

# **Redefining Ready – Reimagining Wells CSD**

## **Maximizing Opportunities for In-Person Learning Reopening Plan**

### **Introduction**

On July 13, 2020, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that school districts in New York State can follow plans to reopen for in-person schooling in September if COVID-19 infection rates stay at 5% or lower in a given region.

Determinations will be made by region about opening and closing schools as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. If a region is in Phase 4 and has a daily infection rate of 5% or lower over a 14-day average, schools in that region could hold in-person instruction. If daily infection rates exceed 9% over a seven-day average, however, schools in that region would not reopen. Similarly, should a region see such an average after reopening, schools in that region would also be directed to close.

While districts have been instructed to prioritize efforts to return all students to in-person instruction, the Wells CSD is also planning for remote/distance learning as well as a for a hybrid model that combines in-person instruction and remote/distance learning. The plan outlined here is for the reopening of the Wells CSD for the 2020-21 school year, following the building closure related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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.

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. 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 Superintendent of Schools, Thomas Sincavage, will serve as the district’s COVID-19 Coordinator. The main role of the COVID-19 Coordinator is to work closely with the local health department, serve as a central contact for schools and stakeholders and ensure the district is in compliance and following the best practices per state and federal guidelines.

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## Communication/Family and Community Engagement

To help inform our reopening plan, the district has sought feedback and input from various stakeholders, including the Board of Education, administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/guardians of students, local health department officials and health care providers. Engagement efforts included online surveys, staff meetings and one-on-one conversations.

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 view via the district website at [www.wellscsd.org](http://www.wellscsd.org), and will be updated throughout the school year, as necessary. The link to the plan appears on the website homepage and on the district's Facebook page.

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, education partners and vendors. The district will use its existing communication channels – including [www.wellscsd.org](http://www.wellscsd.org), Facebook and the Remind App – 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. The information we share will be based on local and state guidance.

In support of remote learning, the district will 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 phone, email, or video conferencing. 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. The district will follow its existing engagement and communication protocols with parents regarding the provision of special education services for their child.

The district is 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. The Hamilton County health department staff and/or the School Nurse will conduct the trainings. Staff will then reinforce the guidelines and protocols. These trainings, following CDC and local health department guidelines, will cover the following topics:

- Hand hygiene
- Proper face covering procedures (how to wear and remove)
- Social distancing
- Respiratory hygiene
- Identifying symptoms- parents will contact the school via phone or dedicated email to inform the school if their child is showing symptoms.

The district will create and deploy signage throughout the district to address public health protections surrounding COVID-19. Signage will address protocols and recommendations in the following areas:

- Proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Acceptable face coverings and requirements related to their wear
- Hand washing
- Adherence to social distancing instructions
- Symptoms/prevention of COVID-19

In addition to signage, the district will encourage all students, staff and visitors through verbal and written communication to adhere to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and DOH guidance regarding the use of PPE through periodic reminders on [www.wellscsd.org](http://www.wellscsd.org), Facebook and the Remind App.

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.

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 and separated by at least six (6) feet. Students will be escorted from the isolation area to their parent/guardian, as needed. Students and staff will be referred to a healthcare provider and provided resources on COVID-19 testing.

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 the local health officials.

### School Closures

The district is preparing for situations in which the school building may 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 decision to close school will be made only after consultation with the local health department and school attorney. The district may choose to modify operations in the school prior to closing to help mitigate a rise in cases. The district will consult with its local health department and school attorney when making such decisions.

School administrators will communicate and, if needed, will consider closing school if absentee rates impact the ability of the school to operate safely. This decision will be made only after consultation with the local health

department and school attorney. If the school needed to close, the district would immediately shift to remote learning. Parents would be notified of this shift as soon as possible.

## 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 the school campus. 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 for the 2020-21 school year should in-person schooling resume. Anyone with questions or concerns should contact our COVID-19 safety coordinator, Superintendent Thomas Sincavage, at [tsincavage@wellscsd.org](mailto:tsincavage@wellscsd.org) or 518-924-6000.

### 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 100.0°F or greater and/or symptoms of possible COVID-19 virus infection to not come to school. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [list of Coronavirus symptoms](#) was used to develop these resources.

