

Binghamton City School District



Reopening Plan 2020-2021

*Updated 10/8/2020



Introduction

ReEngaging and ReImagining BCSD

COVID-19 ReEntry Plan 2020-2021

Governor Cuomo, the State Education Department, and Department of Health released guidelines for the reopening of schools the week of July 17th. The District began its efforts by engaging stakeholder groups last June as soon as it was realized that students would not be returning to traditional classroom instruction at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. We knew that additional measures would need to be in place this fall in order to provide for a safe environment. Although the District has been analyzing various scenarios, absent these guidelines the District has been unable to formulate a specific plan. School districts were also informed that they are required to submit a plan to both the NYS Department of Education and the NYS Department of Health by July 31.

While districts have been instructed to prioritize efforts to return all students to in-person instruction, the district is also planning for full remote/distance learning as well as for a hybrid model that combines in-person instruction and remote learning. Parents are being provided the option of remaining in full remote learning until it has been declared safe for all students to return. Expectations may apply to medically fragile students. A phone and online survey were disseminated the week of July 20th. School administration additionally made phone calls confirming parent choice. Letters from the school will follow to confirm. A form to request to have a child engaged in full remote learning can be found on the district website under For Parents - BCSD Reopening Plan.

The plan outlined here is for the reopening of schools in the Binghamton City School District for the 2020-21 school year, following the building closure related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This plan includes procedures that will be followed in the following schools:

- [Binghamton High School](#), Principal, Mr. Kevin Richman
- [East Middle School](#), Interim Principal, Mr. Michael Holly
- [West Middle School](#), Principal, Ms. Kristine Battaglino
- [Benjamin Franklin Elementary School](#), Principal, Mr. Kyle Skinner
- [Calvin Coolidge Elementary School](#), Principal, Mr. Dario Vasquez
- [Horace Mann Elementary School](#), Principal, Mr. Peter Stewart
- [MacArthur Elementary School](#), Principal, Ms. Lori Asquith
- [Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School](#), Principal, Mr. David Chilson
- [Thomas Jefferson Elementary School](#), Principal, Ms. Sarah Wiggins
- [Woodrow Wilson Elementary School](#), Principal, Mr. Daniel Miller

The health and safety of our students, our staff and their families is our top priority. We want students and employees to feel comfortable and safe returning to school campuses. Our reopening plan incorporates recommendations and guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), the [New York State Department of Health \(NYSDOH\)](#) and the [New York State Education Department \(NYSED\)](#).

The district's reopening plan was developed with the following guiding principles:

- The health, safety and well-being of the children and adults is paramount.
- Educational equity is a priority.
- Planning for school to re-open is not a one-time event.
- Value stakeholder input.
- There may be differences between buildings based on differences in size of buildings and ages of students.

It is possible that we may need to alternate between in-person and remote learning throughout the year due to recommendations and guidance from our partnering agencies, and stay-at-home orders from the Governor. The level of infection, the spread of the virus, and response to the disease in our community will be at the forefront of our decision making as we move to open our schools.

Mr. Eric Wilson, Executive Director for Human Resources and Operations, will serve as the district's COVID-19 Coordinator. Mr. Wilson will work closely with our local health department and will be responsible for communicating changes to expectations of the district plan to all faculty, staff, students and families. He will serve as a central contact for schools and stakeholders, families, staff and other school community members and will ensure the district is in compliance and following the best practices per state and federal guidelines. He may be contacted at 607.762.8100 x322 or covid19coordinator@binghamtonschools.org.

The Board of Education would like to extend their sincere thank you to each of the over 100 members of the stakeholder groups that came together to develop this plan under the guidance of senior leadership. Under the Superintendents direction, three separate task forces began work in early June to identify best practices and resources needed to open our school buildings to in-person direct instruction under the safest conditions possible. Many thanks to the students, parents/guardian, faculty, staff and administrators for their countless efforts and the hundreds of individuals who participated in the ThoughtExchange, phone surveys, on-line surveys and community forums. We value your perspectives and embrace your ideas.

Content Outline

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- Technology and Connectivity
- Teaching and Learning
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- Bilingual Education and World Languages
- Staff
 - Teacher and Principal Evaluation System
 - Certification, Incidental Teaching and Substitute Teaching

Communication/Family and Community Engagement

To help inform our reopening plan, the district has sought feedback and input from stakeholders, including administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/guardians of students, local health department officials and health care providers, employee unions and community groups. Engagement efforts included online surveys, Board of Education presentations, and virtual forums/meetings.

The district remains committed to communicating all elements of this reopening plan to students, parents and guardians, staff and visitors. The plan is available to all stakeholders via the district website at this [link](#), and will be updated throughout the school year, as necessary, to respond to local circumstances. The link to the plan appears on the website homepage and under the quick link COVID-19 Plan on each building home page. Every effort has been made to ensure that the plan is accessible to all individuals in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A/AA. The plan can also be translated into other languages, via the G-Translate feature available on the district website.

As part of its planning for the reopening of schools and the new academic year, the district has developed a plan for communicating all necessary information to district staff, students, parents/guardians, visitors and education partners and vendors. The district will use its existing communication channels—including emails, push notification via the District app, Robo calls, postings to the district COVID-19 website and direct mailings, when appropriate - as well as appropriate signage and training opportunities to support the dissemination of consistent messaging regarding new protocols and procedures, expectations, requirements and options related to school operations throughout the pandemic. Messages posted on our website and via our push notification can be translated into any language via G-Translate, our automated phone calls and emails can be translated into Spanish, and with advanced notice we can use translation services provided by Binghamton University or the American Civic Association to translate messages into our families home language.

The district is committed to establishing and maintaining regular channels of communication and has reviewed and determined which methods have proven to be the most effective in communications with our school community. The district will rely on its existing commitment to communicate news, requirements and updates related to reopening and in-person instruction, including social distancing requirements, proper wearing of face coverings and proper hand and respiratory hygiene. A chart that outlines how information will be communicated can be found at this [link](#):

The information that we will share will be based on state guidance, best practices promoted by the Center for Disease Control, and the recommendations of the reopening committees. Additionally, regularly scheduled letters, released on the second Wednesday of each month from the Superintendent will continue, as well as, monthly learning letters from building principals. It was important to our parents/guardians that communications were predictable and regular. We are planning to have relevant messages go out via email and push notification via the district app on Mondays and Fridays after 3:00 pm. These messages will also be placed on the district's website for future reference. Any message that is considered timely will be accompanied by a robo call to alert families of the messages existence.

In support of remote learning, the district will continue to make computer devices available to all students and teachers. The district will provide students and their families with multiple ways to contact schools and teachers during remote learning, including *email, google classroom, ClassDojo, RemindApp and the district phone directory.*

The district will use existing internal and external communications channels to notify staff, students and families/caregivers about in-person, remote and hybrid school schedules with as much advance notice as possible. Student schedules will be confirmed with mailings home, with options to adjust, made clear to parents. All efforts will be made to make accommodations, while remaining true to the district's commitment to providing a safe environment for learning.

The district will follow its existing engagement and communication protocols with parents regarding the provision of special education services for their child. In addition, the district will make every effort to ensure that communication to parents/legal guardians is in their preferred language and mode of communication.

We are committed to ensuring that all of its students and their families are taught and re-taught new expectations related to all public health policies and protocols. As part of this continuous training, the district will assess the best approach to communicating the information for each students' age group

and will provide frequent opportunities for students to review these policies and protocols. This targeted education will help ensure that all students and their families know what is expected of them as they successfully return to the school setting. These trainings will cover (note: each title is hyperlinked to the resources that will be referenced):

- [Hand hygiene](#) All students, faculty and staff will be trained via the CDC's video on handwashing. This will be done during in-person learning by school nurses at the elementary level and via advisory or special schedule at secondary schools. Additionally, posters will be placed in each restroom, promoting proper handwashing techniques. Procedures will also be taught through each buildings' PBIS committee.
- [Proper face-covering procedures \(how to wear and remove\)](#) The District's Behavior Task Force will provide powerpoint slides to each grade level to explicitly teach proper techniques. Videos will also be created. Social Stories will be used to assist students as needed.
- [Social distancing](#) The District's Behavior Task Force will provide power point slides to each grade level to explicitly teach proper techniques. Videos will also be created. Social Stories will be used to assist students as needed.
- [Respiratory hygiene](#) The District's Behavior Task Force will provide power point slides to each grade level to explicitly teach proper techniques. Videos will also be created. Social Stories will be used to assist students as needed.
- [Identifying symptoms](#) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [list of Coronavirus symptoms](#) was used to develop these resources for training for all students and staff. The district has created and deployed signage throughout the district to address public health protections surrounding COVID-19. Signage addresses protocols and recommendations in the following areas:
 - Proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - Acceptable face coverings and requirements related to their wear
 - Handwashing
 - Adherence to social distancing instructions
 - Symptoms/prevention of COVID-19

In addition to signage, the district will encourage all students, faculty, staff and visitors through verbal and written communication to adhere to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and DOH guidance regarding the use of PPE through additional means such as The District's Behavior Task Force will create a matrix to identify specific protocols in different settings (bus, hallways, classroom etc.)

