



UPDATE

July 17, 2020

High Anticipations for State Guidance Re-opening Plans!

We have been waiting for weeks with great anticipation for guidance from the NYS Health Department, Governor, and State Education Department (SED) on opening schools in September. On Monday, July 13, we received the news that we must create a comprehensive plan for a school schedule that includes in-person instruction, remote instruction/distance learning, or a hybrid of both in-person and remote learning. We will communicate plans as quickly as we can with as much advance notice as practicable, to students, families, and staff. Planning as it stands today:

1. Our ideal plan and first choice will be for in-person schooling following traditional bell schedules practicing social distancing mandates and guidance. We may need to adjust start times and end time to stagger transportation. This will mean students need to wear a mask and practice the 6 feet rule.
2. The second alternate structure for opening school is the hybrid, meaning that 50% of the students will be home learning through distance learning while the other 50% of the students will be in school with their teachers. This model could look like an AM/PM model or alternating day like an A/B Day. This type of model seems to be growing in popularity regionally because it affords the school to meet social distancing guidelines from the Health Department and CDC. We do recognize this type of schedule poses huge hurdles for parents: work, distance learning, and daycare on the days' when students are at home. Plus, this will mean students need to wear a mask and practice the 6 feet rule on days at school.
3. The third alternate and probably the most unpopular model is a complete PreK-12 distance learning. I do know we have a couple of families who may opt-in for distance learning if the previous two models are used and we are working on a program locally with OCM BOCES.

Creating three models to reopen is a huge undertaking of paramount effort, made even more difficult by the timeline, communication, and disruptive impact the pandemic has had on our lives. As we work to reopen the school, we need your input and recognize many of the challenges you face as families. We have developed a survey for families to complete to gain



as much feedback as possible from you. **We encourage you to take the survey, please click on the link below:**

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfcgPpkWmziONwznT0BFjd1Z2fWB7HlodDhsghM-PpyDo0X9w/viewform>

In a short time, we need to hear from as many people as possible to be sure to hear from diverse voices. We know two of the plans are not ideal and we will do what we can to create the plan and structure, given the mandates and guidance. It is our understanding of the decisions to open with in-person, hybrid, or distance learning mode will be decided by the Governor's decision-making model established based on infection virus rates regionally. These decisions will not be similar to an emergency closing day for a snow or ice storm, which are made at a local level by me.

In the following paragraphs and bulleted lists, I highlighted and pulled the State documents for the areas we are addressing. This guidance left us with many questions and few answers. We were told we would receive specific guidance Wednesday and that guidance was postponed and delivered on July 16th a 145-page document. We will get this done and keep you updated as quickly as possible.

Examples of logistics we are working on for each building range from such areas as hallways, classrooms, desk numbers, and transportation. Fortunately, we have a great group of school administrators and educators locally and regionally pooling their knowledge and resources together. Provided that guidance, we can transport 11 students per bus; this requires more than doubling our busses and bus runs. Do not fear, we have options and will be getting students to and from school even if it means multiple bus runs and altered start and end times.

Navigating the Guidance: OCS Activities

The NYSPHSAA Officers' announced the decisions today that includes:

- Delay Fall sports start date until Monday, September 21st (NYSPHSAA PAUSE)
- Cancel Fall Regional and State Championship events
- Waive seven-day practice rule
- Maintain current practice requirements
- Encourage geographic scheduling for games & contests
- Schools would have the option, if permitted by state officials, to offer off-season conditioning workouts.

Community organizations looking to use the facilities or grounds for day camps or youth sports programs are required to follow the applicable guidance issued by the State last week. Please note that the permissibility of youth sports programs (subject to compliance with the State guidance and need appropriate insurance) does not apply to interscholastic school athletic





programs. Because our schools remain closed, school district sports teams are not currently authorized to engage in group practices or training organized by school district personnel. We expect additional guidance to be released on that shortly. The tennis courts and tracks are open to the public, but appropriate social distancing should be maintained.

Please be respectful and responsible to others that may be using the track or tennis courts by adhering to all CDC and DOH guidelines to ensure the track and tennis courts can remain open. Playgrounds remain closed.