The Wells CSD will implement the following practices to conduct mandated health screening:

1. Parents/guardians will be provided with a thermometer by the district and so that a health check can be conducted before students either get on the bus or dropped off at school. This is the preferred screening method referenced in the NYSED guidance. Students who are unable to have their temperature taken at home will report to the nurse's office to have a health screening.
2. 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 either prior to arrival or at school.
3. Daily temperature check and completion of the screening questionnaire for students prior to arrival or at school:
  - a. For prior to arrival screening of students- students whose parent/guardian were unable to complete the screening will not be singled out. Surveys sent out to parents showed 93% of parents/guardians approved of conducting a health check prior to leaving home.
  - b. The process of the health screening will not be used as a basis to exclude students from school.
  - c. Students who require a screening to be completed at school will be treated in a confidential manner and the screening is completed as quickly as possible to minimize time away from class.
4. The screening data will be maintained (cleared/not cleared only) by confidential staff and the data will be retained in accordance with public health guidelines.
5. If an individual has a temperature of 100.0°F or greater or has a positive response to a screening question, the individual will be isolated from others and dismissal from school will occur as soon as practicable.
6. Students and staff are required to notify the school when they develop symptoms or if their answers to the questionnaire change during or outside school hours. Parents and staff may call the school or use the dedicated email address to inform the school.
7. The School Nurse will review the incoming reports of screenings by staff and parent/guardians and attest that they are completed.

8. The School Nurse will be the contact for staff or students to inform if they later experience COVID-19 symptoms.
9. Frequent reminders to staff and parents/guardians regarding the health screening protocol will be posted on [www.wellscsd.org](http://www.wellscsd.org) and the district's Facebook page.

In-school temperature screening protocols include:

- Staff supervision of students who are waiting their turn with social distancing requirements in place.
- Training for staff members who perform temperature screenings.
- Use of PPE for staff members conducting the screening.
- Expectation is fewer than 10 students may need to be screened.

### Social Distancing, Face Coverings & PPE

The district has developed a plan with policies and procedures for maintaining social distancing of all students, faculty, and staff when on school facilities, grounds and transportation. Signage will be posted in hallways and on floors, capacity signage will be posted in classrooms or common areas e.g., cafeteria, library. If social distancing of six (6) feet cannot be maintained, proper face coverings must be worn in common areas such as hallways or school buses. For those medically unable to wear face coverings, a note from the student's physician stating as such will be required.

Students, staff and visitors to our school will be expected to wear face coverings indoors and outside, including on the school bus, when six (6) foot physical distancing is not possible. Students will be allowed to remove face coverings during meals, instruction, and for short breaks so long as they maintain appropriate social distance. Students who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering will not be required to wear one.

Because students and staff will need to be prepared to wear a face covering if another person unexpectedly cannot socially distance, they will be required to wear a face covering in all common areas (e.g., entrances and exits) and when traveling around the school.

Face coverings will be provided to all students and staff, if needed, at no cost. If a student or staff member forgets their face covering, they will be provided a new one. Acceptable face coverings for COVID-19 include, but are not limited to, cloth-based coverings and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose. An employee is allowed to wear their own acceptable face covering if they choose. Employees with healthcare provider documentation stating they are not medically able to tolerate a face covering will not be required to do so.

Face coverings may be challenging for students (especially younger students) to wear in all-day settings such as school, so there may be periods of time when masks are not worn.

Face coverings should not be placed on:

- Children younger than 2 years old.
- Students where such covering would impair their health or mental health, or where such covering would present a challenge, distraction, or obstruction to education services and instruction.
- 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, contractors and vendors on:

- The proper way to wear face coverings.
- Washing hands before putting on and after removing their face covering.
- Proper way to discard disposable face coverings.

## Infection Control Strategies

- Installation of multiple touch-free hand sanitizer dispensers in common areas.
- Signage on the floors and walls in common area for social distancing.
- Frequent reminders for proper hand washing and PPE use.
- Increased staff during the school day to clean and sanitize common areas.
- Students traveling with their cohort (grade level) to the greatest extent practicable.

## Facility Alterations and Acquisition

The Wells Central School District may utilize available space in the cafeteria, gym, stage and library as classroom space. Minor alterations and the use of space dividers may be utilized in existing classrooms. The need for social distancing may be enhanced by alterations to the main lobby or other interior spaces.

## Space Expansion and Tents for Additional Space

The Wells Central School District has no plans for space expansion or tents for additional space. The main building has enough square footage by SED Guidelines to house all of our PreK-12 students, presently 130.