The district is committed to creating a learning environment that protects student and staff health, safety and privacy. Our district will operate under a standard procedure for addressing situations in which an individual has tested positive for COVID-19 or appears symptomatic. These procedures are outlined in the Health & Safety section of our reopening plan.

In the event that a student or staff member is sick or symptomatic, notification to exposed individuals will occur pursuant to the state's contact tracing protocols as implemented by the local health department. The district will not notify the wider community unless specifically directed to do so by local health officials.

School Closures

The district is preparing for situations in which one or more school buildings need to close due to a significant number of students or staff testing positive for COVID-19 or a considerable regional increase in COVID-19 cases.

The Covid-19 Coordinator will coordinate with the Director of the Broome County Health Department to develop a metric involving actions to be taken by the school district in situations involving increased absenteeism, illness and positive Covid-19 cases.

The district may choose to modify operations in one or more schools prior to closing to help mitigate a rise in cases. The district will consult its Medical Director and the Broome County Health Department when making such decisions.

School building administrators will communicate with each other regularly and, if needed, will consider closing school if absentee rates impact the ability of the school to operate safely.

Health & Safety

The health and safety of our students, our staff and their families is our top priority. We want students and employees to feel comfortable and safe returning to school campuses. Our reopening plan incorporates recommendations and guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), the [New York State Department of Health \(NYSDOH\)](#) and the [New York State Education Department \(NYSED\)](#).

The following protocols and procedures will be in place in all district schools including district-run before and after school programs for the 2020-21 school year should in-person schooling resume. Anyone with questions or concerns should contact our COVID-19 safety coordinator Eric Wilson, Executive Director for Human Resources and Operations at covid19coordinator@binghamtonschools.org or 762-8100 ext. 322.

For more information about how health and safety protocols and training will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit the [Communication/Family and Community Engagement](#) section of our reopening plan.

Health checks

The district has developed resources to educate parents/guardians and staff members regarding the careful observation of symptoms of COVID-19 and health screening measures that must be conducted each morning before coming to school. The resources include the requirement for any student or staff member with a fever of 100°F or greater and/or symptoms of possible COVID-19 virus infection to not come to school or if screened at school to be removed to a supervised quarantine room and parents/guardians are notified to pick the student up. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [list of Coronavirus symptoms](#) was used to develop these resources.

The Binghamton City School District will implement the following practices to conduct mandated health screening. The district will utilize electronic methods of communication including email, mobile apps, and/or other technology to assure screening of all students and staff. Paper forms and personal interviews will be utilized in cases where technology is ineffective. Parents will be instructed in health screening requirements through email, mobile app, district website, and where necessary telephonically.

1. Daily temperature checks and completion of the screening questionnaire provided in the [New York Forward Pre-K to Grade 12 School Guidelines](#) for staff, contractors, vendors, and visitors.
2. Daily temperature check and completion of the screening questionnaire (mentioned above) for students at school.
3. Temperatures will be taken using touchless infrared thermometers and a record that the temperature screening has occurred will be maintained in an electronic database until the health crisis has resolved. No individual temperatures will be recorded.
4. Any individual registering a temperature of 100 degrees or higher or has a positive response to a screening question will immediately be isolated in a dedicated supervised quarantine room and immediately dismissed from school.

5. If an individual develops any symptoms or any of the answers to the screening questions change during the day the building principal should be notified and the Covid-19 Safety Coordinator via an email to covid19coordinator@binghamtonschools.org.
6. The Attendance Clerks in each building will review incoming reports of screening by staff and parents/guardians and report them daily to the Head Nurse for review. The Head Nurse will report data daily to the Covid-19Coordinator.

All students and employees will be temperature screened at the point of entry to the school building. Staff will be present to assure appropriate social distancing during the screening process. Floors will be marked with social distancing stickers. Staff performing temperature checks will use no-touch infrared thermometers from behind a plexiglass barrier. Staff will use appropriate PPE including gloves, eye protection, and face masks. Staff administering temperature checks will be trained using an in house video developed by health care professionals. PPE inventory will be maintained under the supervisor of the Executive Director of Human Resources and Operations. The district has procured a three-month supply of appropriate PPE and will attempt to maintain that throughout the school year.

Social distancing, face coverings & PPE

The district has developed procedures for maintaining social distancing of all students, faculty, and staff when on school facilities, grounds and transportation.

- Floor stickers and signage are prominently displayed throughout the school buildings.
- District staff and students will be trained in appropriate social distancing in the classroom, hallways, cafeteria, large instructional spaces, and playground areas.

Social distancing will be maintained while in school facilities and on school grounds unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance. For those medically unable to wear face coverings, a face shield will be provided.

Masks and Face Coverings:

Students and staff will be required to wear appropriate face covering at all times except for during mask breaks and while eating, even when maintaining social distancing.

BCSD will follow CDC guidance on encouraging mask breaks at various times throughout the day: [Considerations for Schools](#). At the elementary level, a minimum of two mask breaks per hour are suggested while at the secondary level a minimum of one mask break per instructional period. Mask break times and durations should be considered in conjunction with the teacher's instruction plan. These should be short "breaks" while students and staff remain 6 feet apart and wear appropriate face coverings at all other times while also maintaining proper social distancing.

Additional PPE will be available for those who need it; however, additional PPE does NOT replace the requirement to wear a mask or face covering. Face shields, for example, are supplemental PPE, but must be worn in conjunction with a mask or face covering.

Appropriate Face Coverings:

Students and staff are strongly encouraged to provide their own face coverings. If students or staff do not have a face covering, the district will provide an appropriate face covering at no cost.

While a hard and list of appropriate or "approved" face coverings does not exist in the guidance, the following website has helpful tips: [Protect Yourself and Your Family from Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#). Based on these directives, cloth face coverings appear to be the most effective. In addition, additional PPE items such as face shields DO NOT replace face coverings, and may be worn in conjunction with, but not as a replacement for, a mask of covering.

Our student Code of Conduct will promote traditional masks that loop behind the ears and provide ample covering for nose and mouth. **Bandana coverings will not be permitted** as they have not shown to provide adequate protection. Gaiters may be an alternative but are not considered as effective as masks, although thicker gaiters may become available in the near future.

Face coverings should not be placed on:

- Children younger than 2 years old
- Students where such covering would impair their health or mental health,
- Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious
- Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance

The district will instruct students, parents/guardians and staff on:

- The proper way to wear face coverings
- Washing hands or using hand sanitizer before putting on and after removing their face covering
- The proper way to discard disposable face coverings

Infection control strategies

We have reduced class size to accommodate social distancing in consultation with our architects and are well within the parameters they set forth. We will be removing all extraneous furniture and materials from the classroom. Alcohol-based hand rub dispensers will be available in each classroom, entrance ways, and offices. Passing times will be staggered to avoid congestion in the hallways and common areas. Plastic dividers are being used in office spaces as appropriate.

Plumbing Facilities and Fixtures

We will maintain the minimum number of toilet fixtures necessitated by building code and maximize social distancing by taking additional fixtures out of service.

- The district is taking drinking fountains out of service except where they have a water bottle filling function. The district will make ample bottled water available to students throughout the day.
- The water system in each building will be flushed prior to the opening of school.
- The district has utilized existing physical barriers in bathrooms and decommissioned toilet fixtures to ensure social distancing. Forced air hand dryers have been disabled and paper towels are being utilized throughout the district.

The district has ensured that social distancing rules will be adhered to by using signage and supervision to reduce restroom occupancy at any given time.

