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**Superintendent of Schools**

## **Re-Opening Schools Plan Guidance Summary**

On Monday, July 13, 2020 the New York State Department of Health issued a 23 page guidance document outlining the requirements schools will need to incorporate into the development of their official Reopening Plan submission, due by July 31, 2020. The following is a summary of the items that this plan must have and those items that are recommended or suggested.

Some Key Items Addressed in the Guidance:

- Face coverings are *recommended* at all times but *required* when appropriate social distancing (ASD) cannot be maintained
- Appropriate Social Distancing (ASD) is defined as *six foot separation* in all directions or use of appropriate physical barriers (strip curtains, cubicle walls, plexi-glass, other impermeable dividers/partitions)
- Face coverings *should* be allowed to be removed during meals, during instruction, and for other “short breaks” (this term is undefined in the guidance)
- Reopening plans *must* indicate how student groups are prioritized for in-person versus hybrid versus virtual instruction
- Faculty *may* instruct more than one “cohort” (group) of students as long as social distancing standards are maintained
- All students, faculty, staff, contractors, vendors, and visitors *must* have their temperature checked prior to entry into a school building *daily*. Individuals with a temperature above 100.0F *must* be denied entry or sent to a dedicated area until they can be taken home.
- A *daily* screening questionnaire *must* be completed by all faculty and staff reporting to school. This questionnaire *must* also be provided to students (or a guardian) to complete periodically (period is not defined in the guidance). Remote health screenings before any individual reports to school is *strongly advised*.
- Students *must* wear face coverings at all times on school buses and *should* maintain ASD. Parents/guardians *should* be encouraged to drop off or walk students to and pick them up/walk them home.
- Students, faculty, and staff *must* be trained on proper hand and respiratory hygiene
- ASD of *12 feet should* be maintained for activities including singing, playing a musical instrument, and aerobic activity resulting in heavy breathing (P.E.)
- Where *feasible*, bi-directional foot traffic *should* be reduced. Six foot markers *should* be placed in areas where lines are likely to form

- Schools must post signage in buildings using either DOH-COVID-19 signage or locally customized signage consistent with DOH signage regarding public health protections against COVID-19
- Faculty/Department meetings may be conducted on-line or can be conducted in-person if conducted in an open, well-ventilated space and insuring individuals maintain ASD
- Reopening plans should include limiting the amount of shared objects to the greatest extent feasible

Reopening Plans must include the following:

- The quantity of faculty/staff/students allowed to return in-person consistent with maintaining appropriate social distancing, availability of PPE, and availability of “safe transportation”
- Protocols and procedures for maintaining ASD on school grounds and in school facilities
- Protocols and procedures to ensure all faculty/staff/students have appropriate PPE at all times
- Clearly articulated plans for how classes, shared spaces, and activities may be adapted in various phases of learning and operations (ex. Who gets in-person/hybrid/virtual, how large spaces will be modified and used, etc.) This includes how field trips will be addressed, visitor policies, and how virtual events will be incorporated.
- How extracurricular events will be addressed (sports, assemblies, clubs [although clubs are not mentioned directly in the guidance document])
- Updated policies on Before and After Care
- Policies for how vulnerable populations will be supported (At-risk, hearing impaired, ENL, etc.)
- Policies and procedures for how transportation services will be provided
- Policies and procedures for how food service will be provided
- Mental Health Support and Programs: How students experiencing difficulty transitioning back to school will be identified and supported, how staff will be trained to talk with and support students upon their return, and support with building resiliency and coping skills for both students and staff
- How schools will communicate preparation for the new school year with students and families. Recommendations in the guidance include webpages, text/email, and social media. Ensuring these are provided in any alternate languages as needed.
- Protocols and procedures for monitoring students, faculty, and staff health including; screening, test protocols, testing responsibility, and Early Warning Sign Detection
- Protocols and procedures for containment, including; School Health Offices, isolation procedures, collecting of students by parents/guardians, addressing infected individuals, addressing exposed individuals, hygiene/cleaning/disinfecting protocols, contact tracing procedures, and communication of these protocols and procedures
- Protocols and procedures governing closure of schools in the event of an outbreak, including; closure triggers, operational activities, and how the communication of a closure will be conducted

- Designation of a COVID-19 Safety Coordinator responsible for reopening plan implementation compliance and any phase-in reopening activities necessary to allow operational issues to be resolved before activities can resume
- The stakeholder groups who were engaged in the development of the reopening plan
- Protocols and procedures for the care of faculty/staff/students who develop symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day, including; a dedicated area for such persons, visual supervision of such persons (socially distanced), availability of appropriate PPE for school health office staff supervising such persons, and guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting the area
- Protocols and procedures for asthma-related acute respiratory treatment care

All of these measures will be considered throughout planning/discussions taking place within the Reopening Task Force as well as internal meetings to prepare for plan submission (by July 31). This guidance is in addition to the NYSED protocols expected tomorrow (7/15), known to be 140 pages in length.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K.R. Bossert, Ed.D." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Kenneth R. Bossert, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools