

F.O.I. Compliance

JOINT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Subject to approval

Date: August 04, 2020

Special Meeting – REMOTE MEETING held

(To view a recording of this meeting, please visit our website www.reg4.k12.ct.us and select “Remote Meeting Recordings” under the BOARD OF EDUCATION Heading)

CHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION:

David Fitzgibbons, Charlene Fearon,
Kris Pollock, Kristen Smith, Maria
Scherber, John Stack

DEEP RIVER BOARD OF EDUCATION:

Paula Weglarz, Missy Campbell,
Miriam Morrissey, Tracy Dickson

ESSEX BOARD OF EDUCATION:

Lon Seidman, Mark Watson, Nancy
Johnston, Cassandra Sweet

REGION 4 BOARD OF EDUCATION:

Kate Sandmann, Paula Weglarz, Lori
Ann Clymas, Trisha Brookhart, Rick
Daniels; Jennifer Clark

Administration:

Superintendent Brian J. White, Assistant
Superintendent Kristina Martineau, Director
of Pupil Services Sarah Smalley, Finance
Director Kelly Sterner

CALL TO ORDER

Supervision District Committee Chair Kate Sandmann called the meeting to order at approx. 5:00 p.m.

The Chairs of the Chester, Deep River, Essex and Region 4 Boards of Education called their respective Boards to order at approx. 5:00 p.m.

Chair Sandman recognized that there may be technical issues during the remote meeting due to the severe weather. However, because there were over 100 participants on the meeting, it was determined that the presentation would move forward with the knowledge that both the slide presentation and the video recording of the meeting will be posted on the website. Additionally, all are welcome to e-mail questions to the Superintendent's office and there will be an opportunity for a follow-up meeting on August 12th. Superintendent White shared that he would be sending out a detailed communication to parents and staff before the end of the week containing the most pertinent information being presented this evening.

Items/Discussion

Superintendent White shared a detailed presentation on the School Reopening Plan for 2020-21 (see attached - please also see video recording of the remote meeting available on the website).

Superintendent White answered questions from Board members.

Public Comment

None made

Chair Sandmann then noted that due to the weather challenges and it now being well past the start time for a different board meeting she would ask that any members of the public who were unable to ask their questions this evening, please e-mail them to the Superintendent's Office. Lon Seidman noted that there was a Google form associated with the virtual spillover room (created to accommodate as many members of the public as possible), and that form has already received many questions that will be answered by the administration via an FAQ document at a later time.

ADJOURNMENT:

On motion duly made and seconded, the Chester, Deep River, Essex and Region 4 Boards unanimously VOTED to adjourn at approximately 6:56 p.m.



REOPENING PLAN for 2020-2021

Joint Board of Education Meeting

August 4, 2020

CSDE Reopening Guidance and Scenarios

- State of Connecticut directed school districts to plan for a full reopening of school and to develop three plans that could be utilized at any point in the school year based on the most current health data for the state (low, moderate, and high transmission categories).

Three reopening scenarios:

-Full, Reopening (5 days per week for all students (opt out option for full e-learning)

-Hybrid, Partial Reopening (cohort scheduling) (opt out option for full e-learning)

-Remote, E-Learning for All

- Cohort model (where possible PreK-12)(K-6, 7-8 and 9-10 with schedule changes)
- Social distancing (where possible)(reopening and hybrid)
- Health and safety measures in place for all in-person options

Reopening Plan Development Process / Timeline

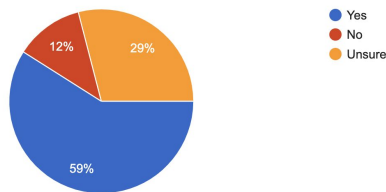
- Stakeholder surveys (parents) administered (**April 20th**)
- Stakeholder surveys (parents, staff students grades 5-12) administered (**May 27th**)
- CSDE and State of Connecticut issued guidance on reopening: Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan for Reopening (**June 29th**)
- Parent/Family Survey regarding school attendance and transportation (**July 13th**)
- Reopening Stakeholder Advisory Groups: Operations, Logistics and Safety, Social and Emotional Wellness, and a Teaching and Learning (**July 15 and July 16**)
- Staff Survey (**July 21st**)
- Reopening Plan submission to CSDE (**July 24th**)
- Reopening Plan presentation to Communities (**August 4th**)
- Follow Up Parent Survey (**August 5th**)

Parent/Family Survey Results

- Survey administered July 13-17, 2020
- 1,526 responses
- Follow-Up Survey: August 5-7, 2020

The guidance from the state requires that, in general, schools will re-open to full capacity next year with health and safety protocols in place. Those protocols will include a rigorous facility cleaning regimen, increased focus on and time for hand hygiene, masks required of all school occupants at all times, and social distancing practice to the degree possible when possible. To provide the best social distancing possible we will be removing ancillary furniture from classrooms, reducing and modifying passing times, and adapting instructional practices to keep students more spaced from each other than we have in the past. Under those conditions, do you anticipate returning your child to school in the fall?