## Plumbing Facilities and Fixtures

- In July 2020, the district installed two touchless water bottle filling stations, one in the main foyer and one in the high school. All students will receive personal water bottles for use at no cost.
- Installation of touch-free paper towel dispensers installed in place of air dryers.
- Minimum number of toilet fixtures available for use in the school as established in the building code.
- Ensure distancing rules by using signage or hall monitors to reduce restroom occupancy at any given time, where feasible. Limit to no more than two students in a communal bathroom at any one time.

## Ventilation

- In May 2020, district installed 19 new unit ventilators in classrooms. Ventilation will be maintained through an enhanced maintenance schedule.
- Efforts will be made to increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible (e.g., opening windows and doors) while maintaining health and safety protocols.
- Worked with Engineers to establish proper filtration requirements during the current capital building project.

## 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 of the nurse's office 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. A curtain or barrier will be used as necessary. Office area will be supervised by an adult and have easy access to a bathroom and sink with hand hygiene supplies.

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) will be added. When caring for a suspected 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, 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. 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 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 six (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.

### Return to School after Illness

The district has established protocols and procedures, in consultation with the local health department, about the requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screened positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment at school. This protocol includes:

1. Documentation from a health care provider following evaluation.
2. Negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result.
3. Symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation.

The district will refer to DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure](#)" regarding protocols and policies for faculty and staff seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after the staff member had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19.

The district requires that individuals who were exposed to the COVID-19 virus complete quarantine and have not developed symptoms before returning to in-person learning. The discharge of an individual from quarantine and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the local health department.

### COVID-19 Testing

#### Contact Tracing

The district will notify the 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.

To assist the local health department with tracing the transmission of COVID-19, the district has developed a plan to trace all contacts of exposed individuals in accordance with protocols, training, and tools provided through the New York State Contact Tracing Program.

The district may 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.
4. Assisting the local health department in tracing all contacts of the individual in accordance with the protocol, training, and tools provided through the NYS Contact Tracing Program.

If/when COVID-19 cases are discovered in the school, the school will immediately close off the areas or classrooms, clean and disinfect the area. The district will immediately contact the local health department, as well as any affected families or staff.

In the event that a large-scale testing will need to be conducted at the school, the district administration will work with the Hamilton County Department of Public Health.

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.

### 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 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:

Conditions that may warrant reducing in-person education or closing the school, in consultation with state and local health departments, may include:

- 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 Hamilton County health department.
- If the infection rate rises above 9%, schools must wait until the 14-day average is below 5%.
- Once schools open at Phase 4 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 a representative from the Hamilton County Department of Public Health on the situation.
- The district will consider closing school if absentee rates impact the ability of the school to operate safely.
- The district will consult with the local department of health and school attorney when making such decisions.

## 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, gymnasium, 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 feel sick.
2. Cover their nose and mouth with an acceptable face covering when unable to maintain social distance from others.
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 available instead of a hand dryer.
- 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 hands until 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.

## 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 the “STOP THE SPREAD” poster, 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 distinguished include:

- Bathrooms and Locker rooms
- Health offices, isolation rooms
- Administrative offices (main office, reception area)
- Frequently touched surfaces in common areas (door handles, copy machine keypads, etc.)
- Breakrooms
- Cafeterias/Kitchens
- Computer labs
- Science labs
- Classrooms
- Maintenance offices
- Bus Garage
- Buses, school vehicles
- Library
- Large meeting areas (gymnasium, music room)
- Playground (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/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.

### 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. All of these potential situations will be handled both individually and confidentially.

### Visitors on Campus

No outside visitors or volunteers will be allowed on the school campus, except for the safety and well-being of students. Parents/guardians will report to the welcome window in the main entrance vestibule. Essential visitors to

facilities will be required to wear face coverings and will be restricted in their access to our school building. Visitors must follow all safety protocols as listed above.

## School Safety Drills

The district will conduct eight (8) fire (evacuation) drills and four (4) lockdown drills as required by education law and regulation and the fire code, without exceptions. Schools must 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. In addition:

- When planning drills, consideration will be given to how the school may modify drill procedures to minimize risk of spreading infection. Conducting drills is an important part of keeping students and staff safe in an emergency; however, steps will be considered to minimize the risk of spreading infection while conducting drills.
- Regardless of the modification used when conducting a drill, students will 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.

