face shield;
- ☐ Transportation staff (drivers, monitors, attendants, mechanics and cleaners) will be trained and provided periodic refreshers on the proper use of personal protective equipment and the signs and symptoms of COVID-19;
- ☐ Transportation departments/carriers will need to provide Personal Protective Equipment such as masks and gloves for drivers, monitors and attendants in buses as well as hand sanitizer for all staff in their transportation locations such as dispatch offices, employee lunch/break rooms and/or bus garages.
- ☐ Drivers, monitors and attendants who must have direct physical contact with a child must wear gloves.
- ☐ *Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

The Cato-Meridian Central School District (CMSD) transportation staff will assess their own health assessment. This will include mandatory temperature check. CMSD will supply transportation staff with proper face coverings. CMSD will supply gloves to anyone who comes in direct contact with children.

Students on Transportation

Mandatory Requirements for Students on Transportation:

- ☐ As was outlined in the Health and Safety section of this guidance, all parents/guardians will be required to ensure their child/children are not experiencing any signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and do not have a fever of 100 degrees or more prior to them boarding their method of transportation to school;

- ☐ Students must wear a mask on a school bus if they are physically able. Students who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering, including students where such covering would impair their physical health or mental health are not subject to the required use of a face covering;
 - ☐ Students must social distance (six feet separation) on the bus;
 - ☐ Students who do not have a mask can NOT be denied transportation;
 - ☐ Students who do not have masks must be provide one by the district;
 - ☐ Students with a disability, which would prevent them from wearing a mask, will not be forced to do so or denied transportation.
- ☐ *Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

Upon entering the bus, children will experience temperature checks. If students are over 100.0 degrees, they will be asked to return inside their homes. Student should have a mask upon entering their bus. If they do not have a mask one will be provided to them.

Pupil Transportation Routing

Mandatory Requirements for Pupil Transportation Routing:

- ☐ If the school district is in session remotely or otherwise, pupil transportation must be provided to nonpublic, parochial, private, charter schools or students whose Individualized Education Plans have placed them out of district whose schools are meeting in in-person sessions when/ if the district is not;
 - ☐ All students are entitled to transportation by the district to the extent required by law. Transportation departments do not have the ability or the right to deny transportation for children who are in foster care, homeless or attend private or charter schools. Parents who may have missed the due date to request out of district transportation due to a reasonable excuse may file a 310 appeal with the Commissioner of Education.
- ☐ *Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

The district will provide transportation if needed.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Communities and schools are facing unprecedented challenges as they respond to the compounded difficulties of a global pandemic, an economic recession, and civic unrest in response to structural racism. But these challenges

also offer unprecedented opportunities to re-envision and renew the capacity of our schools and communities to be welcoming, supportive, inclusive, and equitable environments.

To meet these challenges, individuals must start with the inner work of healing their own hearts and minds, finding the capacity within themselves to support healing for students, families, peers, and communities. While district and school personnel cannot solve every problem, collectively they are a powerful force in improving the well-being of themselves and those around them.

As district and school personnel adapt to environments that result in substantially reduced time spent interacting in-person, ensuring intentional and meaningful inclusion of social emotional learning (SEL) across all aspects of operating strategies is critical to supporting the well-being and success of students, staff, and families. Along with physical health and well-being, schools and districts must prioritize social emotional well-being -- not at the expense of academics, but in order to create the mental, social, and emotional space for academic learning to occur.

It is unrealistic to expect that students will return to instruction as they left it months ago. Students have experienced an extremely stressful, and for many, traumatic experience while isolated from school, friends, and community.

Some students have had positive experiences during school closures, learning, growing, and discovering new identities as activists, caregivers, and leaders in their communities. Schools should support and nurture new skills and mindsets.

Students known to be vulnerable, as well as those not previously on district and school radars, may return to instruction anxious, fearful, withdrawn, grieving, and/or unprepared to self-manage new or exacerbated negative behaviors. And some students have thrived in an on-line environment, as school anxiety has lessened. Should additional periods of remote learning be required, students who had an adult available to assist them previously may now be home alone as adults return to work. Older students may be tasked with the care of younger family members. Schools and districts must be prepared to meet students where they are, regardless of the circumstances in which they find themselves.

During the Regional Task Force Meetings, stakeholders discussed the variety of student, family, and school personnel needs that must be addressed during transitions back to school in the fall, whether that is in-person, remote, or a hybrid. Overall, worry was expressed that many students, families, and staff will return with fear or anxiety, and school and district staff will need to balance physical safety with social and emotional needs.

Stakeholders expressed concern over local capacity to address increased social and emotional needs with existing staff, and discussed opportunities to better position existing staff to build capacity around student and family engagement, trauma-responsive practices, social emotional learning, restorative practices, and fostering relationships, within both in-person and virtual environments. They further expressed concerns about screen time for students should remote or hybrid learning be necessary, and the ability of students and families to access resources during periods of remote learning.

Stakeholders stressed the importance of clear communication with all stakeholders including students, families, staff, and community, and considered how community partnerships could be leveraged to increase capacity. They recommended that social and emotional well-being be prioritized during transitions back to school and for as

long as necessary to appropriately support student needs; physical and emotional safety is necessary for the brain and body to be ready to learn.

Finally, stakeholders stressed the critical need to address adults' social and emotional needs before the return to school and on an ongoing basis. Adults must have systems of support including meaningful peer relationships, opportunities to connect, and resources to support self-care. Without these supports in place, adults will not have optimal capacity to support the needs of students and families.

The following considerations are intended to assist in creating a welcoming and caring school community that ensures its members are met with compassion and the support they need to achieve and thrive. Academic learning cannot be effective until the basic human needs for physical and emotional safety are met. This is an embodied practice. Breathe, notice, feel, and be present.

The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:

- Ensure that a district-wide and building-level comprehensive developmental school counseling program plan, developed under the direction of certified school counselor(s), is reviewed and updated to meet current needs.
- Establish an advisory council, shared decision-making, school climate team, or other collaborative working group comprised of families, students, members of the board of education, school building and/or district/charter leaders, community-based service providers, teachers, certified school counselors, and other pupil personnel service providers including school social workers and/or school psychologists to inform the comprehensive developmental school counseling program plan.
- Address how the school/district will provide resources and referrals to address mental health, behavioral, and emotional support services and programs.
- Address professional development opportunities for faculty and staff on how to talk with and support students during and after the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency, as well as provide supports for developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty, and staff.
- ***Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.***
 - Social Emotional Learning Considerations
 - Cato-Meridian Central Schools will continue to utilize a Multi-Tiered System of Support to address students' social emotional needs. A variety of supports will be available in the Elementary and Jr. Sr. High School that targets students at each Tier of need.
 - Whole group social emotional learning instruction will be provided through the Positivity Project (P2) at both the Elementary and Jr. Sr. High School Level. Additional Tier 1 supports of whole group

lessons focused on community building, health relationships, and executive functioning strategies will be provided to students K-8. Those students participating in a fully online method of schooling will also have access to this instruction through virtual means. Tier 2 services will be targeted at students who are demonstrating challenges as evidenced by school data (for example, increased attendance challenges or behavioral issues). These services may include targeted short term supports such as mediation, targeted skill development, DASA interventions and resiliency supports. Tier 3 services will be targeted at children who are demonstrating significant challenges. They may include individual counseling, Behavioral Consultation, referrals to community resources and wrap around services. Dialectical Behavior Therapy, a small group cognitive behavioral therapy support) is also available at the Jr. Sr. High School level. These supports will be available through in person as well as virtual means.

- In addition, Cato-Meridian is committed to supporting our families in meeting their children's needs. Plans are currently underway to offer more global parental supports to meet students needs, particularly in the area of anxiety.
- In terms of professional development, the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES Professional Development Unit has been and will continue to provide training in the areas of trauma informed practice, therapeutic crisis intervention and supports, behavior management and social emotional learning. The Behavioral Excellence Coach will support in-district initiations regarding social emotional learning, as well as, provide support and teaching tools for developing, coping and resilience skills for students, faculty and staff. The staff at Cato-Meridian also provides training to teachers and teacher aids and assistance around therapeutic supports for children.
- The Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES Professional Development Unit has been, and will continue to provide training in the areas of trauma informed practice, therapeutic crisis intervention and supports, behavioral management and social emotional learning.
- The districts Behavioral Excellence Coach will support in-district initiatives regarding social emotional learning, as well as, provide supports and teaching tools for developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty, and staff.

SCHOOL SCHEDULES

COVID-19 required schools to make critical adjustments to their instructional model in March 2020 with little or no time to plan. As schools devise their re-opening plans for the 2020-21 school year, plans must address resuming in-person instruction. However, scheduling decisions must be informed by health and safety standards and the most up to date guidance from the New York State Department of Health.

Consideration must also be given to the needs of students, families, and staff as well as the realities of available space and student enrollment in each unique school and district. Schools are given the ability to restructure their programs using flexible scheduling models—taking advantage of in-person, remote, or hybrid learning models—and to provide synchronous and/or asynchronous instruction.



Per the New York State Department of Health guidance, plans should address a combination of in-person instruction and remote learning to facilitate a phased-in approach or hybrid model, which may be necessary at various times throughout the 2020-2021 school year. In cases where in-person instruction is not feasible, phased-in and hybrid models of education will need to consider if certain students will be prioritized for in-person instruction first or more frequently based on educational or other needs (e.g., early grades, students with disabilities, English language learners), and must balance this with equity, capacity, social distancing, PPE, feasibility, and learning considerations. These priorities if applicable shall be determined at the individual school or district level based upon the needs of student populations within such schools or districts.

If COVID-19 cases develop, schools/districts may consider restricting access within school facilities and across school grounds, particularly in affected areas to avoid full school closures. In such instances, schools/districts may choose to temporarily move classes where an individual has tested positive for COVID-19 to remote/virtual format until all contacts can be identified, notified, tested, and cleared. To maximize in-person instruction, Schools/districts should consider measures that can be implemented to decrease density and congregation in school facilities and on school grounds, when possible, such as:

- finding alternative spaces in the community to allow for more in-person instruction;
- adjusting class or work hours, where appropriate and possible;
- limiting in-person presence to only those staff who are necessary to be at the school during normal school hours;
- maintaining or increasing remote workforce (e.g., administrative staff) to accommodate social distancing guidelines;

- staggering schedules and allowing more time between classes to reduce congestion in hallways, walkways, and buildings; and/or
- shifting design of class schedules to accommodate social distancing guidelines, including cohorts (e.g., alternative classroom schedules, full-time in-person learning for younger students, and part-time distance learning for older students).

Schools/districts should collaborate with stakeholders including, but not limited to, teachers, staff members, parents, and community groups when considering alternate schedules. Plans must include how schedules will be shared and made available to the school community. Schools should share their scheduling plans with students, families, and staff as soon as possible before the start of the school year and anytime a change is required in order to allow families to plan childcare and work arrangements. If schools/districts begin to implement in-person and hybrid learning models, they must also be prepared to shift back to fully remote learning models should circumstances change and school buildings are required to close.

Regardless of the instructional model implemented, equity and access must be the priority for all students including, but not limited to, students with disabilities, English language learners, and students experiencing homelessness.

~~Three~~ Options for Instruction at Cato-Meridian CSD.

- ~~1. All Remote Learning Open to any Cato-Meridian student.~~
- ~~2. Hybrid In Person 4 days a week in grades Pre-K-6th grade and two days a week grades 7-12. For Specific schedule see below. Everyone is remote learning on Wednesdays.~~
- ~~3. In person learning. In person learning is 4 days a week in grades Pre-k-6th grade and two days a week grades 7-12. Everyone is remote learning on Wednesdays.~~
4. All Remote-Open to any Cato-Meridian student.
5. In-person learning 5 days a week.

Cato-Meridian Central School 2020-2021 Daily Schedule



Elementary School (Pre-Kindergarten - Grade 6)

Attend in-person learning on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays
(Wednesdays will be mandatory online learning for all students)

	<u>AM Transportation</u>	<u>Student Day</u>	<u>PM Transportation</u>	<u>Teacher Day</u>
<u>Pre-Kindergarten - Grade 3:</u>	6:30 - 7:30	7:35 - 1:40	2:05 - 3:05	7:30 - 2:50
<u>Grades 4 - 6:</u>	7:30 - 8:30	8:35 - 2:40	3:05 - 4:05	7:50 - 3:10

• **Pre-K - Grade 6 staff schedule on Wednesdays:-**

- 8:00 - 11:30 - Online learning support, host virtual meetings, small group times
- 11:30 - 12:30 - Lunch
- 12:30 - 3:20 - Professional Development/Meetings/Co-Planning

Junior-Senior High School (Grades 7-12)

Students with last name beginning with A-K: Attend in-person learning on Mondays and Thursdays; Mandatory online learning on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

Students with last name beginning with L-Z: Attend in-person learning on Tuesdays and Fridays; Mandatory online learning on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays

	<u>AM Transportation</u>	<u>Student Day</u>	<u>PM Transportation</u>	<u>Teacher Day</u>
<u>Grades 7-12:</u>	8:30 - 9:30	9:35 - 3:40	3:40 - 4:40	8:50 - 4:10

• **Grades 7-12 staff schedule on Wednesdays:-**

- 8:50 - 12:00 - Online learning support, host virtual meeting, small group times
- 12:00 - 1:00 - Lunch
- 1:00 - 4:10 - Professional Development/Meetings/Co-Planning

BUDGET AND FISCAL MATTERS

Economic Overview

Both the national economy and New York State's economy have been dramatically impacted by the COVID-19 crisis and the various mitigation efforts that have been undertaken since March 2020. What is still unknown is the extent to which the impact will improve or worsen, how long it will last, and which sectors of the state economy will be most severely impacted.

It is important to understand the fundamentals of education finance policy in New York State to develop the most responsible—and flexible—budget plans for reopening schools. The economic demographics of school districts across the state vary widely, from some of the wealthiest districts in the country to some of the poorest. The various state aid formulas work to complement that reality, with the wealthiest district receiving less state aid and the districts with less local fiscal capacity receiving more.

New York State government operations are funded through a blend of many revenue sources, including the personal income tax, sales tax, corporate taxes, user fees, and federal grants and entitlements. Each of these sources is impacted in different ways by the changes in economic activity in the state due to COVID-19.

School District Fiscal Preparedness

Another major factor in the fiscal outlook for school districts is the availability of undesignated reserve funds, which districts set aside for times of fiscal hardship. Again, the individual district circumstance can vary widely. According to the most recent data available to the Department, overall unexpended fund balances total 13.83 percent of all school spending outside the big five city school districts,² but the level available in individual districts ranged from 0.04 percent to 86.19 percent.