1,526 responses

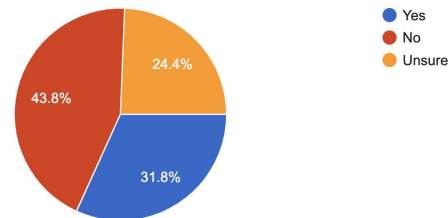


Returning to School Plans

59% Yes
12% No
29% Unsure

The guidance from the state further advises that school buses may run at full capacity with student wearing masks at all times and loading and unloading in a manner that keeps them from passing each other in the aisle. Students will only be able to ride their assigned bus. The practice of changing buses or alternative drop offs will be discontinued. Under those conditions, do you anticipate that your child will ride the school bus next year?

1,526 responses



Transportation via School Bus

31.8% Yes
43.8% No
24.4% Unsure

Facilities Preparations

Each BOE approved 19-20 funds in June to support building preparations for the reopening of schools:

- Upgrade bathrooms to touchless toilet and sink fixtures
- Upgrade classroom sinks to touchless faucets
- Each building has sanitizer sprayer equipment
- All facilities equipped with multiple, foaming-style hand sanitizer stations
- Front offices equipped with plexiglass safety barriers
- PPE supplies acquired (disposable masks, disposable gloves)
- Increased stock of disinfectant supplies
- Building ventilation systems have been serviced (or are scheduled to be prior to opening of school)
- Building Signage (directional, and informational i.e. social distancing requirements, etc.)

Schools will continue to monitor needed supply levels and coordinate with Finance Office as necessary.

COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies

- Face Coverings
- Social Distancing
- Cohort Model (K-8)
- Block Schedule (JW/ VHRS)

Face Coverings

- All students, staff and visitors must wear face masks, face coverings, or face shields that completely cover the mouth and nose (per State of CT requirement). This applies to the bus and while in school.
- Students and staff are asked to use their own face coverings.
- The district will supply disposable masks as needed.
- Mask breaks will be scheduled during the day. Procedures for mask breaks are being developed.

Social Distancing

- Entrance and exit procedures for school and transportation.
- Maximize social distancing cohorts, classroom layout, hallways, passing times, cafeteria recess, gym, and bus transportation)
- Hallway transitions minimized at each level.
- Classroom seating arrangements designed to maximize space between student desks (3-6 ft. assuming full in person classes, depending on room and class size)
- Classroom cohort model employed in grades K-6, 7-10
- Lunch to be served in classrooms K-6, 7-12
- Larger instructional spaces utilized at JW and VRHS
- Designated one way hallways and stairwells where applicable.
- Directional signage posted throughout buildings.
- Designated outdoor areas for recess, PE and mask breaks.
- Virtual events and meetings whenever applicable.
- Limit visitors to schools.
- Utilize outside space as much as possible.

K-6 Classroom Layout Examples and Distancing (3ft to 6ft depending on class size and room size)



7-12 Classroom Layout Examples and Distancing (5ft to 6ft depending on class size and room size)



Cohort Model

- Cohort Model will be utilized in grades K-8.
- Cohorting maintains small groupings and limits contact as much as possible.
- Lunch will be served in classrooms (grades K-8).
- This model limits the travel of groups of students throughout the building during the day.
- This model will be in place all day for elementary and middle school students.
- Special Area teachers (art, music, FLES, etc) will move among classrooms at the elementary and middle levels.
- Middle School students will remain in teams.
- At VHRS, ninth and tenth grade students will be scheduled by cohort as much as possible.
- Traffic patterns in all buildings (use of designated stairwells, hallways, entrance and exits) to minimize potential for grouping in common spaces.

Block Schedule at JWMS and VRHS

Temporary shift for 2020-2021 to 4x4 Block Schedule at VRHS and AB Block Schedule at JWMS to create cohorts, reduce class sizes, to maintain greater social distancing, and to reduce class transitions

SAMPLE JWMS AB Block Schedule

	A Day	B Day
Block 1	English	Math
Block 2	Social Studies	Science
Block 3	Spanish	Spanish
Block 4	Exploratory Electives (Rotation)	Exploratory Electives (Rotation)

SAMPLE VRHS 4x4 Block Schedule

	Semester 1		Semester 2	
Block 1	English		Social Studies	
Block 2	Math		Science	
Block 3	French		PE/HEALTH	
Block 4	Elective	Elective	Elective	Elective

Health and Safety: Practices and Protocols

- Cleaning Procedures: Deep Cleaning Protocols (buildings and busses)
- Hand Hygiene
- Self Screening
- Limitations on Building Visitors

Cleaning Procedures

- We are implementing enhanced building cleaning and disinfection procedures daily.
- Head custodians will continue to monitor building specific cleaning needs.
- Central Office will continue to work with principals to determine building based need for overtime or increased custodial staffing.
- Our schools will continue to partner with our local health districts (CT River Area and Town of Essex)

Hand Hygiene

- Students and staff will wash hands frequently (and at specified times such as transitions to lunch, recess, etc).
- Students will receive training in proper hand washing routines.
- Buildings have adequate hand sanitizer supply.
- Sanitizing stations have been placed at all main entrances to our schools.
- We will continue to adhere to CDC guidance regarding best practices in public health.

Self-Screening

- Parents and Staff are asked to engage in self-screening BEFORE leaving home in the morning.
- Self Check:
 - No symptoms (dry cough, sore throat, sudden loss of taste or smell, etc.)
 - Temperature must be below 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Per State of CT Guidance containment rooms will be established in each school for anyone who is symptomatic during the school day.
- Stay home if you are sick.

Limitations on Building Visitors and In-Person Meetings

Until further notice:

- Visitors will not be allowed (parents/guardians may come to main office as needed, but will not be allowed into main buildings)
- All outside service vendors, contractors, and deliveries must sign in and adhere to our health and safety requirements. To the greatest extent possible, maintenance and repair work will be scheduled outside of school day.
- In-person meetings for staff will adhere to all social distancing and group size requirements.
- The majority of parent/principal/teacher/staff meetings will occur remotely.

COVID-19 in School: Decision Making Process

In the event of a confirmed case in one of our schools the following steps will be taken:

- **Assess** the risk with local health officials.
- **Communicate** with parents/guardians, school community, local/state officials
- **Plan** for a short-term closure to allow for deep cleaning of facility and contact tracing per CDC guidelines
- **Consult** with local health officials regarding appropriate action steps (including decision making about a longer duration closure at the site or district-wide)

Teaching and Learning

For 2020-2021, all components below will be in place for in-person, hybrid and remote, e-learning modes:

- Technology Integration (daily use of Google Classroom and Chromebooks)
- High Quality Instruction: Instructional strategies and differentiation
- Focus on Instructional Support (Review and New Learning)
- Quality, timely instructional feedback to individual learners
- Equity and Access for All Students (individualized support, technology,
- Standards-Based curriculum in place
- Target, strategic mini-assessments (balance)

Scenario #1: Full Reopening in Schools

- Schools in session in-person 5 full days per week
- Health and safety protocols per CDC and CT guidelines in place
- Health self-assessment tool for staff and families to support decisions regarding in-person attendance day to day based on CDC guidance
- Social distancing, cohort model (where feasible) and classroom layout redesign
- One-way hallway travel, wherever feasible
- Additional instructional spaces
- Outdoor instructional spaces
- Mask protocols and practices (mask breaks, related services)
- Schedule modifications at JWMS and VRHS (cohort model 7-10)
- All lesson plans and instructional activities delivered via Google Classroom and Google Slides (See Saw PreK-2) to support technology integration and possible transition to other learning models
- Additional instructional materials for home learning opportunities
- Additional instructional supplies/materials to limit sharing of materials

Families may choose to have their child(ren) temporarily participate via remote, e-learning

K-6 Reopening Scenario #1: Full In-Person

arrival/dismissal transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social distancing protocols• Face masks, covers or face shields on bus (and when entering/exiting school)• Embarking and disembarking procedures• Deep cleaning protocols between runs• Arrival and dismissal procedures to promote social distancing
lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students remain in classrooms for lunch to minimize multi-cohort interaction and to promote social distancing
recess	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will participate in outdoor recess in cohorts only• Social distancing protocols in place• When possible, mask breaks during outdoor activity
after school programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Until further notice, after school programs on hold
schedule and cohorting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students remain in cohorts• Specials teachers and content area teachers travel to cohort classroom
mask expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All students and staff must wear face mask, face coverings or face shields per CDC and CT health department guidelines

7-12 Reopening Scenario #1: Full In-Person

arrival/dismissal transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social distancing protocols• Face masks, covers or face shields on bus• Embarking and disembarking procedures• Deep cleaning protocols between runs• Arrival and dismissal procedures to promote social distancing
Schedule and cohorting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cohort model grades 7-10 with schedule changes for 2020-2021<ul style="list-style-type: none">-4x4 block schedule at VRHS (4 classes-semester 1, 4 classes-semester 2)-AB block schedule at JWMS (A day-4 classes, B day-other 4 classes)• Teachers travel to cohort classroom
lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students remain in classrooms for lunch to minimize multi-cohort interaction and to promote social distancing
after school programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waiting on guidance from CIAC regarding high school athletics• All other after school programs are on hold until further notice
social distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students remain in cohorts, where possible• Specials teachers and content area teachers travel to cohort classrooms, when possible
mask expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All students and staff must wear face mask, face coverings or face shields per CDC and CT health department guidelines

Scenario #2: Hybrid/Partial Reopening in Schools

Schools in session 5 full days per week via hybrid schedule (in-person and remote model)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
In-Person: Cohort A E-Learning: Cohort B	In-Person: Cohort A E-Learning: Cohort B	E-Learning For All (Deep Cleaning Between Cohorts)	In-Person: Cohort B E-Learning: Cohort A	In-Person: Cohort B E-Learning: Cohort A

- Deep cleaning on Wednesday while all students and staff are remote teaching and learning
- allows for greater social distancing and reduced in-person class sizes
- benefits of in-person teaching and learning to support remote, e-learning practices (more beneficial and effective balance of synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning)
- While in building, all health and safety protocols in place (masks, social distancing, cleaning, etc.)

When and why do we consider a transition from full, in-person attendance to a hybrid/partial model?

- Based on change in health data information and in consultation with state and local health departments, district medical advisor, and CSDE.
- Flexibility in scheduling and attendance cohorts to support recommended social distancing measures.

Scenario #3: Remote, E-Learning

- Schools in session 5 full days per week via remote, e-learning plan
- Planned Synchronous Learning
(direct, live instruction via Google Meet with teacher and small group learning activities)
- Asynchronous Learning via recorded mini-lessons and individual instructional practice
- All lesson plans and instructional activities delivered via Google Classroom and Google Slides
(See Saw PreK-2)
- All students 1:1 Chromebooks K-12
- Additional print instructional materials and supplies to support remote, e-learning
(K-6 workbooks, art, books, and math manipulatives where needed)

Technology Planning

- K-12 one-to-one Chromebooks for all students
- Teachers one-to-one laptop computers (built in microphones and cameras)
- Capacity for one-to-one devices for all paraeducators
- Technology integration for all three scenarios-Google Classroom will be utilized to communicate daily lesson plans and function as the primary instructional platform
- Use of Google Suite for teaching and learning (Google Meet, Google Docs, etc.)
- District approved software applications and online instructional materials to support technology integration and blended learning approach (TCI, Edulastic, SeeSaw, ScreenCastify, etc)
- Ongoing professional development and focused support for teachers and paraprofessionals
- Technology support for families and students
- Connectivity and internet access support for families and staff as needed (hotspots)

Access and Equity

District and Building Leadership working with staff to ensure that all student have what they need to be successful in any of the proposed teaching and learning scenarios (in-person, hybrid, or distance learning):

- Technology
- Instructional materials
- Access to teachers and staff
- Access to supports and accommodations including specialized instruction, and academic/social/emotional interventions
- Food security
- Positive connections with students and adults

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

- Staff will have special emphasis on establishing positive relationships with all learners (especially at the beginning of the year as students acclimate to school).
- Staff will routinely create opportunities for interpersonal connections between students, their peers, and staff in each teaching and learning model.
- Staff will build in social and emotional learning (SEL) supports and practices in all learning models.
- Increased staff focus on monitoring and responding to individual student needs.
- SEL will be an ongoing professional development focus for the year.

Meeting the Needs of Special Education and 504

- Full, Hybrid and Remote learning will continue to ensure that IEPs and 504s are implemented.
- PPT and 504 meetings will continue to be held virtually in most cases.
- District Wide Intensive programs examined on a case by case basis in collaboration with parents, administration and case managers, to determine best cohort fit for students.
- Individualized and small group instruction to be delivered in resource room settings, maintaining the cohorting model.
- To maintain safety for related service providers and paraprofessionals who must work in close proximity to students (based on IEP needs) a variety of appropriate PPE ordered and available. (clear face shields, gowns, gloves, etc.)

Collaborative PreSchool Model

- Collaborative Preschool will shift to a full day cohort model.
- Start and end times will shift to promote social distancing.
- Preschool students are not required to wear face masks in the classroom
- Preschool students will wear masks entering and exiting school (in hallways)
- To maintain safety for related service providers and paraprofessionals who must work in close proximity to students (based on IEP needs) a variety of appropriate PPE ordered and available. (clear face shields, gowns, gloves, etc.)

Transportation

Collaborating with Transportation Providers to Accomplish State Safety Guidance and Best Cleaning Practices:

- Load bus/van from back to front
- Passengers must remain socially distanced to greatest extent possible
- Passengers must remain in their seat for entire route
- Drivers will wear protective face coverings
- Students will wear masks (back up masks will be provided to students who do not have a face covering when boarding vehicle)
- Developing plan to increase cleaning/sanitization of vehicles with related documentation procedures
- Exploring options for bus monitors (K-6)

After School and Extracurricular Programs

- All after school activities (K-8) are on hold until further notice.
- Activities for Grades 9-12 under review
- Before and after school care: TBD

VRHS Athletic Fall Program

- Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) Update and Guidance
- CIAC released 20-21 Fall Sports Plan on July 29th
- Plan allows for pre-season conditioning in groups of up to 15 students beginning on August 3rd. With additional dates for practices to begin by sport.
- Plan subject to change in response to public health data.
- VRHS Administration working with CO to determine recommended approach.
- Administration will be presenting to R4 BOE in August about Fall Athletics.

Opening of School Calendar and Transition Planning

- Adjust number of student days (177) to allow for additional staff training at start of year.
- Monday - August 24, 2020 - Monday, August 31, 2020 Full Day Professional Development for Staff
 - Health and Safety Protocols
 - Social and Emotional Health
 - Teaching and Learning
 - Technology Training
- First day of school for students, Tuesday, September 1, 2020 (early dismissal)
- September 1st - September 4th Student Orientation (early dismissal each day)
 - In person and distance learning activities
 - Review health and safety protocols and new routines
 - Technology training
 - Acclimating to masks and other social distancing expectations
- Tuesday, September 8th Full Days Begin

Professional Development and Staff Training Focus

Student and Family Training Modules:

- Social distancing, mask wearing protocols, and hand washing
- Self-Assessment Health Tool and Procedures (Daily Monitoring)

Staff Training Modules and Priority Professional Development for Reopening:

- Social distancing, mask wearing protocols, and hand washing
- Self-Assessment Health Tool and Procedures (Daily Monitoring)
- Containment Room Protocols and Suspected Illness Reporting Procedures
- Social and Emotional Wellness-Needs Assessment and Reopening Planning
- Tier 1 Instruction, Differentiation, and Intervention (High Quality Instruction for All Students)-Reopening Planning
- Google Classroom, E-Learning, and Technology Integration Best Practices and Expectations
- Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning-Best Practices and Expectations to Meet Needs of All Students
- Blended Learning-Hybrid Instructional Practices, Planning, and Expectations
- Priority Teaching and Learning Focus Areas
- Assessment vs. Monitoring Student Learning Progress - Targeted Mini-Assessments and Intentional, Responsive Instructional Practices

Budgetary Considerations and Ongoing Planning

Analysis of COVID-19 impact on major budget categories:

- Labor Negotiations
- Long Term Substitutes / Staffing Needs (Certified and Non-Certified)
- Bus Monitors (K-6)(proposed)
- Grab and Go School/Community Food Security Program
- Individual Student Services / Programmatic Needs
- Health and Safety Equipment
- Facilities/Maintenance
- Transportation
- Insurance

Next Steps

- Ongoing communication (central office and building principals) with school staff and communities
- Compile staff data
- Re-Survey families August 4th 2020
- Partner with teachers to finalize Teaching and Learning scenarios for 20-21
- Engage communities in dialogue about unexpected COVID-19 costs
- Determine school scenario to begin the year
- Continue to Engage Re-Opening Committees
- Develop training modules for staff, students and families

Questions?