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 classroom, minimizes contact of students in hallways, stairwells, and at the evacuation site. If conducting drills using a modified procedure, the drill will be conducted with all students in the building on that school day.
- If schools reopen with a “hybrid” in-person model, such as one where students attend school on a rotating schedule to reduce the occupancy of the school building, all students will receive instruction in emergency procedures, and participate in drills while they are in attendance in-person.

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

- Conduct lockdown drill in classroom setting while maintaining social distancing/using masks.
- Conducting lockdown drills on a “staggered” schedule with smaller numbers of students present to maintain social distancing, all students will receive instruction in emergency procedures and participate in drills while they are in attendance in-person.
- Conduct lockdown drill in 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. In addition:

- In July 2020, the district installed two touchless water bottle filling stations, one in the main foyer and one in the high school. All students will receive personal water bottles for use.
- Installation of touch-free paper towel dispensers installed in place of air dryers.
- Minimum number of toilet fixtures available for use in a building as established in the building code
- Ensure distancing rules by using signage and hall monitors to reduce restroom occupancy at any given time, where feasible. Limit to no more than two students in a communal bathroom at any one time.
- In May 2020, the district installed 19 new unit ventilators in classrooms. Ventilation will be maintained through an enhanced maintenance schedule.
- Efforts will be made to increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible (e.g., opening windows and doors) while maintaining health and safety protocols. Worked with Engineers to establish proper filtration requirements during the current capital building project.
- Maintain adequate, code required ventilation (natural or mechanical) as designed.

## Child Nutrition

School meals (breakfast and lunch) will continue to be available to all students, including those attending school in-person and those learning remotely, should the district need to shift to that learning model.

### 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 high school lunch period has been divided (by cohorts) into two lunch periods to limit the number of students in the cafeteria at one time.

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 and staff to observe social distancing while eating meals.

Meals will be served onsite in small cohorts (grades PreK/K, 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12.). All social distancing and PPE guidelines will be in effect. Students with food allergies will continue to be protected. Students, under adult supervision, will perform proper hand hygiene before and after eating. Adults will consistently reinforce and promote health and safety measures.

Meals served in the cafeteria: Tables and other high touch areas will be cleaned and disinfected after one group of students leaves and before the next group arrives. CDC cleaning and disinfecting protocols will be followed. The district ensures continued compliance with all Child Nutrition Program requirements.

### Meals Offsite/Remote

In the event that the district moves to a hybrid or remote learning model, breakfast and lunch will be delivered door to door to any student who requests, and will be delivered in accordance with NYSED guidelines.

## 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 six (6) feet of each other. Parents/guardians are encouraged to drop off and/or pick up their child to reduce density on buses.

All buses that are used every day by the district will be cleaned/disinfected at least once a day. High contact spots will be wiped down after the morning (AM) and afternoon (PM) runs.

School buses shall not be equipped with hand sanitizer due to its combustible composition and potential liability to the district. School bus drivers and monitors must not carry personal bottles of hand sanitizer on school buses.

Whether school is in session remotely or otherwise, pupil transportation will be provided for students whose Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) have placed them out of district whose schools are meeting in-person.

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 and monitors are required to perform a self-health assessment for symptoms of COVID-19 before arriving to work. If personnel are experiencing any of the symptoms of COVID-19, they will notify their supervisor and seek medical attention.

School bus drivers must wear a face covering when the bus is not in motion. School bus monitors must wear a face covering at all times when on the bus.

Transportation staff will be trained and provided periodic refreshers on the proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

The district will provide, at no cost, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as masks and gloves for drivers and monitors on buses as well as hand sanitizer for all staff in the transportation office.

Drivers and monitors who must have direct physical contact with a child must wear gloves.

The following protocols will be in place for the buses/transportation:

- Parents are encouraged to conduct a health screening before their child(ren) get on the bus. This is the preferred screening method referenced in the NYSED Guidance. If students do not have a health screening before they get on the bus, they will not be denied transportation, however they must have a health screening as soon as they arrive at school by school staff.
- All students must wear a mask at all times while on the bus. This is a requirement by NYS.
- If a student does not have a mask, they will be provided with one before they get on the bus.
- Families/same household will be required to sit together.