These reserves are approximately two thirds capital, retirement, and employee benefit accrued liability reserve (EBALR) reserves. Unrestricted reserves total approximately 4.5% of total proposed spending, again excluding the five dependent city school districts. Relaxing rules around withdrawals from certain purpose driven reserves would provide districts additional flexibility in budgeting for the upcoming years with a diminished prospect of increases in state aid, but such changes would require enactment of legislation.

When districts consider how much of those reserve funds should be tapped into during any single school year or crisis, they should remember that this situation has the potential to be long-lasting.

2020-21 Enacted State Budget

Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget proposal in January 2020 initially called for a statewide increase in school aid for the 2020-21 school year of \$825 million, or 3 percent. As the COVID-19 crisis emerged prior to the enactment of the final budget, that planned increase did not materialize, resulting in a school aid apportionment

² Source: PTRC balance divided by budgets

that held unrestricted funds flat for districts and maintained reimbursements at statutory levels. A reduction in state-funded aid was partially offset by an increase in emergency federal funds.

Pandemic Adjustment and CARES Act Funds

State Aid was reduced in the 2020-21 school year by a total of \$1.13 billion through a “Pandemic Adjustment”, which reduced school district aid allocations at their bottom line, commensurate with the amount of federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES Act) funds each district was projected to receive. Districts were then allocated an amount of federal funding through the combination of the CARES Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSERF) and the Governors Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEERF). As a result, school districts will experience a decrease in state aid payments but will be eligible to apply for an amount from these federal grants. However, it should be noted that the CARES Act requires a portion of the funds to be used to provide equitable services to non-public schools.

Potential Further Aid Reductions

The 2020-21 Enacted Budget also included provisions that will allow the Director of the Budget, subject to amendment by the Legislature, to reduce appropriations across any and all program areas of the state budget should actual revenues come in at levels that are below the assumptions made in the Executive Budget. As of April 2020, this projected total shortfall was \$13.3 billion for the 2020-21 state fiscal year. The actions noted above reduced this gap by nearly \$1.2 billion.¹¹ Combined with other budget actions, the remaining gap was projected to be \$8.2 billion. Absent additional federal support, the Division of Budget has stated that further reductions to school aid, Medicaid, social services, and transportation might be necessary to eliminate that projected budget gap.

180 Day Calendar and Attendance Reporting for State Aid Purposes

School districts report certain enrollment, attendance, and school calendar information through the State Aid Management System (SAMS). While this data submission process differs from other procedures, the underlying data provided should be consistent with all other attendance reporting and requirements.

The minimum annual instructional hour requirement and 180 days of session requirement are also both reported through SAMS. For both the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, school districts will be required to continue the same information, based on the schedule provided for the average student, rather than reporting for each individual student. Under regulatory changes adopted as an emergency rule by the Board of Regents on July 13, 2020, school districts may be eligible to apply for a waiver from the minimum instructional hour requirement for both the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years

Successful application of the waiver will shield school districts from a reduction in aid for failure to meet the minimum instructional hour requirement. However, the 180 days of session requirement is in statute, and for the 2020-21 school year there are currently no statutory provisions that would allow a school district to provide fewer than 180 days of instruction over the course of the full school year.

Impact of Low Attendance on State Aid

School districts have expressed concerns about the impact that students choosing to stay home during the pandemic will have on their state aid calculations. State Aid formulas use multiple attendance counts in the calculation of aid apportionments for school districts. Statewide over 70 percent, largely in Foundation Aid, is based on Average Daily Membership or district enrollment, which is a measure of student registration in the district and does not take attendance into account. These aid formulas should not be impacted by attendance rates. Some formulas use Average Daily Attendance in the calculation of reimbursement rates, and Education Law §3602(1)(d)(2) provides for the commissioner to exclude from that calculation “days on which school attendance was adversely affected because of an epidemic...”. NYSED plans to advance a proposed COVID-specific change to such regulations in September for consideration by the Board of Regents.

Flexibility in Non-NYSED-Governed Activities

While budget and fiscal matters have implications in nearly all operational and instructional program areas, the laws, regulations, and business rules are largely outside of the discretion of the State Education Department. Below are a few areas where recommendations have been made to NYSED staff that deserve further consideration by state policymakers:

- Reserve funds: consideration for providing temporary flexibility in the immediate use of designated or restricted reserve funds, and requirements to repay funds over a set period of time;
- Transportation issue: as mentioned in the Transportation section of this guidance, providing flexibility on the adoption of contracts with providers and pursuing a streamlined bus driver licensing process with the Department of Motor Vehicles to ease the burden of hiring new bus drivers;
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and technology purchases: provide more avenues for shared service agreements and ease burdens on BOCES to expanding service in this area.

Flexibility for Budgetary Transfers

It is anticipated that there may be costs in 2020-21 that districts did not budget for in necessarily the correct account codes. In particular, the need for additional equipment has been noted above. Flexibility for budget transfers in the 2020-21 school year only for additional equipment needed (associated with re-opening and the maintaining of buildings primarily) would help school districts in that position. Historically, school districts have been advised that money cannot be transferred into an equipment account code because equipment is considered a non-contingent expense (generally) and transfers into non-contingent line items are prohibited. This determination appears to be based primarily on Formal Opinion of Counsel No. 213 (www.p12.nysed.gov/mgtserv/budgeting/handbook/appendixg.html).

In addition, school districts are encouraged to maximize their state-aided hardware in order to ensure that all necessary equipment is being purchased.

Tax Collection

School districts that rely on banks or other outside entities, such as a town, to collect school taxes, could face an issue of capacity for in-person collection. Limited staffing or hours may make it more difficult for taxes to be

paid in the period without penalty. In addition, at least one instance of a bank not wanting to have citizens coming in to pay taxes and bank staff having to handle all of that paper has resulted in a district needing to have to come up with a new process. Having to change to a collection process that is all in-district may not be feasible, either due to costs or staffing.

Districts should be reviewing their tax collection process to try and anticipate any issues or problems that they may face based on the ability of residents to pay taxes in person and without penalty.

ATTENDANCE AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

As described in the Technology and Connectivity section of this guidance, remote learning did not work for everyone during the spring 2020 school closures. In many schools and districts, large numbers of students did not log on or otherwise participate in online learning opportunities. It is therefore critical for schools to use a variety of creative methods to reach out to students and their families who did not engage in distance learning. School policies and procedures must focus on the academic consequences of lost instructional time and address absences before students fall behind in their learning. Initiating an educational neglect or Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) proceeding should be a last resort; schools and districts should work with their local departments of social services prior to bringing any legal action against students or their families.

Attendance for Instructional Purposes

The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:

- ☐ Schools are responsible for developing a mechanism to collect and report daily teacher/student engagement or attendance regardless of the instructional setting.
- ☐ *Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

Attendance for Reporting Purposes

Reopening Mandatory Requirements

- ☐ Attendance of any school-age student of compulsory age, who resides in the district or is placed by a parent/guardian in another public school district, a charter school, or is placed by a district administrator or the CSE of the school district in educational programs outside the district (such as, another school district, BOCES, approved private in-State or out-of-State school, and State supported school) must be reported in SIRS. To date, the reporting of daily attendance of Prekindergarten students is not required;
- ☐ Attendance must be reported by any reporting entity that is required to take attendance;
- ☐ Resident students of compulsory age who were not in attendance in a public school, including charter schools, nonpublic school, or approved home schooling program in the current school year must be reported until they exceed compulsory school age, they no longer reside in the district, or the district has

documentation that the student has entered another educational program leading to a high school diploma;

- ☐ Students who drop out while still of compulsory school age must be kept on the school attendance register until they exceed compulsory school age or move out of the district.