State Education Department Guidance Update

Guidance from the State Education Department (SED) dissemination to schools before the opening of the online SED portal for what the plan calls for included information on the following topics and focusing our efforts on:

Health and Safety:

- Preventive actions
- Perform health checks and screenings following DOH guidance
- Recognize the signs and symptoms of illness in students and staff
- Develop plans to maximize social distancing
- Develop plans to manage and isolate ill persons until they can be sent home
- Instruct students and staff in proper hand and respiratory hygiene
- Require wearing appropriate face coverings; and develop cleaning and disinfecting procedures for the school following CDC and DOH guidance

Nutrition:

- Provide all enrolled students with access to school meals each school day whether the school is in-person or remote
- Address all applicable health and safety guidelines
- Ensure compliance with Child Nutrition Program requirements; and communicate with families

Social-Emotional Well-Being:

- Social-emotional support school transitions
- Reacquaint students to mental, social, and emotional space for academic learning

Facilities:

- Promote social distancing
 - Maintain existing safety requirements designed to protect students
 - Schools to expand their physical footprint or change the way they utilize space
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- Continue to meet or exceed ventilation requirements and filtration requirements

Transportation:

- Continue services to all students with consistency and equity
- Perform regular school bus disinfection measures
- Train school bus staff regarding social distancing on the bus, at stops, and at unloading times
- Train staff regarding the wearing of masks
- Students will wear masks and social distance on the bus
- Districts will continue to provide transportation to homeless students, students in foster care, those who attend religious, independent, or charter schools in and outside of the district, and those with disabilities

Absenteeism:

- Continue with policies and procedures focused on the academic consequences of lost instructional time and address absences before students fall behind in school.
- Use a variety of creative methods to reach out to students and their families who have not engaged in distance learning.

School Schedules: meet three models; in-person, hybrid instruction, and distance learning

Teaching and Learning-Requirements:

- Clear opportunities for equitable instruction for all students
- Continuity of learning when using any instructional model
- Standards-based instruction
- Substantive daily interaction between teachers and students
- Clear communication plans between parents and schools

Teaching and Learning-Flexibility:

- Flexible student/staff ratio in prekindergarten
- Extended time for prekindergarten and kindergarten screening to be completed
- A waiver allowing districts to convert UPK seats from full-day to half-day (not applicable to Statewide Universal Full Day Pre-K programs)
- Flexibility with the 180 minutes per week Unit of Study requirement
- Flexibility in the delivery of physical education
- An allowance for a blend of hands-on and virtual science laboratory experiences
- When appropriate, districts and charters may utilize remote or virtual work-based learning experiences for CTE and CDOS programs

Technology and Connectivity:

- Sufficient access to a computing device and high-speed broadband is essential for educational equity
- Districts and schools must know the level of access all students and teachers have in their places of residence
- Address the need to provide devices and internet access to students and teachers who currently do not have sufficient access
- Provide multiple ways for students to participate in learning and demonstrate mastery of learning standards in remote/blended models
- Schools and districts should provide instruction on using technology and IT support for students, teachers, and families
- Provide professional development for teachers and leaders on designing effective online/remote learning experiences

Schools and school districts are required to provide:

- Free Appropriate Public Education consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities
- Meaningful parent engagement regarding the provision of services to their child;
- Collaboration between the Committee on Preschool Special Education/Committee on Special Education (CPSE/CSE)
- Program providers representing the variety of settings where students are served
- Access to the necessary instructional and technological support to meet the unique needs of students
- Documentation of programs and services and communications with parents

Special Education:

- Consider in-person services as a priority for high-needs students and preschool students with disabilities whenever possible
- Consider contingency plans developed by the CPSE/CSE to address remote learning needs in the event of intermittent or extended school closures

Bilingual Education and World Languages- Considerations and Best Practices

- Align policies to the [Blueprint for ELL/MLL Success](#)
- Ensure coordination content and ENL/BE teachers
- Adopt progress monitoring tools to measure ELL proficiency
- Provide social-emotional learning support to ELLs in their home language
- Continue utilizing technology in ELL instruction
- Support SIFE and other vulnerable populations
- Ensure EMLL Profile supports early learning
- Support completion of the NYS Seal of Biliteracy

Staffing and Human Resources

- Must ensure that all teachers, school and district leaders and pupil personnel service professionals hold a valid and appropriate certificate for their assignment

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- Can continue to utilize incidental teaching when determining how to staff their classrooms
 - Can employ substitute teachers to address staffing needs for the allowable amount of days given their qualifications and teaching assignment
 - Work with educator preparation programs to identify appropriate ways in which student teachers can support classroom instruction

Reopening Plan Timeline:

- Submit Re-opening Plan by July 31, at the school level
- Post on school public website
- Contain the mandatory elements outlined in NYSED's School Reopening Guidance Document
- August 1st - Governor to determine September opening structure based on the matrix of the virus spread
- School is scheduled to open September 8th

Important Calendar Dates:

- **Re-Opening School 2020 Public Hearing, Virtual: July 23, 6:00-7:00 PM**
- **Board of Education Virtual Meetings: July 28 & August 25**
[Click here for viewing options](#) or
<http://www.onondagacsd.org/districtpage.cfm?pageid=1690>
- **September 1, 2020 - Staff Professional Development Day**
- **September 8, 2020 - First Day of School**

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Rob Price, Superintendent