- The bus will load from the back to the front, to help prevent students from walking past one another.
- The bus will unload from front to back, socially distanced as the students exit the bus.
- Social distancing will be conducted on buses, to the extent practicable.
- When outside temperatures are above 45 degrees Fahrenheit, school buses may transport passengers with roof hatches or windows slightly opened to provide air flow.
- Transportation staff are encouraged 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 or common objects.
- The district will reconfigure the loading and unloading of students who are transported by bus or car. Elementary (PreK–6) and high school (7–12) students will enter and exit through different doors at the main entrance.

## 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 district employs both a full time School Psychologist and a full time School Counselor. They will have regular check-ins with students and staff in order to assess the varying mental health needs of everyone.

The district has established a shared decision-making committee comprised of families, students, members of the board of education, school building 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 has professional development opportunities for 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 will be addressed by working with our resources within Hamilton County Department of Public Health as well as the HFM BOCES Risk Management Service. This training will be provided before school begins in the fall and periodic refreshers will be implemented.

## School Schedules

To begin the 2020-21 school year, the district plans to run the same schedule as last year. Arrival and dismissal times will remain similar if not the same as last year. The district may need some extra time in the morning to conduct health screenings and provide breakfast under the safety protocols. The district may adjust the homeroom/period schedules to accommodate for these changes. Should the district find it necessary to make adjustments to the pickup/dropoff times, parents/guardians will be notified far enough in advance as possible.

## School Activities

### Extracurriculars

As of July 31, 2020, the district will not be offering extracurricular activities until further notice. Those activities and clubs that may be done remotely will be examined in the fall. If and when the district allows in-person extracurricular activities, all of the same health and safety protocols will remain in place.

Note: Sports are not permitted at the time of publication of this guidance, and additional information on athletic activities is forthcoming.

Assemblies and large gatherings in the school will not be permitted at this time. The district will strive to keep cohorts (grade levels) together whenever possible.

The use of facilities by outside groups is not allowed until further notice.

## Childcare

If the school must shift to a hybrid or remote learning model, the district will immediately survey parents to assess childcare needs and assist parents in securing daycare locally, or refer parents to other county resources for additional assistance.

## Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism

Should the district need to shift to a hybrid or remote learning model, student attendance will be taken daily by the classroom teachers. Teachers must observe active student engagement with the remote lesson in order to be marked as present. Teachers will use the student management program SchoolTool to record and track attendance.

## Technology and Connectivity

The district provides Chromebooks/iPads/laptops for every student and teacher in the district.

Student Home Access: All students have internet access at home. The district contacted all families in the Wells CSD during March 2020 school closure to see who needed an internet device/hot spot. Parents are encouraged to contact the school if their internet or device needs change. Should the district need to shift to a hybrid or remote learning model, parents will be immediately surveyed to see if their technology needs have changed. In the event of hybrid or remote learning models, the district has Verizon MiFi hot spots available for families at no cost who both need and can receive internet.

The district will provide for multiple ways for students to participate in learning and demonstrate mastery of Learning Standards in both the hybrid or remote learning models. This will be covered in greater detail in the Teaching and Learning section that follows.

## Teaching and Learning

The 2020-21 Wells CSD school calendar includes two 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 on providing support in the areas of both social-emotional health as well as technology integration.

These days may also be utilized for student orientation. This would provide students with an opportunity to meet their teacher(s) and begin to establish the relationship necessary for a successful school year.

As we enter the new school year, teachers and staff 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 and students who did not engage in remote learning during the spring of 2020, or students with technology/connectivity needs.

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.

The district attests that they have measures in place to ensure eligible agencies with whom they contract will follow health and safety guidelines outlined in the NYSED guidance and required by the NYSDOH. The district ensures that their eligible agencies have 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 HFM BOCES website at [www.hfmboces.org](http://www.hfmboces.org).

### In-Person Instruction

Upon reopening, the number of students in each of our classrooms will 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 (6) feet apart. Accommodating a six (6) foot radius around students may necessitate the identification of additional rooms and common-area spaces that can be converted into classrooms.

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

Our school will minimize the movement of students. This means having some students potentially eating breakfast and 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, whenever possible.

To the extent possible, students will remain in cohorts when leaving the classrooms, such as for recess, lunch or in between periods, so as to reduce their exposure to additional students.