Ventilation

- Our Facilities and Grounds Department has repaired, replaced, and installed window screens where appropriate to facilitate natural ventilation.
- The district has, where appropriate and practicable, installed MERV-13 air filters and recalibrated HVAC systems.

Management of ill persons, contact tracing and monitoring

The district requires students, faculty, or staff members who develop COVID-19 symptoms during the school day to report to the nurse's office. If there are several students waiting to see the school nurse, students must wait at least 6 feet apart. The district has designated areas to separate individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 from others until they can go home or to a healthcare facility, depending on severity of illness. One area will be used to treat injuries, provide medications or nursing treatments, and the other area will be used for assessing and caring for ill students and staff. Both areas will be supervised by an adult and have easy access to a bathroom and sink with hand hygiene supplies.

- Benjamin Franklin Elementary, Room 115
- Calvin Coolidge Elementary, Room 125
- Thomas Jefferson Elementary School, Room 07
- Horace Mann Elementary School, Room 100
- MacArthur Elementary School, Room D103
- Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School, Room 117
- Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, Room 115
- East Middle School, Room 214A
- West Middle School, Room 254
- Binghamton High School, First Floor Fitness Room
- Columbus, Room 311
- Robinson Street, Room 2nd Floor Office A

PPE requirements for school health office staff caring for sick individuals includes both standard and transmission-based precautions. In areas with moderate to substantial community transmission, eye protection (e.g., goggles or face shield) should be added. When caring for a suspect or confirmed individual with COVID-19, gloves, a gown, eye protection, and a fit-tested N-95 respirator will be used, if available. If an N-95 respirator is not available, a surgical face mask and face shield will be used.

School health office cleaning will occur after each use of cots, bathrooms, and health office equipment (e.g., blood pressure cuffs, otoscopes, stethoscopes). Health office equipment will be cleaned following manufacturer's directions.

Disposable items will be used as much as possible (e.g., disposable pillow protectors, disposable thermometers, disposable thermometer sheaths or probes, disposable otoscope specula).

Aerosol Generating Procedures

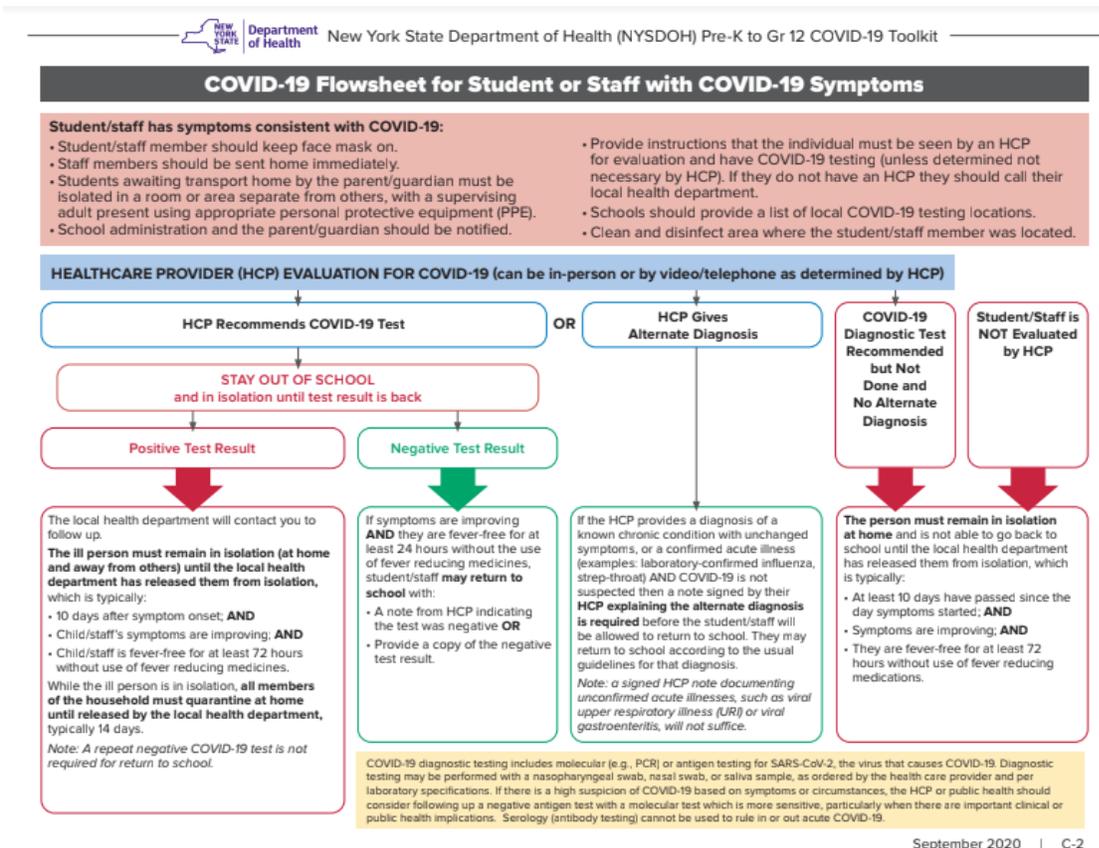
Respiratory treatments administered by nurses generally result in aerosolization of respiratory secretions. These aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) potentially put healthcare personnel and others at an increased risk for pathogen exposure and infection. The district requires the following PPE to be worn during AGPs: gloves, N-95 or a surgical mask with face shield, eye protection and a gown. PPE will be used when: suctioning, administering nebulizer treatments, or using peak flow meters with students who have respiratory conditions.

Treatments such as nebulized medication treatments and oral or tracheostomy suctioning will be conducted in a room separate from others with nursing personnel wearing appropriate PPE. For nebulizer treatments, if developmentally appropriate, the nurse will leave the room and return when the nebulizer treatment is finished.

Cleaning of the room will occur between use and cleaning of the equipment should be done following manufacturer's instructions after each use.

If Students or Staff become Ill with Symptoms of COVID-19

The district will follow the guidelines from New York State Department of Health. Reference the flow Chart below for return to work policies.



At School

The district requires 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. Students will be supervised in the isolation area while awaiting transport home and will be separated by at least 6 feet. Students will be escorted from the isolation area to their parent/guardian. Students or staff will be referred to a healthcare provider and provided resources on COVID-19 testing.

COVID-19 Testing

In consultation with the County Health Department and County Contact Tracers information regarding Covid-19 positive tests will be shared with the appropriate individuals via email and phone calls. The district, in cooperation with the County Health Department will preserve the privacy rights of students and staff.

In the event that a large-scale testing will need to be conducted at the school, the district administration will work with the following providers:

- [UHS Walk-In - Vestal](#)
- [Binghamton University Event Center Parking Lot](#)
- [Guthrie Vestal](#)
- Binghamton General Hospital

Contact Tracing

The district will notify the state and local health department immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 diagnostic test result by an individual within school facilities or on school grounds, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors of the district.

The district will assist with contact tracing by:

1. Keeping accurate attendance records of students and staff members
2. Ensuring student schedules are up to date
3. Keeping a log of any visitor which includes date and time, and where in the school they visited

Where practicable, the district will close off potential areas of contamination for a period of twenty-four hours after which the areas will be cleaned and sanitized. Where closure of a potentially contaminated area is impractical, the area will be immediately cleaned and sanitized by custodial staff utilizing appropriate PPE.

Confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state laws and regulations. School staff should not try to determine who is to be excluded from school based on contact without guidance and direction from the local health department.

For more information about how COVID-19 containment efforts will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit the [Communication/Family and Community](#) section of our reopening plan.

School Closures

A closure refers to contingency plans, protocols, and procedures for decreasing the scale or scope of in-person education and/or closing the school. The district will collaborate with the local health department to determine the parameters, conditions or metrics (e.g., increased absenteeism or increased illness in the school community) that will serve as early warning signs that positive COVID-19 cases may be increasing beyond an acceptable level.