- ☐ *Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

Attendance for State Aid Purposes

School districts report certain enrollment, attendance, and school calendar information through the State Aid Management System (SAMS). While this data submission process differs from other procedures, the underlying data provided should be consistent with all other attendance reporting and requirements.

As discussed in the Budget and Fiscal Matters section of this guidance, the minimum annual instructional hour requirement and 180 days of session requirement are also both reported through SAMS. For both the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, school districts will be required to continue to submit the same information through SAMS that has been required in previous years, namely aggregate instructional days and hours, as well as daily calendars. Under regulatory changes adopted as an emergency rule by the Board of Regents on July 13, 2020, school districts may be eligible to apply for a waiver from the minimum instructional hour requirement for both the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years to the extent that “the district is unable to meet such requirement as a result of an Executive Order(s) of the Governor pursuant to the State of emergency declared for the COVID-19 crisis, or pursuant to Education Law §3604(8), as amended by Chapter 107 of the Laws of 2020, or reopening procedures implemented as a result of the COVID-19 crisis”. Successful application of the waiver will shield school districts from a reduction in aid for failure to meet the minimum instructional hour requirement. However, the 180 days of session requirement is in statute, and for the 2020-21 school year there are currently no statutory provisions that would allow a school district to provide fewer than 180 days of instruction over the course of the full school year.

For charter schools, instructional time requirements are set forth in Education Law Section 2851(2)(n) and Commissioner’s Regulation Section 175.5. These requirements were effectively waived as stated above. See the Budget and Fiscal Matters section of this guidance for additional details.

Chronic Absenteeism

Extensive research indicates that missing ten percent of school days tends to be the “tipping point” when student achievement declines.³ Chronic absence, or absenteeism, is defined as missing at least ten percent of enrolled school days, which in New York State is eighteen days per school year, or two days per month.

³ Balfanz, Robert & Byrnes, Vaughan, Chronic Absenteeism: Summarizing What We Know from Nationally Available Data, John Hopkins University Center for Social organization of Schools, May 2010.

- Chronic absence includes all absences from instruction, both excused and unexcused. Instead of school policies and procedures focusing on truancy, it is essential for school attendance policies to focus on the academic consequences of lost instructional time and for the school procedures to address absences before students fall behind in school.
- During these challenging times, the development of positive school relationships may be a lifeline for students disconnected from school.
- Although flexibility is recommended when monitoring attendance in a remote instructional model, for students who have not engaged in remote learning and school staff outreach to parents/guardians has been unsuccessful, districts and other schools should explore a variety of methods for reaching out such as:
 - phone calls to families are often the simplest solution and provide an immediate opportunity to offer resources and assess student and family needs
 - where families do not respond to phone calls, texting may offer a lower-stress alternative and a subsequent phone call can be arranged
 - seeking out adults in the school who have established a connection with the student and/or family may yield improved results. Counselors, coaches, social workers, and psychologists are often logical choices, in addition to teaching staff. Social media contact or using friends to reach out can also be effective strategies.
- Assign each student an “ally” – an adult who is responsible to check in on the student every day, whether instruction is in-person, remote, or online.

School districts and other school entities have the responsibility to provide translation for families who speak a language other than English in the home. Once contact is made, emphasis should be on addressing the student’s or family’s barriers to “attendance” or engagement with instruction.

Educational Neglect

An allegation of educational neglect may be warranted when a custodial parent or guardian fails to ensure a child’s prompt and regular attendance in school or keeps the child out of school for impermissible reasons resulting in an adverse effect on the child’s educational progress, or imminent danger of such an adverse effect. Educational neglect should not be considered where the parent/guardian has kept their child home because they believe it is unsafe for their child to attend school in person during the pandemic, and the child is participating in remote learning opportunities.

Schools and districts are urged to reach out to their local departments of Social Services (LDSS) with any questions or concerns related to child welfare. The LDSS point of contact (POC) for your area may be found through the following link: [LDSS POCS](#). The Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Neglect, the hotline to report child abuse and neglect, should be contacted only as a last resort, after you have exhausted all other strategies to connect with students and families.

Reporting and investigation of suspected cases of educational neglect present a range of complex issues and challenges for local social services districts and school districts. It is in the best interest of these agencies, school districts, and the families they serve, to collaborate in addressing their concerns. From the process of reporting - a school responsibility - and throughout the process of investigation, which is the purview of Child Protective Services (CPS), there will be numerous opportunities for timely intervention and collaboration involving

students, parents, school officials, and CPS staff. This collaborative approach should lessen the need for Family Court referral and proceedings.

Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS)

Under the Family Court Act Article 7, a PINS proceeding may, in certain circumstances, be initiated to have a person under eighteen years of age, who does not attend school, is incorrigible, ungovernable, habitually disobedient and beyond the lawful control of a parent, or other person legally responsible for such child's care, or appears to be a sexually exploited child, adjudicated by the Family Court as a PINS.

Before taking such drastic action, outreach to the appropriate LDSS may provide the student and family access to additional services designed to prevent a young person from being adjudicated a PINS. Family Support Services programs have been established to provide comprehensive services to children and families. The LDSS point of contact (POC) for your area may be found through the following link: [LDSS POCS](#).

Resources

[Attendance Playbook: Smart Solutions for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism in the COVID Era](#)

TECHNOLOGY AND CONNECTIVITY

For New York State students to lead productive and successful lives upon graduation, they must understand and know how to use digital technologies. Technology knowledge and skills are vital for full participation in 21st Century life, work, and citizenship. Sufficient access to computing devices and high-speed internet are essential for educational equity. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the inequitable access to technology and internet services in students' places of residence was a priority to be addressed. The closure of New York schools and subsequent shift to remote learning only highlighted this urgent need. The

period of remote learning due to school closures presented significant challenges, especially due to the digital divide, but also unprecedented opportunity for schools, students, and families to leverage technology to support instruction, learning, communication, and meaningful connections. The effective use of digital technology can assist educators in differentiating and personalizing learning; provide flexibility in scheduling and pace; and provide multiple entry points for students to engage in learning. As schools plan for reopening, technology and connectivity must remain essential areas of focus.

Regardless of whether in-person, remote, or hybrid models are utilized, schools should seek to provide students and teachers, for use in their places of residence, with access, to the extent practicable, to:



- A computing device, such as a laptop, desktop, Chromebook, iPad, or full-size tablet, for their exclusive use; and
- Consistent, reliable access to high-speed internet at a sufficient level to fully participate in remote/online learning (e.g., a hotspot).

In alignment with the Board of Regents' vision for teaching and learning, as articulated in the [USNY Statewide Learning Technology Plan](#) (2010), NYSED is committed to working with schools and partners to help ensure students have “all the time, everywhere” access to devices and high-speed internet, both at school and at their places of residence. NYSED is aware that in specific, limited areas of the state, high-speed internet is not yet available. Students' places of residence may not be connected to fiber, and/or cellular service may not be available. In these limited cases, assisting students in obtaining access to high-speed internet may not be possible at the school or district level at this time.

In the limited cases where students may still lack internet access in their places of residence, despite best efforts, districts and schools must ensure that all efforts are being made to provide some form of internet access availability, such as by boosting WIFI signals to parking lots.

The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:

School and District Reopening Plans must include information on how the school will:

- ☐ Have knowledge of the level of access to devices and high-speed broadband all students and teachers have in their places of residence;
- ☐ To the extent practicable, address the need to provide devices and internet access to students and teachers who currently do not have sufficient access; and
- ☐ Provide multiple ways for students to participate in learning and demonstrate mastery of Learning Standards in remote or blended models, especially if all students do not yet have sufficient access to devices and/or high-speed internet.
- ☐ ***Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.***

While the mandatory shift to remote learning in Spring 2020 has highlighted the work that must be done to ensure all New York State students have equitable access to technology, it also revealed a significant capacity for innovation. Districts and schools are encouraged to reflect on lessons learned during remote learning, and to assess the effectiveness of digital tools, platforms, and resources utilized.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

New York students are entitled to a free public education, even as we face the unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. All students must have the opportunity to feel safe, engaged, and excited about their learning, whether in-person, remote, or some combination of the two. At the heart of teaching and learning are the relationships that students have with their peers, teachers, and school community members. Students are searching for a return to their routines and a sense of normalcy, so all efforts should acknowledge the importance of setting a positive routine and welcoming environment that supports students during this unpredictable time. During the upcoming school year, it is of the utmost importance that individual student needs and equity are put at the center of all learning experiences. Flexibility is essential when planning for the fall, and we are prepared to shift between in-person, remote learning, and a hybrid model in a way that is least disruptive to students.



All schools must provide 180 days of instruction each school year to their students. Instructional days shall be counted for programs that are delivered in-person, remotely, or through a hybrid model.

The following section includes information about the mandatory requirements and recommended practices for schools as they prepare for the 2020-2021 school year, including information about Prekindergarten, K-12 Programs, and Career and Technical Education.

The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:

- ☐ All schools must ensure that they have a continuity of learning plan for the 2020-2021 school year. Such plan must prepare for in-person, remote, and hybrid models of instruction.
- ☐ Instruction must be aligned with the outcomes in the [New York State Learning Standards](#).
- ☐ Equity must be at the heart of all school instructional decisions. All instruction should be developed so that whether delivered in-person, remotely, or through a hybrid model due to a local or state school closure, there are clear opportunities for instruction that are accessible to all students. Such opportunities must be aligned with State standards and include routine scheduled times for students to interact and seek feedback and support from their teachers.
- ☐ Instruction aligned to the academic program must include regular and substantive interaction with an appropriately certified teacher regardless of the delivery method (e.g., in person, remote or hybrid).
- ☐ Schools must create a clear communication plan for how students and their families/caregivers can contact the school and teachers with questions about their instruction and/or technology. This information needs to be accessible to all, available in multiple languages based on district or charter school need, widely disseminated, and include clear and multiple ways for students and families to contact schools and teachers (e.g., email, online platform, and/or by phone).

- ☐ *Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

Reopening Plan Mandatory Requirements

- ☐ Districts and schools operating Prekindergarten programs must include Prekindergarten in the mandatory requirements outlined under Teaching and Learning above.
- ☐ All Prekindergarten programs that have a direct contract or a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NYSED must submit a Reopening Plan to the Office of Early Learning. Additional information on the format and submission requirements will be forthcoming.
- ☐ Districts that contract with eligible agencies, including CBOs, to provide Prekindergarten programs must attest that they have measures in place to ensure eligible agencies with whom they contract will follow health and safety guidelines outlined in this guidance and required by the New York State Department of Health. The district must also ensure their eligible agencies have a Continuity of Learning plan that addresses in-person, remote, and hybrid models of instruction.
- ☐ *Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

Health and Safety Considerations

State-administered Prekindergarten Programs should follow all guidelines set forth by the New York State Department of Health when planning for 2020-21 Prekindergarten programming. The following health and safety guidance should also be considered:

- Family style eating should not be practiced due to social distancing requirements and for health and safety requirements.
- For classrooms without an interior bathroom, an adult should accompany each child to and from the bathroom outside the classroom and ensure that proper handwashing protocols are followed.
- Napping materials should be sanitized daily and, to the extent practicable, assigned to individual students for the school year.
- Center-based and small group learning is a critical component of a Prekindergarten instructional program. Districts, schools, and eligible agencies (including CBOs) should:
 - avoid centers that include multiple students using it at one time, such as water/sand tables, sensory tables, etc.;
 - provide students with individual sets of materials to avoid sharing of common items; and

- follow proper sanitation guidelines from the Department of Health after children have been at a learning center or in small groups.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

CTE Content and Delivery

While planning for CTE instruction, whether through in-person, remote, or hybrid models, school districts and BOCES must ensure that all applicable NYS Learning Standards are met and content that is critical for meeting these standards as well as requirements for applicable industry certifications or other postsecondary credentialing is identified. Additionally, for those programs in fields such as health sciences, barbering, and appearance enhancement where specific curricula and/or clinical hours are mandated by other state

agencies (Department of Health and Department of State respectively), consideration must be given to ensuring requirements of the programs are met. All planning should be done within the context of meeting NYS Department of Health guidelines for health and safety and social distancing policies. CTE laboratory spaces should be set up to accommodate all such policies.



CTE coursework must continue to be taught by appropriately certified CTE teachers. Instructors who are required to hold a NYS professional license for a particular content area (i.e., health sciences, barbering, appearance enhancement) must maintain such license without lapse. All CTE laboratory/clinical instruction and supervision must be delivered by the appropriately certified CTE teacher. Flexibility is allowed for other staff (under the guidance of the CTE teacher) to supervise student groups in a non-laboratory/clinical setting to better adhere to social distancing guidelines.

The Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will make all 19 of our Career and Technical Education programs available to our region's students. Curriculum and learning experiences will be prioritized to ensure alignment with all New York's State Learning Standards as well as industry standards. Students enrolled in programming that requires the accrual of laboratory hours to meet licensure requirements will be provide many opportunities to accomplish said hours. Lastly, all CTE programs at the BOCES will strictly adhere to the aforementioned social distancing protocols.

ATHLETICS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Interscholastic sports, and extracurricular activities are an important aspect of student life and the school community. During the COVID shutdown students were unable to engage in and enjoy these social activities that are part of the fabric of any school program. As schools plan for reopening in September, attention should

be paid to bringing back activities that can be conducted in a safe environment with appropriate social distancing protocols.

Per the [reopening guidance issued by the NYS Department of Health](#), schools/districts must develop policies regarding extracurricular programs including which activities will be allowed, considering social distancing, PPE usage, and cleaning and disinfection, as well as risk of COVID-19 transmission (e.g., interscholastic sports, assemblies, and other gatherings). ~~Policies should consider how to maintain cohorts, if applicable, or members of the same household. Schools/districts should refer to DOH's "Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency" to assist in development of these policies; however, interscholastic sports are not permitted at the time of publication of this guidance, and additional information on athletic activities is forthcoming.~~

Interscholastic Athletics

Per the [NYDOH Guidance](#) Interscholastic sports are ~~not~~ permitted at the time of publication of this guidance, and additional information on athletic activities is forthcoming.

The [New York State Public High School Athletic Association](#) (NYSPHSAA) has established a COVID-19 Task Force comprised of NYSPHSAA member superintendents, principals, athletic directors and executive directors in addition to representatives from New York State Athletic Administrators Association and State Education Department. The Task Force will provide guidance when New York high school student-athletes are allowed to return to athletics. The task force is reviewing State and local health guidelines, as well as NYSED guidance, regarding the 2020-2021 school year to determine, among other things, the extent to which changes may be needed for each interscholastic sports season. The COVID-19 Task Force will continue to review all aspects of the fall 2020 season and the 2020-2021 school year related to the COVID-19 crisis, such as practice requirements; fan attendance; resocialization efforts; protocol; procedures; transportation; etc. As more information becomes available it will be shared on the [NYSPHSAA website](#)

Considerations for Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

- Restrict use of school/district facilities to district or school sponsored extracurricular activities and groups. If any external community organizations are permitted to use school/district facilities, schools/districts must ensure such organizations follow State and locally developed guidance on health and safety protocols.
- Maximize the use of technology and online resources to create or continue some extracurricular activities that may not need or has limited person-to-person contact.

Extracurricular Activities and Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours

All extracurricular activities that use school facilities must follow State and local on health and safety protocols and must comply with applicable social distancing requirements and hygiene protocol.

- Follow [New York State Department of Health guidelines](#) and [CDC guidelines](#) on wearing of masks, handwashing and social distancing.

- For more information on cleaning and disinfection, review sanitation guidelines from CDC at [CDC Cleaning and Disinfection Community Facilities](#) , [CDC Reopening Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfection Public Spaces Workplaces, Businesses Schools and Homes](#)

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Students with disabilities were particularly impacted by the closing of schools in spring 2020. In some cases, these students were unable to fully access the programs and services they needed to progress academically, particularly those programs and services that are best delivered in person. School reopening plans must always consider the special needs and requirements of students with disabilities.



Special education programs and services provide equity and access for students with disabilities to be involved in and to participate and progress in the general education curriculum. School reopening plans must provide a framework to ensure that all students with disabilities continue to have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. In consideration of the health, safety, and well-being of students, families, and staff, school reopening plans must be designed to enable transitioning between in-person, remote, and hybrid learning environments to ensure the provision of FAPE consistent with the changing health and safety conditions that exist.

NYSED's Office of Special Education (OSE) has created guidance documents to address frequently asked questions raised by parents, educators, administrators, and other key stakeholders regarding the implementation of special education programs and services and the provision of FAPE during this public health crisis. The OSE guidance is based on current information released from the United States Department of Education (USDE) as well as information contained in New York State Executive Orders and New York State Department of Health guidance. For your reference, links to the relevant federal and NYS resources are included at the end of this section.

The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:

- ☐ The school reopening plan, whether services are provided in-person, remote, and/or through a hybrid model, must address the provision of FAPE consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those providing special education and services.

- ☐ The school reopening plan must address meaningful parent engagement in the parent's preferred language or mode of communication regarding the provision of services to his/her child to meet the requirements of the IDEA.
- ☐ The school reopening plan must address collaboration between the committees on preschool special education (CPSE) and committees on special education (CSE) and program providers representing the variety of settings where students are served to ensure there is an understanding of the provision of services consistent with the recommendations on individualized education programs (IEPs), plans for monitoring and communicating student progress, and commitment to sharing resources.
- ☐ The school reopening plan must ensure access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability related needs of students.
- ☐ The school reopening plan must address how it will document the programs and services offered and provided to students with disabilities as well as communications with parents, in their preferred language or mode of communication.
- ☐ ***Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.***

Special Education Reopening

I. Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

- A. In Person Instructional Model - ensures access to general education curriculum and peers.
 - 1. Cato-Meridian Elementary (Pre-K-6th grade) will provide in person instruction full day ~~Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.~~
 - a. Students will receive specialized instruction within a special class or inclusive setting depending on the CSE recommendations.
 - b. Additional supplemental instruction will be embedded within the student's general education classroom where appropriate.
 - c. Related services will be provided both in person and virtually to address student needs in the most efficacious manner. Children will be grouped in pods where appropriate to minimize contact across groups.
 - d. Additional remediation and parent engagement time will be provided weekly on Wednesday through virtual means.
- B. Hybrid Learning Model - allows students in the Jr. Sr. High School access to in person as well as virtual instruction while maintaining safety.
 - 1. Cato-Meridian Jr. Sr. High School - students will attend school two days weekly (Alpha Split) with three days of online instruction.
 - ~~Students will receive specialized instruction within a special class or inclusive setting depending on recommendations in person twice weekly.~~
 - a. Additional virtual services will be provided through virtual meetings.
 - b. Related services will be provided in either virtually or in person depending on student need.
- C. Online Learning Model - allows students access to certified special education and general education teachers while providing families with a virtual model.
 - 1. Cato-Meridian Elementary (PreK-6th grade) will provide online instruction to those students whose family elect to not return to physical school.

- . Specialized instruction will be provided virtually to support access to the general education curriculum.
- a. Related services will be provided virtually.

- 2. Cato-Meridian Jr. Sr. High School

- a. Virtual Instruction will be provided in content and elective areas. Special education teachers will provide direct instructional support to students as well as curricular support to general education teachers.
 - b. Related services will be provided virtually.

- II. Parent Communication/Engagement

- A. Families will be offered the opportunity to review their child's proposed schedule prior to the deadline to indicate Instructional Model Choice.

- 1. Methods of Communication offered

- a. In person meetings (with masks)
 - b. Virtual meetings
 - c. Email communication

- 2. CSE meetings will be scheduled at parent request to address areas of concern.

- B. Ongoing Communication

- 1. Special Education Teachers/Related Service Providers will maintain a log of services provided, parent contact, attendance, and progress monitoring information to document student participation and progress.
 - 2. Quarterly Progress Reports will be provided to parents/guardians.

- III. Provision of Services

- A. In Person Method: students will receive special class, inclusive instruction and related services as recommended on their IEPs. Length of service may be modified based on schedule constraints. Supplemental instruction at the elementary level will be provided within the classroom setting where appropriate.
 - B. Programs: Students participating in out of district programs will follow the schedule of that individual program (for example, if a BOCES program is following a district plan of .5 instruction in person, the child would attend daily for .5 day).
 - C. Accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services and technology (including assistive technology) will be available to meet the unique disability needs of students.

- IV. Collaboration

- A. CPSE: Following the notification of parent choice, the CPSE will review the settings where children are served and ensure that the services match the student needs.
 - 1. The CPSE will work with providers to ensure that plans for monitoring and communicating student progress are in place and appropriate.
 - B. CSE: Following notification of parent choice, the CPSE will review the settings where children are served and discuss the provision of services within the school or program settings.
 - 1. The CSE will work with providers to ensure that plans for monitoring student progress are in place and appropriate.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND WORLD LANGUAGES

The spring 2020 COVID-19 crisis was extremely challenging for all students, but created particular difficulties for our most vulnerable students, including English Language Learners (ELLs). These challenges exacerbated existing educational inequities, like a lack of access to technology and reliable Wi-Fi needed for remote learning. It is critical that school reopening plans address the special needs of ELLs, and that all communications with ELL students and their families be in their preferred language and mode of communication.

As schools prepare to reopen schools in 2020-21, they must remain mindful of legal requirements and proactively address inequities, including, to the greatest extent feasible, providing support and instruction to all parents/guardians regarding the use of technology in their preferred language of communication. ELLs must be provided with the supports needed to close the potential learning loss that may have been a result of the school closures due to COVID-19.

As schools design their reopening plans, ELLs must be afforded the opportunity for full and equal participation whether it be through an in-person, remote, or hybrid model of instruction. While many ELLs may have benefitted from learning through remote learning platforms, it is important to consider their unique needs and to strengthen the home language and supports necessary for English language development utilizing synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Schools are strongly encouraged to examine resources available on the [NYSED Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages](#) website as they develop their plans, as their curriculum is reviewed, as instructional plans are developed, and as educational materials are selected. Districts and schools should contact their [Regional Bilingual Education Resource Networks \(RBERNs\)](#) if they need additional guidance/support during this process.