## Hybrid/Remote 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.

Student schedules will remain the same whether instruction is in person, hybrid or remote so that students and teachers do not encounter conflicts wherein synchronous lessons for different subjects are offered simultaneously.

To ensure high-quality remote learning experiences, we will standardize 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, to the extent possible.

If the district needs to shift to a hybrid learning model, students in grades PreK–6 will continue with daily, onsite instruction. Students in grades 7–12 will follow the same daily period schedule with either the hybrid or remote learning model. Under the remote learning model, all students in PreK–12 will be at home every day.

### **Grades PreK–6 (Remote Learning Model)**

- Daily learning schedule set by the classroom teacher, but when possible, will mirror the schedule as if the child was in school, including rotational day (A, B, C, D, E, F)
- Student will log in to Google Classroom/Meet for direct instruction.
- Students will engage in daily classroom activities.
- Daily attendance must be recorded.
- Lessons will be accessible for later review, to the extent practicable.
- Teachers will be available daily for communication with student and parents/guardians.
- All students will have a mobile learning device with internet.
- Grades will be based on Formal/Summative assessments, as well as other measures the teacher deems appropriate.

### **Grades 7–12 (Hybrid and Remote Learning Model)**

- Under the hybrid model, students will operate on a two days in school, two days at home schedule. One group of students will come to school for two straight days while the other group will be remote learning for two straight days, then the students will switch.

#### **For all learning done at home:**

- Daily learning schedule will be set by the period schedule and rotation day at the school.
- Student will log in to Google Classroom/Meet for direct instruction.
- Students will engage in daily classroom activities.
- Daily attendance must be recorded for each period of the day.
- Lessons will be accessible for later review, to the extent practicable.
- Teachers will be available for daily communication with students and parents/guardians.
- All students will have a mobile learning device with internet.
- Grades will be based on Formal/Summative assessments, as well as other measures the teacher deems appropriate.

## Special Education

The Special Education Department will be in collaboration with the General Education Teachers, to provide students with disabilities access to educational opportunities to the same extent as their peers. The Special Educators will provide regularly scheduled, individualized assistance by way of in-person, Google Meet, phone conferences, texts, and emails to students with IEPs/504s. Students who are classified/504s will have access to learning with support based on their IEPs/504s. These supports include: program modifications (e.g. reduced classwork/homework; work provided in multiple steps; visuals given; hard copies provided; etc) that are provided by access of physical materials, Google Meet, telephone instructions, texts, or emails; and provision of testing accommodations (e.g. tests read where applicable by in-person administration, Google Meet or phone; extended time; etc.) The Special Education Educators will update the General Education Teachers with any changes or amendments to their students' IEPs/504s according to the Part 200s regulations. General Education Teachers will maintain access to view their specific students' IEPs/504s through the SchoolTool Management System.

The support services listed on the students' IEPs include: Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech and Counseling. These services will be provided through in-person instruction or by distance learning activities with instruction conducted by video meetings and are based on the students' individual goals. The Related Service Providers will contact the parents, set up regularly scheduled sessions with the students by in-person instruction or teletherapy, and will work on skills listed in the student's goals while providing feedback to the students and parents. Progress monitoring will be documented in the students' files on Frontline. Students who are not physically present or have no access to the internet will be provided activities on paper and instructed by phone.

The Special Education Educators and the Related Service Providers will maintain contact with parents by Google Meet, Remind App, email, text, and phone conferences to discuss concerns and answer questions regarding their child's IEP/504 services and accommodations/modifications. CPSE/CSE and 504 meetings will be held in-person or by video conference using Google Meet or by phone conference. Invitations will continue to be sent to parents by the Postal Service and/or emails. Evaluations and reevaluations will be administered by way of face-to-face assessments and observations when school is open with appropriate safety measures. Evaluations and reevaluations that do not require face-to-face assessments or observations will take place while school is closed, if the parent or legal guardian provides consent. We will continue to follow guidance from NYSED and the US Department of Education and will make revisions as additional guidance regarding provision of Special Education services are made to ensure each student receives FAPE.

To ensure the health and safety of our students, Special Education Services that are provided in the classroom will be administered to students that are seated six (6) feet apart and/or with protective face coverings. When students are released from the special education classroom, all desks and materials will be sanitized in accordance with the CDC guidelines.

## Education and World Languages

The district currently has no ELL students enrolled.

## 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.