At a minimum, the plan will incorporate the following:

- Schools will close if the regional infection rate rises over 9% after Aug. 1. Schools will close if the 7-day rolling average of the infection rate is above 9%.
- Schools in regions in Phase 4 can reopen if the daily infection rate remains below 5 percent using a 14-day average, unless otherwise directed from the Broome County Health Department.
- If the infection rate rises about 9%, schools must wait until the 14-day average is below 5%
- Once schools open at Phase IV below 5% for a 14-day rolling average, schools can remain open even if the rate continues to rise about 5% until it reaches 9% for the 7-day average.
- The district will be notified by the Broome County Health Department on the situation.
- The Superintendent will consider closing school if absentee rates impact the ability of the school to operate safely.
- The district may choose to modify operations prior to closing to help mitigate a rise in cases. If infection rates are rising above 5%, the district will consider modifying school operations for medically vulnerable students and staff if they are participating in in-person activities.
- The district will consult their medical director and/or the Broome County Department of Health when making such decisions.

For more information about how school closure information will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit the [Communications/Family and Community Engagement](#) section of our reopening plan.

Health hygiene

The district will emphasize healthy hygiene practices for students and staff by providing initial and refresher education in hand and respiratory hygiene, along with providing adequate supplies and time for frequent hand hygiene. Signs will be posted throughout the school (e.g., entrances, restrooms, cafeteria, classrooms, administrative offices, auditorium, custodial staff areas) and regular messaging will be shared with the school community. Signage will be used to remind individuals to:

1. Stay home if they feelsick.
2. Cover their nose and mouth with an acceptable face covering when unable to maintain social distance from others or in accordance with any stricter policy implemented by the school.
3. Properly store and, when necessary, discard PPE.
4. Adhere to social distancing instructions.
5. Report symptoms of, or exposure to, COVID-19.
6. Follow hand hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection guidelines.
7. Follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

Hand Hygiene

Students and staff must carry out the following hand hygiene practices.

- Wash hands routinely with soap (any kind) and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Dry hands completely after washing. Use paper towels to dry hands.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizer should be rubbed on the hands until it is completely absorbed. **DO NOT** dry hands if sanitizer is used.

Hand washing should occur:

- Before and after eating (e.g. snacks and lunch).
- After going to the restroom or after assisting a student with toileting.
- After using a tissue.
- Before and after using shared materials.
- Before and after putting on or taking off face masks.
- After coming in from the outdoors.
- Anytime hands are visibly soiled.

Respiratory Hygiene

The COVID-19 virus spreads from person to person in droplets produced by coughs and sneezes. Therefore, the district will emphasize the importance of respiratory hygiene.

Students and staff must carry out the following respiratory hygiene practices.

- Cover a cough or sneeze using a tissue. If a tissue is used, it should be thrown away immediately.
- If you don't have a tissue when sneezing or coughing, sneeze into your elbow.
- Wash your hands after sneezing or coughing.
- Face coverings are protective. Wearing a face covering will keep the respiratory droplets and aerosols from being widely dispersed into the air.

For more information about how hygiene information will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit the [Communication/Family and Community Engagement](#) section of our reopening plan.

Cleaning and disinfecting

The district will ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH, including "Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19," and signage, as applicable. Cleaning and disinfection logs will be maintained that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection.

Examples of facility types where cleaning and disinfection frequency will be recorded include:

- Bathrooms
- Health offices, isolation rooms
- Administrative offices (main office, reception area)
- Frequently touched surfaces in common areas (door handles, elevator buttons, copy machine keypads, etc.)
- Breakrooms
- Cafeterias/Kitchens
- Science labs
- Classrooms
- Maintenance offices and work areas
- School vehicles
- Libraries
- Large meeting areas (auditoriums, gymnasiums, music rooms)
- Playgrounds (cleaning only)
- Outdoor seating areas (plastic or metal)

Students, faculty, and staff will be trained on proper hand and respiratory hygiene, and such information will be provided to parents and/or legal guardians on ways to reinforce this at home.

The district will provide and maintain hand hygiene stations around the school, as follows:

- For handwashing: soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels.
- For hand sanitizing: an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical.
- Accommodations for students who cannot use hand sanitizer will be made.

Regular cleaning and disinfection of the facilities will occur, including more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk and frequently touched surfaces. This will include desks and cafeteria tables, which should be cleaned and disinfected between each individual's use. Cleaning and disinfection will be rigorous and ongoing and will occur at least daily, or more frequently as needed.

The district will ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms. Restrooms should be cleaned and disinfected more often depending on frequency of use.

For more information about how cleaning and disinfection information will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit the [Communications/Family and Community Engagement](#) section of our reopening plan.

Vulnerable populations/accommodations

We recognize that some students and staff members are at an increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness, live with a person who is at an increased risk, or simply do not feel comfortable returning to an in-person educational environment. It is our goal that these individuals are able to safely participate in educational activities. Students and staff members may be offered additional PPE, use of physical barriers, greater social distancing, and/or remote instruction or remote work location.

Visitors on campus

No outside visitors or volunteers will be allowed on school campuses, except for those involved in the safety and well-being of students. Parents/guardians will report to the front office and not go beyond unless it is for the safety or well-being of their child. Essential visitors to facilities will be required to wear face coverings and will be restricted in their access to our school buildings. Visitors must follow all safety protocols as listed above.

School safety drills

The district will conduct fire (evacuation) drills and lockdown drills as required by education law and regulation and the fire code without exceptions. The district will continue to conduct mandatory fire and lockdown drills according to the existing statutory schedule. Drills will be conducted in a manner that maintains social distancing at exits and gathering points outside the building, while still preparing students to respond in emergencies. Regardless of the modification used when conducting a drill, students should be instructed that if it was an actual emergency that required evacuation or lockdown, the most imminent concern is to get to safety; maintaining social distancing in an actual emergency that requires evacuation or lockdown may not be possible and should not be the first priority.

The district modifications to evacuation drill protocols may include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting drills on a “staggered” schedule, where classrooms evacuate separately rather than all at once, and appropriate distance is kept between students to the evacuation site. Staggering by the classroom, minimizes contact of students in hallways, stairwells, and at the evacuation site. If conducting drills using a modified procedure, it is required that the drill be conducted with all students in the school building on that school day, it may be necessary to do so during a class period that is extended for this purpose.
- School buildings will be certain that all students are receiving instruction in emergency procedures, and participating in drills while they are in attendance in-person.

Modifications to Lockdown Drills may include, but are not limited to:

- Conduct lockdown drills in classroom settings while maintaining social distancing/using masks.
- Conducting lockdown drills on a “staggered” schedule with smaller numbers of students present to maintain social distancing, however, schools must be certain that all students are receiving instruction in emergency procedures and participating in drills while they are in attendance in-person.
- *Conduct lockdown drills in the classroom without “hiding”/ “sheltering” but provide an overview of how to shelter or hide in the classroom.*

Facilities

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection in the district, facilities operations will be geared toward meeting social distancing requirements and cleaning frequently touched spaces regularly. In carrying out projects or tasks supporting infection control, requirements will be met for changes associated with building spaces. Plans for changes or additions to facilities that require review by the Office of Facilities Planning (OFP), will be submitted to comply with the requirements of the 2020 New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (BC) and the State Energy Conservation Code.

The function, position and operation of stairs and corridor doors, which have closers with automatic hold opens (and are automatically released by the fire alarm system), will remain unchanged.

The district plans to meet the deadline for submission of Building Condition Survey or Visual Inspections on time. In addition, lead in water sampling will be carried out upon the reopening of school under conditions consistent with when the building is “normally occupied.”

Upon reopening, the district plans to increase ventilation, to the greatest extent possible. Water systems will be flushed in buildings that have been unoccupied.

- The District has, where appropriate and practicable, installed MERV-13 air filters and recalibrated HVAC systems.
- We will maintain the minimum number of toilet fixtures necessitated by building code and maximize social distancing by taking additional fixtures out of service.
- The District is taking drinking fountains out of service except where they have a water bottle filling function. The District will make ample bottled water available to students throughout the day.
- Our Facilities and Grounds Department has repaired, replaced, and installed window screens where appropriate to facilitate natural ventilation.

Child Nutrition

School meals will continue to be available to all students, including those attending school in-person and those learning remotely.

For information about how meal information will be communicated, visit the [Communication/Family and Community Engagement](#) section of our reopening plan.

Meals onsite

For students onsite, meals will be provided while maintaining appropriate social distancing between students. Students do not need to wear face coverings when seated and eating so long as they are appropriately socially distanced.

The district will ensure social distancing between individuals while eating in the school cafeteria. If not feasible, meals may be served in alternate areas (e.g., classrooms) or in staggered meal periods to ensure social distancing and proper cleaning and disinfection between students.

The sharing of food and beverages (e.g., buffet-style meals, snacks) is prohibited, unless individuals are members of the same household. Adequate space will be reserved for students, faculty, and staff to observe social distancing while eating meals.

All students in attendance in the Binghamton City School District whether remote, in person, or in a hybrid model will be provided access to breakfast and lunch on a daily basis. The high school and middle school configuration for breakfast will be a Grab and Go model with students accessing their meal as they come through the main doors of the building wearing a mask and socially distanced as feasible. Elementary students will be provided breakfast, delivered to their classrooms, ordering the day prior.

Lunch will be served at all grade levels in the lunch line format via the cafeteria system. While students go through the serving line they will be wearing a mask and will be socially distanced. Students will then take their meals to a designated/socially distanced location for consumption (cafeteria, classroom, or other).

The Binghamton City School District's School Feeding Program is dedicated to the health and welfare of all involved. Because of this, all State and local Health and Safety Guidelines are researched, implemented and followed. This not only holds true for the current situation but for any and all food preparation and delivery models.

All food allergies are handled via our individual school health offices. Our registered nurses facilitate the needs of any student with a documented food allergy signed by a medical provider to all necessary parties. The cafeteria staff prepares food based on that student's medical needs and any staff supervising food consumption is made aware of the type and extent of the allergy. Hand hygiene will be a priority in the Binghamton City School District model. Hand washing will be verbally encouraged on a regular basis. In addition, COVID-19 approved hand sanitizing stations will be placed throughout the building and in the food distribution locations. Clear signage will be posted as a reminder as to the importance of sound hygiene and discouraging the sharing of food.

Meals offsite/remote

Breakfast and lunch meals will be available for pick-up at the school sites two times per week during a set time period. A schedule will be published monthly, or sooner, if modifications are needed.

Transportation

The district will conduct transportation activities that are consistent with state-issued public transit guidance and NYSED School Reopening guidelines. Students and school staff must wear acceptable face coverings at all times on school buses (e.g., entering, exiting, and seated) and should maintain appropriate social distancing to the extent practicable.

Students who are able will be required to wear masks and social distance on the bus to the extent practicable; however, students whose physical or mental health would be impaired are not required to wear a face covering, but must be appropriately socially distanced. Members of the same household may be seated within 6 feet of each other. Parents and legal guardians are encouraged to drop off or walk students to school to reduce density on buses.

All buses that are used every day by districts and contract carriers will be cleaned/ disinfected once a day. High contact sports will be wiped down after the morning (AM) and afternoon (PM) run depending upon the disinfection schedule.

School buses shall not 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 will configure wheelchair placement to ensure social distancing of 6 feet.

Whether school is in session remotely or otherwise, pupil transportation will be provided to nonpublic, parochial, private, charter schools or students whose Individualized Education Plans have placed them in out of district schools who are offering in-person sessions.

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.

School Bus Staff

School bus drivers, monitors, attendants and mechanics are required to perform a self-health assessment for symptoms of COVID-19 before arriving at work or their employers, First Student and Broome County Transit Authority will screen them prior to commencing their bus runs. If personnel are experiencing any of the symptoms of COVID-19, they will notify their employer as per the reporting policies 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 by their employers First Student and Broome County Transit Authority and provided periodic refreshers on the proper use of personal protective equipment and the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

Transportation carriers will 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.

Face coverings will be provided to students in need. In order to accomplish social distancing, only one student will occupy a seat, but members of the same household may be seated together. Bus schedules will be adapted to accommodate reduced capacity. Parents/legal guardians will be encouraged to drop off or walk students to reduce density on buses.

Buses will be disinfected between runs.

When temperatures are above 45 degrees Fahrenheit, school buses will transport passengers with roof hatches or windows slightly opened to provide airflow.

Protocols for bus drivers, monitors and attendants including:

- The driver, monitor, and attendant may wear gloves if they choose to do so but are not required unless they must be in physical contact with students.
- Transportation staff will be encouraged by their employer to wash their hands with soap and water before and after am and pm runs to keep healthy and prevent the spread of respiratory and diarrheal infections from one person to the next. Germs can spread from other people or surfaces when you:
 - touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
 - touch a contaminated surface or objects
 - blow your nose, cough, or sneeze into hands and then touch other people's hands or common objects

Students will disembark from transportation vehicles by:

- When students embark and disembark the bus, they should follow social distancing protocols. This will increase the time required to load and unload buses at schools in the morning and afternoon.
- To encourage social distancing the district has reconfigured the loading and unloading locations for students who are transported by bus, car or are pedestrians.
- Since hand sanitizer is not permitted on school buses, hand sanitizer will be provided to each student upon entering the building during the temperature check.

For more information about training protocol for students and staff and how transportation information will be communicated, visit the [Communications/Family and Community Engagement](#) section of our reopening plan.

Social Emotional Well-Being

We recognize that the social emotional well-being of our students and staff during these challenging times is critically important. The district has made available resources and referrals to address mental health, behavioral, and emotional needs of students, faculty, and staff when school reopens for in-person instruction. The school district's social workers and counselors will work with faculty and families to address any concerns for a student's well being through the district's Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). These include Tier I supports such as Connected and Respected, Responsive Classrooms K-5 and Guided Discipline 6-12, Tier 2 interventions including check in/check out, counseling, referrals to services and Tier 3 interventions (e.g crisis intervention, individual instruction in SEL).

The district has established an advisory council that involves shared decision-making and is 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. The advisory council will inform the comprehensive developmental school counseling program plan. This program plan has been reviewed and updated to meet current needs.

The district addresses 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 support for developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty, and staff. This is addressed by providing online PD in stress management, in person and online PD in restorative practices, crisis prevention, youth mental health first aid and trauma informed practices for both staff and students.

School Schedules

Hybrid instruction: The hybrid instruction plan divides students into two cohorts. One cohort will meet in- person two days per week (Mondays/Tuesdays) with virtual and or independent work on the remaining days (Half-day Wednesday/Thursday/Friday). Half-days on Wednesday will be used for the entire class to meet virtual. This will limit the number of students in the building at any given time while allowing us to adhere to the health and safety guidelines. This will also ensure 6 foot social distancing can be maintained in each classroom during instruction. Hybrid instruction will be used, if the governor allows our facilities to be reopened to students, in the elementary schools, middle schools and high school. Cohort assignments will occur in mid-August and parents will be afforded the opportunity to request a change in cohort. Every effort will be made to keep siblings in the same cohort so as to minimize exposure while in school.

Daily schedules are in the process of being finalized and the district anticipates changes to daily schedules, and using staggered schedules in larger buildings to avoid large numbers of students entering and exiting the building.

Full time, in-person instruction: We recognize that for some student populations, full time in person instruction is necessary. These populations include all self-contained classrooms for special education students, where classroom spaces are already set up for social distances and additional PPE will be provided to faculty and staff working in these spaces. Additionally, every effort is being made to create an environment for primary students to attend daily as well. A determination will be made by August 10th as to which grade level we are able to accommodate. Full-time, in person instruction will follow a daily schedule, with a half-day being offered on Wednesdays.

Following is a visual of a hybrid and full in-person instruction schedule:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Cohort A Full day of in-person instruction	Cohort A Full day of in-person instruction	Remote Learning for Cohort A & B for half-day; Possible Cohort D who attends 3 days per week.	Cohort A Full day of remote learning with some instruction synchronous	Cohort A Full day of remote learning with some instruction synchronous
Cohort B Full day of remote learning with some instruction synchronous	Cohort B Full day of remote learning with some instruction synchronous	Teacher Collaboration and Preparation Time	Cohort B Full day of in-person instruction	Cohort B Full day of in-person instruction
Cohort C Full day of in-person instruction	Cohort C Full day of in-person instruction	Cohort C Half-day in-person instruction	Cohort C Full day of in-person instruction	Cohort C Full day of in-person instruction

Additionally, the middle school and high school are currently working on daily schedules that reduce the amount of passing time in the hallways.

Full time, virtual instruction: In the event of a **closure**, this plan will have students joining their classes daily, using a revised online schedule that aligns with their current schedule; this will allow for a seamless transition if necessary. Attendance will be taken and assignments will be given and graded. A daily schedule will be developed and disseminated prior to the start of school so that students and parents are aware of the daily expectations for engaging in learning.

Virtual instruction per family choice: Full time, remote and online classes for those who are unable to return to school for medical reasons and/or general discomfort. These will be credit-bearing options offered to any student/family interested at the secondary level. We anticipate this commitment being long-term for a family. For parents who have indicated this as a choice, letters of commitment will

follow in the month of August. All families will receive a phone call, whose purpose is to ascertain interest in this option. Wherever possible, synchronous instruction will be provided so that students are learning while the teacher is providing direct instruction.

For information about how school schedule information will be communicated to students, families and staff members, visit the [Communication/Family and Community Engagement](#) section of our reopening plan.

School Activities

Extracurriculars

Policies regarding extracurricular programs and which activities will be allowed will be developed taking into consideration student interest, social distancing, PPE usage, and cleaning and disinfection, as well as risk of COVID-19 transmission. The district will refer to DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)" to assist in development of these policies.

Note: Interscholastic sports are not permitted at the time of publication of this guidance, and additional information on athletic activities is forthcoming. Practices for Fall Sports have been delayed until September 21st. The decision to conduct sports will fall under the New York State Public High School Athletic Association.

Childcare

After school childcare is provided through third party certified vendors. Each must file with the district their COVID-19 plan prior to commencing with their program.

Policies regarding aftercare programs include social distancing, PPE usage, cleaning and disinfection requirements, as well as the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Protocols in how to maintain cohorts, if applicable, or group members of the same household will be considered.

Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism

Teachers will record using Schooltool, our student management system, daily student attendance. It is expected that teachers will be interacting with their students daily. These daily interactions will count as being in attendance. Additionally, on days when students are to be engaged in virtual classroom work, attendance will be taken based on whether or not a student participates in the remote activity on the assigned day. The district has a standing Attendance Task Force, who will meet in the month of September to evaluate the effectiveness of the protocols the district will put in to place. Attendance data from Schooltool is used to determine the degree to which the district attendance flow chart is to be used to prevent chronic absenteeism. Teachers, whenever possible, will be providing remote instruction from school buildings. There attendance will be taken as part of the screening process daily.

Technology and Connectivity

Binghamton has surveyed both its community and its faculty to ascertain levels of connectivity to participate in hybrid and remote learning. For both groups, very low numbers of students, families, and faculty lack access to internet connectivity. For those who do, we have worked with our IT department to promote routers throughout our buildings and in community hotspots. We also believe that, based on survey data, all instructors who would be delivering remote instruction off campus have the connectivity needed to carry out that task.

As in the Spring, our District provides all students and faculty with Chromebooks for device access if they do not have devices of their own. We also provide a list of community hotspots for students to access connectivity if they do not have access at home. For families who are still in need of internet access, the district has purchased wireless connectivity devices they may use for the year, free of charge.

Teaching and Learning

The school calendar typically includes one or more staff-only days before students arrive at school. Acknowledging the challenges that our teachers and staff have faced this spring delivering remote instruction under stressful circumstances, the district will focus these in-service days at the start of the school year on providing support to staff in the areas of social-emotional health and technology integration.

These days will also be utilized for student orientation. This time will allow small groups of students to meet with their new teacher and begin to establish the relationship necessary for a successful school year.

As we enter the new school year, teachers will be encouraged to spend time building relationships, supporting students with the transition back to school, and teaching social distancing etiquette at developmentally appropriate levels.

When a remote or hybrid learning model is necessary, certain groups of students will be prioritized for in-person learning to the greatest extent possible. This includes, but is not limited to, special education students, English language learners, students who did not engage in remote learning during the spring of 2020, students with technology or connectivity needs, and primary students.

Assessing student learning gaps or areas of need will be critical. Formative assessment before a unit of instruction to assess student understanding of pre-requisite skills will be common practice.

Acknowledging that the typical content in a given grade level or course may need to be adjusted, content will be prioritized to ensure that students receive instruction for the prioritized learning standards, key understandings, and skills necessary for students' success in future study.

Grading practices will follow a standards-based framework designed to provide direct feedback regarding students' mastery of course content.

Our Director of Pre K programming has been in contact with all outside Pre K providers. As part of their contract for services, each agency must attest that they have measures in place to ensure they will follow health and safety guidelines outlined in the NYSED guidance and required by the NYSDOH. Each agency plan will include a continuity of learning plan that addresses in-person, remote and hybrid models of instruction.

For information relating to teaching and learning in BOCES special education and Career and Technical Education programs, please see the BOCES website [Center for Career & Technical Excellence](#)

In July 2020, our District launched a two-pronged parent survey to ascertain preferences for remote learning or in-person learning if schools were to be physically-open for students. Both a phone option and an online, Survey Monkey, option were provided. We had approximately 2000 families to respond to one of those options.

From there, our building Principals and their clerical teams contacted every family in their building to ascertain their preference and ability for fully remote instruction if in-person learning were permitted this year. Results are being kept in a shared Google Document for all administrators to utilize. We anticipate having those answers during the July 27th week.

In-person Instruction

Upon reopening, the number of students in each of our classrooms will be reduced to adhere to CDC guidance regarding proper social distancing. Class size will reflect the need to ensure that students' desks/seats are positioned no less than six feet apart.

Accommodating a six-foot radius around students will necessitate the identification of additional rooms and common-area spaces that can be converted into elementary classrooms.

Current staffing levels may be insufficient to accommodate the expanded number of classrooms needed to ensure social distancing. In early July 2020, the District's architectural firm worked with our facilities department to provide a space analysis in each building. Utilizing that data, building principals led their leadership teams in making determinations for space based on DOH and SED guidelines. With the six-foot and twelve-foot guidelines in place, we have explored repurposing some traditional spaces for new learning opportunities. For example, we believe that we can utilize our large gym space for music instruction and ensemble practices as we can accommodate twelve-foot spaces in that area.

At the elementary level, depending on the number of students who opt for fully-remote instruction, we may be able to accommodate in-person learning for the remaining students several days per week. At the secondary level, we believe that a hybrid model works best utilizing cohorts. With two cohorts attending two days per week, we can use a block schedule to minimize student movement and passing time opportunities.

These approaches, combined with a repurposing of spaces to meet social distancing needs, will allow us to meet all guidance concerning reducing COVID-19 spread.

All instruction will continue to be aligned to the New York State Learning Standards.

Our schools will minimize the movement of students. This potentially means having students eat lunch in their classroom instead of the cafeteria and eliminating assemblies, field trips and other large-group activities. Special-area subjects (e.g., art, music, physical education) may be pushed into the classroom. Whenever possible students will utilize outside space for physical education instruction. We will adhere to 12 feet between students when engaging in physical activity.

To the extent possible, students will remain in small cohorts if/when leaving the classroom, such as for recess or any necessary transition, to reduce their exposure to additional students.

For information on school schedules, visit the School Schedules section of our reopening plan.

In the traditional classroom setting, students will be socially-distanced at desks with six-feet separately themselves with other students on all sides. Masks and appropriate PPE will be provided to all students and staff who need them. With this environment, students and staff will be able to participate in significant learning opportunities centered on state standards. Moreover, students and staff will leverage 1:1 technology, both within and outside the classroom, to provide substantive learning opportunities for an in-person environment. Students will experience a modified learning environment as it relates to their usual, free movement around the room and the building. However, that modified movement does not prohibit substantive learning from taking place.

Students will continue to enjoy regular access to their teachers for learning and feedback. While this may look different from pre-COVID environments, we will leverage school schedules and technology to ensure that these interactions continue. Whether a full in-person or a hybrid model, teachers will still have time in their workday for students to seek feedback. In addition, we will leverage 1:1 technology and other platforms to engage in direct feedback with students in an in-person environment. For example, we have utilized learning platforms for students to submit essays and gain feedback even in an in-person environment. This procedure reduces paper going back and forth and could help lesson possible transmission points.

For information about how in-person instruction information will be communicated to students and families, visit the Communication/Family and Community Engagement section of our reopening plan.

Remote/Hybrid Instruction

Given the possibility that communities may experience spikes in COVID-19 cases at any point during the school year, which may prompt short or long-term school closures, our district has developed a hybrid/blended learning model and schedule that can continue as is in a fully remote environment.

Instruction will not only focus on “core” subject areas to the exclusion of elective courses. Consideration has been given to prioritizing hands-on and lab-based activities while students are onsite in school buildings. All instruction will continue to be aligned to the New York State Learning Standards.

As noted previously, student schedules will remain the same whether instruction is in person or remote so that students do not encounter conflicts wherein synchronous lessons for different subjects are offered simultaneously.

Remote learning opportunities for secondary students will include a greater emphasis on synchronous instruction, with teachers finding ways to provide live instruction and lessons to students. While recording of live lessons is still essential for students unable to attend at a scheduled time, teachers will

ensure that their students are directly engaged with them and their class peers in experiential learning on a regular basis.

To ensure high-quality remote learning experiences, we have standardized the use of a single online learning platform - Google Classroom, and develop a common, coordinated set of guidelines for teachers to follow when using the platform with students.

Grading practices will follow a standards-based framework designed to provide direct feedback regarding students' mastery of course content. We will use a four-scale grading rubric based on levels of competency/mastery, which can then be aligned to numeric bands (for GPA purposes).

For information on school schedules, visit the School Schedules section of our reopening plan.

In a remote/hybrid model, students and staff will continue to have substantive interactions. Our District will utilize Google Classroom as our learning platform to promote consistency among all PreK-12 classrooms. In addition, we have invested in Remind to provide secure phone calling from any device for teachers to continue to communicate with families in regular means. Finally, we have continued to invest in and building capacity with Zoom for synchronous opportunities. Substantial training on all of these platforms is ongoing throughout July and August and will be emphasized during Superintendent's Conference Days in September.

Students will continue to enjoy regular access to their teachers for learning and feedback. While this may look different from pre-COVID environments, we will leverage school schedules and technology to ensure that these interactions continue. Whether a full in-person or a hybrid model, teachers will still have time in their work day for students to seek feedback. In addition, we will leverage 1:1 technology and other platforms to engage in direct feedback with students in an in-person environment. For example, we have utilized learning platforms for students to submit essays and gain feedback even in an in-person environment. This procedure reduces paper going back and forth and could help lesson possible transmission points.

For information about how remote/hybrid instruction information will be communicated to students and families, visit the Communication/Family and Community Engagement section of our reopening plan.

Special Education

The Binghamton City School District is committed to ensuring that every student receives a high quality and equitable education. The BCSD Department of Special Services strongly believes in the principle of equal access and is dedicated to ensuring that students, parents, teachers, school staff, administrators, partners, and the public at large are able to access all communications, materials, and documents without difficulty or obstacle. The BCSD is committed to equal opportunity for people with disabilities, in fulfillment not only of its duty under State and Federal law, but its mission to ensure every learner has an equal opportunity to succeed and grow. The BCSD reopening plan for the 2020-2021 school year represents a variety of planning scenarios, resources and considerations that ensures all students with disabilities are provided FAPE in a healthy and safe environment. The BCSD is considering 3 possible

scenarios for instruction: In-person Learning Model, Distance/Virtual Learning Model, and a Hybrid Learning Model utilizing elements of in-person and virtual. Whether an in person, hybrid or distance (virtual) model is used, continuous learning will occur for all IEP/504 bound students to ensure students have equitable access.

Students with disabilities will continue to receive a high-quality education in alignment with the student's Individual Educational Plans (IEPs). The district is committed to addressing the individual needs of students with disabilities. The CPSE/CSE will continue to convene to review the student's needs, goals, services, and level of engagement in the online/distance learning environment. Alternative materials, methods of support, and interaction strategies should be put in place to help mitigate the impact on students.

Students with disabilities attending the BCSD will continue to receive specialized instruction and related services through both the hybrid model and the distance learning model to meet their identified needs. Students engaging in distance learning will have access to appropriate educational materials and receive daily interaction with their licensed special education teacher(s). The BCSD will work to ensure that all students with an IEP or 504 have equal access to the learning and required materials, including technology. We will continue to review the delivery of special education and related services, as well as general education curriculum on a regular basis to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to distance learning. This will necessitate communication between the special education teacher, the general education teachers, the parent/guardian and related services providers to ensure that students with disabilities can be appropriately involved and make progress toward the general education standards and IEP goals. Our special education faculty and staff will effectively support each student's unique learning needs, including the ability to provide differentiated instruction as well as one-on-one support for students who need it. Regardless of where the learning is happening, support identified on a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan will be provided.

The district will consider the needs of each student and family when developing strategies to support student learning. It is recognized that the materials and strategies may also need to be differentiated or modified to support some learners and situations. We anticipate a need for training for families on how to use electronic devices and learning platforms, including for families with limited English proficiency. Our district has chosen Google as the virtual platform used for instruction, our special education teachers have their own Google Classrooms as well as act as a co-teacher in the general education Google Classroom in order to follow mandated IEP service minutes and services. If a hybrid model is used, our special education teachers will continue to provide in-person IEP support and services as noted on the IEP, in addition to continued virtual support on a regular basis. For those students who need a different approach, paper packets or worksheets will be provided, which will be distributed and collected several times a week by our staff. Telephone instruction is also a model that can be used for more one on one personalized instructional support if using a hybrid or virtual model. For the 2020-2021 school year, we will continue to allow any faculty member or paraprofessional working with an IEP bound student access to the confidential IEP through ClearTrack special education data management system.

The Director(s) of Special Services have developed a direct line of communication with building principals, district administrators and educators in order to prepare staff to plan for the needs of students eligible for special education, evaluations/reevaluations, and IEP implementation. Appropriate safety protocols will be in place during any in-person evaluations, however, when in-person evaluations are not possible, remote evaluations will be considered. Remote evaluations will be conducted via a secure platform. All student IEP's will continue to be implemented and a process to hold IEP meetings to review IEP goals, services and the process to conduct evaluations/reevaluations has been provided and reviewed with all appropriate staff. This does include virtual meetings and phone conferences for those parents interested in virtual meetings rather than in-person meetings. Student progress will continue to be reported to parents as scheduled whether a hybrid or virtual model is used. Our special education teachers will use a variety of synchronous and asynchronous methods for collecting progress data, including observations of the student via remote methods, working with the parent to complete a data collection sheet, curriculum-based assessments and using historical student data. We will also consider progress monitoring data from spring and fall 2020 to determine what compensatory services might be needed.

Whether a hybrid or virtual learning model is used, continued training and professional development will be provided to faculty and staff, students, and parents/guardians on implementation of our distance learning model and the district's expectations.

The BCSD plan for educating all students will be communicated via the district website, this will include information specific to plans for students with disabilities. Whether provided virtually or in-person, the frequency and duration of programming and services will be adhered to, as per the IEP. If there are adjustments that need to be made, we will work within the Federal and State regulatory requirements and make amendments as necessary. Changes will not be made to the IEP without the consent of the parent.

If instruction is being provided to the general education student population, whether it be a virtual or distance learning platform or paper materials, our IEP/504 bound students will receive the same instruction in addition to their specified services under the IEP/504. Appropriately supporting IEP/504 bound students in virtual learning environments, including parental communication, progress monitoring, progress communication, and providing IEP related services, requires key instructional planning and preparation which will be provided to our faculty and staff (as noted above). When students with disabilities access online learning programs, additional planning will be needed so students can be supported with additional services determined by the student's IEP/504. These added programmatic needs often require extra levels of consideration to determine the appropriateness of the online interventions and special education services. The BCSD Office of Special Services has allocated funding to provide teachers with common planning hours as well as professional development in order to support students on a hybrid or virtual model.

When school buildings provide online resources for students and families the Office of Special Services will also provide resources in an accessible and equitable manner for parents of students with

disabilities. This includes using inclusive language, providing a range of activities accessible in a variety of modalities and skill levels, in the parent's language, and allowing parents and students flexibility.

We will ensure that students have equitable access to a continuum of special education services. Our district will provide training, resources, and tools to support the CPSE/CSE in determining the needed services. No matter what model a student will be participating in, the CPSE/CSE will meet to ensure that the district's model is individualized for each student. Special education and related services as identified in the IEP during may be provided in a variety of ways. This may include in-person and/or distance/virtual learning models. CPSE/CSE should consider a variety of synchronous and asynchronous methods for collecting progress data, including observations of the student via remote methods, working with the parent to complete a data collection sheet, curriculum-based assessments, data collected prior to the school facility closures.

Collaboration is critical between CPSE/CSE & program providers in all settings to ensure there is an understanding of the provision of services consistent with the IEP recommendations, plans for monitoring student progress and commitment to sharing resources.

For our preschool students with a disability, the Director of Special Services and the CPSE Chairperson are the liaisons between parents within the district and the county health dept, as well as their approved agency evaluators and providers. Upon request for an evaluation, the district obtains consent from parents, for evaluations at the approved agency selected. Once evaluations are complete a meeting is held and if eligibility is determined, the district coordinates a service provider to support the student. The individualized education plans (IEP's) that are created at the CPSE meetings are shared with the providers, so they know the strengths and needs of the students, as well as their goals and service provision. The parents receive quarterly progress notes, and the team meets at least annually. With the previous closure, we lined up teletherapy sessions as well. We will continue to offer parents the option of in-person or teletherapy this fall.

For our school-age students with a disability, the CSE will continue to meet annually for each student. If a student attends BOCES, a private school or a likewise institution, those who carry out the student's services will participate in the meetings as well. All documents with agreed upon goals and programming will continue to be developed in partnership with the outside agencies. Copies of all documents will continue to be provided to the specific stakeholders involved to ensure they can accommodate the needs of the student even if all programming is held remotely. The outside agencies are also given access to our Special Education database, ClearTrack so they can continuously note progress within this system and make updates to the draft documents accordingly. All communication/documentation is also sent home. Parents receive progress notes quarterly.

Teachers and related service providers will engage in clear, ongoing, and shared communication and collaboration to ensure equitable access to special education programs and services and the continued offer of FAPE for students with disabilities. Service providers will maintain a schedule of regular planning and communication for supporting students with disabilities, including review of progress monitoring data and special education teachers will be included in grade-level discussions.

Teachers and related service providers will maintain documentation on all instruction and services that were provided to each student so that it may be communicated to the CPSE/CSE for consideration when making any individualized determinations of subsequent student needs. Related service staff will maintain documentation of services through session notes in ClearTrack. Teachers and related service staff will maintain documentation of parent contact through the contact log option, in the ClearTrack and/or in the notes section of Schoooltool (our district-based data platforms).

The Binghamton City School District will ensure the needs of students are addressed. The BCSD Department of Special Services will ensure that our teachers and administrators review student baseline data in order to determine present levels and learning gaps in order to mitigate any lost skill or achievement due to the pandemic. Historical data and evidence about what students knew and could do prior to the pandemic will play a key role in instructional practice and strategy implementation. Differentiated instruction will also be used in this framework to implement a variety of instructional strategies aimed to help meet students where they are and move them to where they need to go. Teachers and related service providers will continue to review student's progression toward IEP goals and objectives to record student growth. Additionally, teachers and service providers will continue to collect data, whether in-person or remotely and use the data to monitor each student's progress toward the annual goals and to evaluate the effectiveness of the student's special education services. Teachers will determine any need for additional supports or services to remediate gaps. However, if a gap is identified due to pandemic, the BCSD Office of Special Services will ensure delivery of services and supports through extended learning opportunities as necessary. Continuous progress monitoring assessments will be conducted utilizing diagnostic assessments and curriculum-based measures to ensure student growth and recovery.

Progress monitoring data will continue to be reviewed by staff to evaluate the effectiveness of student services and supports, as well as to inform instructional decisions. Collecting BIP data may be limited under remote learning, however, our licensed special education teachers and school psychologists will continue to complete direct observations, conduct behavioral rating scales using frequency and context as a method to collect data and provide strategies to support student behavioral goals. When goals are monitored under remote circumstances, a data collection tool will be provided to parents to assist in gathering information.

The BCSD Office of Special Services will continue to schedule and hold all CPSE/CSE/504 meetings and complete all evaluations that were postponed due to requirements of social distancing for in-person meetings. Through the use of department and faculty meetings, as well as in-person discussions and observations, the OSS (Office of Special Services) Director(s) will ensure that teachers and administrators provide ongoing communication and collaboration with parents regarding IEP implantation, CSE meetings, progress monitoring and any other Special Education related information. The BCSD will continue to hold IEP team meetings, including parents and all appropriate IEP team members to conduct annual reviews, revisions and eligibility staffing. These may take place utilizing Zoom or telephone conference calls or in-person meetings (i.e. teams may meet in-person if approved by the NYSED, NYSDOH and school district policy).

The BCSD Directors of Special Services expect special education teachers to create learning experiences that center on critical problem solving, collaboration, communication and creativity with a focus on essential and relevant learning for students. Whether using a hybrid or remote learning framework, our teachers will create opportunities for interdisciplinary and well-rounded learning while providing

mandated IEP services to our students. Our special education teachers will continue to build key skills and focus on concepts that align to the NYS State and 21st Century Standards along with their general education counterparts. Throughout the year, our special education teachers will integrate opportunities for formative assessment and student feedback even during remote learning experiences. Our special education teachers will continue to differentiate and adjust distance learning delivery models to include paper packets, online experiences, blended learning, phone, etc. as it matches student learning needs and technology and connectivity capacity. Above all, all of our faculty and staff will support all SWD students to attain a New York State Regents Diploma (with accolades and honors if deemed suitable), New York State Local diploma or NYS SACC and successfully transition to career and/or college. We will continue to identify and communicate with each senior about their graduation status and we will require dedication & diligence from school administrators, counselors, social workers, and teachers to communicate regularly regarding current standing and graduation requirements.

As a district, we continue to support inclusionary practices and the collaboration between our special education teachers and classroom teachers to meet the needs of all students. This collaboration is especially critical while we provide continuous learning opportunities for our students while our schools are closed. Each student with an individualized education plan (IEP) has a Special Education teacher assigned as his/her “case manager”. This educator ensures that the general education teachers and support staff understand the needs of the student, including any accommodations, modifications, or technology needs even during distance or remote instruction. The “case manager” regularly checks in with the student, other educators and the parent(s) to ensure that the student’s needs are met and that they are progressing towards their goals as well as the overall curriculum. If there are any supports that need to be addressed in an alternative manner, due to a virtual and/or hybrid model, the teachers will work with the OSS to ensure these needs are met.

Collaboration between the special education teacher and the general education teacher is critical for meeting the needs of students and in providing Specially Designed Instruction to meet the needs of the students even during times of remote learning. Teachers will adapt, as appropriate to the needs of an IEP bound student, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs that result from the student’s disability. Our special education teachers will ensure student access to the general curriculum, so that he or she can meet the education standards that apply to all students. The implementation of specially designed instruction will support the students with a disability’s access to academic content by mitigating any barriers to learning due to the disability. Students with disabilities will be provided supplementary aid, program modifications and accommodations during a hybrid or remote learning framework.

Our teachers will consider what supplemental aids and services can be deployed with consistency across the proposed reopening models to ensure that students with disabilities have the support they need to be educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate in the least restrictive environments. Additionally, our teachers will collaborate to increase opportunities for students with disabilities during in-person, hybrid or distance learning models of instruction to promote access to support and resources across the continuum of services.

Bilingual Education and World Languages

- All incoming ELL students will be screened in accordance with state regulations within the required 10 school days of initial enrollment. Teachers will conduct in person screening when possible using appropriate social distancing measures.
- Required instructional units of study to all ELLs will be provided based on their most recently measured English language proficiency level during in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 school year.

Staff

Teacher and Principal Evaluation System

All teachers and principals will continue to be evaluated pursuant to the district's approved APPR plan.

Certification, Incidental Teaching and Substitute Teaching

All teachers will hold valid and appropriate certificates for teaching assignment, except where otherwise allowable under the Commissioner's regulations (e.g., incidental teaching) or education law.



Key References

- [State Education Department Issues Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools](#) (July 16, 2020)
- [State Education Department Presents Framework of Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools](#) (July 13, 2020)
- [Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, NYS Department of Health](#) (July 13, 2020)

Additional References

- [Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#) (June 26, 2020)
- [Interim Guidance for Food Services during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.](#) (June 26, 2020)
- [Interim Guidance for Office-Based Work during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.](#) (June 26, 2020)
- [Interim Guidance for Public Transportation Activities during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.](#) (June 26, 2020)
- [New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [New York State Education Department Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration COVID-19 Website](#)