The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:

- ☐ Qualifying schools that reopen using in-person or hybrid instruction will be required to complete the ELL identification process within 30 school days of the start of the school year for all students who enrolled during COVID-19 school closures in 2019-20, as well as all students who enroll during summer of 2020 and during the first 20 school days of the 2020-21 school year. After this 20day flexibility period, identification of ELLs must resume for all students within required 10 school days of initial enrollment as required by Commissioner's Regulations Part 154.
- ☐ Provision of required [instructional Units of Study](#) must be provided to all ELLs based on their most recently measured English language proficiency level during in-person or hybrid instruction.

- ☐ Maintain regular communication with the parents/guardians and other family members of ELLs to ensure that they are engaged in their children's education during the reopening process. Provide all communications for parents/guardians of ELLs in their preferred language and mode of communication.

- ☐ *Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

ELL Reopening Considerations:

1. ELL Identification Process: All students suspected on needing ELL supports will complete the identification process (interview, assessment) within the first 20 days of school. Following this time period, the traditional required 10 days of initial enrollment will be utilized.
2. Provision of the required instructional units of student will be provided to all ELLS.
3. ELL Teachers will maintain regular communication to ensure they are engaged in their education during the reopening.
4. Communications will be provided in their preferred language and mode of communication.

STAFFING

Among school-based factors, teaching and school leadership are the two greatest influences on student learning. As LEAs create their plans for the 2020-2021 school year, they: must ensure that all teachers, school and district leaders, and pupil personnel service professionals hold a valid and appropriate certificate for their assignment; can continue to utilize incidental teaching when determining how to staff their classrooms; can also employ substitute teachers to address staffing needs for the allowable number of days, given their qualifications and teaching assignment; should work with educator preparation programs to identify appropriate ways in which student teachers can support classroom instruction; and should consider whether their currently approved APPR plans may need to be revised to be consistent with their plans for reopening, whether in-person, remote, or a combination of the two.



TEACHER & PRINCIPAL EVALUATION (EDUCATION LAW §3012-D/APPR)

Consistent with research and best practices, the Department believes that well-designed and implemented teacher and principal evaluations (“Annual Professional Performance Review”; “APPR”) are an important tool to help support educator growth and development. With this goal in mind, the measures that are used as part of an annual evaluation should provide useful information to district administrators and the educators who are being evaluated that helps support educators and leverage their expertise. In turn, this helps ensure equitable access to effective educators for all students so that students are given the skills to succeed.

In this unprecedented time of school closures, LEAs are facing new challenges in evaluating and supporting their professional staff. Although LEAs should not penalize their educators as a result of the challenges to learning presented by the COVID-19 crisis, they must still make sure students are being taught as effectively as is practical to expect. Therefore, providing support that teachers and school leaders require is critical at this time.

Providing feedback and support to educators through the evaluation process can both equip them as they adjust their practice to distance learning, as well as guide focus areas for future growth once students and teachers return to their physical classrooms.

The following section includes information about the mandatory requirements and recommended practices for LEAs as they prepare for the 2020-2021 school year.

The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:

- ☐ Pursuant to Education Law 3012-d, each school district and BOCES must fully implement its currently approved APPR plans in each school year⁴.
- ☐ *Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

Our APPR plans will continue to be reviewed and adjusted according to our instructional model.

Reopening Plan Mandatory Requirements

- ☐ Pursuant to Education Law 3001, individuals employed to teach in New York State public schools must hold a valid certificate. School districts, BOCES, and charter schools can review the SIRS 329 Staff Certifications report, which is available in Cognos for authorized users, to ensure that teachers hold the appropriate certificates for their teaching assignments. This report is refreshed weekly and lists all valid certificates for all staff identified in the school district, BOCES, or charter school Staff Snapshot.
- ☐ *Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

Our Human Resource function ensures that each certificated employee has the appropriate certification(s) requisite to operate in the area assigned. In some instances, we find it necessary to apply the “Incidental Teaching” avenue provided for under the State Education Department’s guidelines. Additionally, Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES Regional Certification Office serves to assist us with our certification needs.

STUDENT TEACHING

Commissioner’s Regulations Section 52.21(b)(1) (xvi) defines student teaching as follows:

Student teaching means a structured, college-supervised learning experience for a student in a teacher education program in which the student teacher practices the skills being learned in the teacher education program and gradually assumes increased responsibility for instruction, classroom management, and other related duties for a class of students in the area of the certificate sought. These

⁴ Governor Andrew Cuomo’s Executive Order (202.39) related to APPR only suspended the requirement to complete APPRs for the 2019-20 school year.

skills are practiced under the direct supervision of the certified teacher who has official responsibility for the class.

We do not plan on offering any student teaching placements this school year.

CONTACT TRACING

~~COVID-19 related School Safety Guidance: Revised 8-25-2020 original 8-12-2020~~

Communication

~~The Responsible Parties at any school district/ BOCES, will communicate directly with members of the Cayuga County Health Department regarding COVID-19 issues and protocols. The primary COVID-19 contacts at the Cayuga County Health Department are:~~

~~Kevin Zippel, PhD., RN Supervising Community Health Nurse~~

~~Nancy Purdy, BSN, RN Director of Community Health Services~~

~~The Cayuga County Health Department designates (315) 253-1560 for primary use which is answered at the office during typical working hours and after hours by a 24 hour 7 day a week answering service who will contact appropriate personnel as requested. The Responsible Parties at any school district/ BOCES will communicate with the Cayuga County Health Department for any COVID-19 related concerns and questions pertinent to the operations of their districts including but not limited to the public health and well-being of the District's students and employees.~~

~~The Cayuga County Health Department will communicate with the Responsible Parties at any school district/ BOCES regarding COVID-19 related information or concerns pertinent to the public health and well-being of the District's students, faculty and staff; including but not limited to quarantine and isolation of students and employees. The Cayuga County Health Department will communicate with the Responsible Parties at any school district/BOCES if the designated primary contacts change and who they are. The Responsible Parties at any school district/BOCES will communicate with the Cayuga County Health Department if the designated primary contacts change and who they are.~~

~~Definitions:~~

Close Contact—a close contact is defined as anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 10 minutes starting from 48 hours before the person began feeling sick until the time the patient was isolated.

Contact Tracing—interview a person having been diagnosed with a COVID-19 infection to determine whom they may have been contact with during the timeframe of being infectious in order to prevent spreading of the infection. Contact tracing is led by the Cayuga County Health Department. The school will be required to provide attendance records, contact information and other supportive information as requested to the health department.

Incubation Period—the interval between the time of invasion by an infectious agent and appearance of the first sign or symptom of the disease in question. For SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), the incubation period is on average 4-5 days but may be as long as 14 days. 5% of persons will develop symptoms in 2 days; 50% of persons will develop symptoms in 5 days; 95 % will develop symptoms within 14 days.

Infectious Period—period of time during which a case is able to transmit a disease to others. The infectious period for COVID-19 starts 2 days before someone develops symptoms; is most infectious day of symptom onset; and infectiousness wanes over the course of 10 days. Infectivity of COVID-19 is determined by its reproduction number, or R0 (pronounced R naught), which current epidemiological estimates suggest lies between 1.5 to 3. This means that every COVID-19 patient may infect up to three other people on average.

Isolation—the Health Department will require, through public health order, a person to go into mandatory isolation who has tested positive for COVID-19 and shall be monitored by the health department.

Proximate Contact—It is not necessary for proximate contacts to be placed in quarantine. Being in the same enclosed environment such as a classroom, office, or gatherings but greater than 6 feet from a person displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Precautionary Quarantine—A resident of New York State (NYS) returning from travel to a designated state for designated period of time or an international traveler arriving to NYS are required to quarantine for 14 days. It is possible having traveled to these areas, the traveler is a proximate contact of a positive Covid-19 individual(s).

Self-Care—ability to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health-care provider.

Quarantine—the Health Department will require a person having direct contact to a positive Covid-19 person to mandatory quarantine, through public health order, and will monitor person for development of symptoms. Separating people and limiting movement of people who have or may have been exposed can help to prevent spread of illness from people with COVID-19 before they feel ill or have symptoms.

~~Screening—The Responsible Parties at any school district/ BOCES will monitor daily the employees, students and necessary visitors for symptoms of COVID-19, to include daily screening before entering the school buildings.~~

~~Employees and students should be encouraged to self-monitor for symptoms such as fever, chills, cough, the loss of taste/smell, headache, and gastrointestinal symptoms.~~

~~Employees and students are not to attend school if feeling ill~~

~~Testing—COVID-19 testing is contingent upon availability of specimen collection material, appropriate Personal Protective Equipment and laboratory capacity. As such, the specific recommendations for specimen collection sites may be altered to reflect resources, timeliness of analysis and response. It is recommended all people seeking a COVID-19 test call in advance to schedule their appointment and assure health care personnel are appropriately attired. Additional opportunities for COVID-19 testing may become available over time.~~

~~At the time this plan is written, here are local resources for COVID-19 testing.~~

~~At all testing sites bring your health insurance card if you have one.~~

~~☐ Personal HealthCare provider~~

~~☐ Cayuga County Urgent Care Centers including:~~

~~FingerLakes Medical Urgent Care Center~~

~~303 Grant Ave.~~

~~Auburn, NY~~

~~315-258-7100~~

~~Urgent Care of Auburn~~

~~37 West Garden St., Suite 105~~

~~Auburn, NY~~

~~315-252-0000~~

~~WellNow Urgent Care Center~~

~~271 Grant Ave.~~

~~Auburn, NY~~

~~315-704-6097~~

~~☐ Out of county testing sites:~~

~~Upstate University Health System~~

~~550 Harrison Center~~

~~550 Harrison Street, Syracuse~~

~~No appointment necessary~~

~~Syracuse Community Health Center~~

~~819 South Salina St., Syracuse~~

~~Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm and Saturdays 9am-1pm.~~

~~No appointment necessary~~

~~Cayuga Medical Associates~~

~~Ithaca, NY~~

~~Appointment and Registration: cayugahealth.org/~~

~~Or call 607-319-5708.~~

~~Appointment is required and testing criteria must be met~~

~~Call the NYS Department of Health hotline number for additional sites:~~

~~1-888-364-3065~~

Contact Tracing

The Responsible Parties at any school district/ BOCES will immediately notify the Cayuga County Health Department (CHHD) upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 test result by an individual in school facilities or on school grounds, including employees, students, and visitors. The CCHD will verify the person has tested positive.

The Cayuga County Health Department will lead the COVID-19 contact tracing effort partnering with the Responsible Parties at any school district/BOCES to provide names, addresses, phone numbers of pertinent people. Additionally, the Responsible Parties at any school district/BOCES will be required to provide attendance records, contact information and other supportive information as requested to the health department.

If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in school, the Responsible Parties at any school district/ BOCES may choose to temporarily move instruction to a remote format until all contacts can be identified, notified and placed in quarantine.

The CCHD will notify the Responsible Parties at any school district/ BOCES of any positive or quarantined employees or students.

Scenarios

1. Employee/Student Has Tested Positive For COVID-19

Will be provided a Public Health Order by the Cayuga County Health Department to be in mandatory isolation for the period of COVID-19 infectiousness. During the period of

isolation, the individual will be monitored by the health department. The local health department will officially release employee/student from isolation when criteria for discharge has been met.

2. Employee/Student Has Been In Close Contact With Positive Covid-19 Person
Will be provided a Public Health Order by the Cayuga County Health Department to be in mandatory quarantine for the period of COVID-19 incubation period. During the quarantine, the individual will be monitored by the health department and if symptoms develop, the health department will encourage COVID-19 testing. The health department will officially release employee/student from mandatory quarantine when discharge criteria has been met.

3. Employee/Student Is Symptomatic Having No Close Contact With Positive Person
If employee/student is ill feeling or screens positive for COVID-19 symptoms, they are to remain at home and provide self-care. Prior to returning to school, an employee/ student will need documentation from a health care provider following an evaluation, a negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result and symptom resolution. consult with their medical provider, if necessary. They may return to school after all symptoms are resolved and fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medicine.

4. Employee/Student Has Had Close or Proximate Contact With Someone In Quarantine
A contact (Person C) of a contact (Person B) is not considered at risk unless Person B tests positive for COVID-19. Person C is not subject to quarantine.

5. Employee/Student Has Traveled To A State Designated As Having Significant Community Spread OR Any International Travel
Employees/Students who travel internationally or to a designated state with significant community spread must notify their supervisor/principal of their travel plans, including the state/country traveled to, along with the departure and return dates.
If an Employee/Student has traveled internationally or from within one of the designated states with significant community spread, he/she must register with NYSDOH and quarantine upon re-entering New York for 14 days from the last travel within such designated state or airline arrival date to New York.
<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>
The requirements of the travel advisory do not apply to any individual passing through designated states for a limited duration (i.e., less than 24 hours) through the course of travel.
Employees/Students may return to work/school after completing 14 days of quarantine, dependent on the eruption of COVID-19 symptoms

Cleaning and Disinfection

Based on data from lab studies on COVID-19, it may be possible that a person can get COVID19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth,nose, or possibly their eyes. However, the primary mode of transmission for COVID-19 is through close contact from person-to-person.

Coronaviruses on surfaces and objects naturally die within hours to days. Normal routine cleaning with soap and water removes many germs and dirt from surfaces.

Disinfectants kill germs on surfaces. Killing germs on a surface after cleaning can further lower the risk of spreading the virus.

The following practices will be utilized by the Responsible Parties at any school district/ BOCES to reduce the risk of community spread of COVID-19 and other contagious germs.

The Responsible Parties at any school district/ BOCES will follow these practices to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other contagions:

☐ Daily routine cleaning of surfaces with disinfectants shall be conducted throughout the school

If a student or employee becomes ill:

☐ Close off areas internal to the building used by the person who is sick.
☐ Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area
☐ Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting, unless waiting 24 hours is not feasible, then wait as long as possible. Clean and disinfect commonly touched areas like desk, locker, bathroom office, keyboards, mouse, telephones etc.. Allow the areas to dry before reuse.

☐ Wait 24 hours to vacuum the space if needed. When vacuuming routinely or as part of extra cleaning, temporarily turn off room fans and if possible turn off the central HVAC system that services the room or space, so that particles that escape from vacuuming will not circulate throughout the facility.

Regular use of the room and objects may continue after disinfection.

Closure Communication:

- The Cayuga County Health Department will do Contact Tracing when needed. The school district will provide all relevant contact information.
- District Superintendent will communicate with all stakeholders once the Cayuga County Health Department has been determined it is necessary to close school. Parents and staff will be updated via School Messenger emergency system.

Inserted Pre-K to Grade 12 COVIS-19 Toolkit

Inserted COVID-19 related School Safety Guidance Revised 10-4-2020