

# **Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES**

Reopening Plan – Fall 2020



**Recovering, Rebuilding and Renewing:  
The Spirit of New York's Schools**

This reopening plan is specifically designed for the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES. The plan will continue to grow and change as the guidance and orders to the public health crisis dictates.

## **School District Information:**

Superintendent: Dr. Brian Hartwell  
Contact Information: [bhartwell@cayboces.org](mailto:bhartwell@cayboces.org)  
(315)253-0361 x7615

Thank you to the following members of the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES educational community for participating in our reopening committee:

Helen Day, Jennifer Parker, Vince DeWitt, Casey Stephens, Valerie Short, Jim Keegan, Drew Yakawiak, JoAnn Tarolli, Tammy Jedra, Heath Ferris, Rebecca Siracusa, Patricia Stevens, Jean Goetzmann, Nikola Wall, Danielle O'Brien, Susan Lynch, Al Albring, Tony Abbatiello, Megan Rohlin, Nina Baker, Jennifer Henry, Christine Barbagallo, Laurie Skutt and Jack Mekeel.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The health and safety of the children and adults in our schools is paramount. Health and safety considerations must always come first in every decision made and every action taken by our schools and districts.

Whether instruction is provided in-person, remotely, or through some combination of the two, schools have an important role to play in educating and communicating with school communities about the everyday preventive actions they can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Prevention is accomplished by following the recommendations of health authorities in the following areas:

- Health Checks;
- Healthy Hygiene Practices;
- Social Distancing;
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Cloth Face Coverings;
- Management of Ill Persons; and
- Cleaning and Disinfection.

In each of these categories, schools should note those recommendations that are essential as they represent the minimum standards. Additional considerations are based on best practice or recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and should also be reviewed and included as feasible in reopening plans. Schools and districts must continually monitor the CDC and DOH websites to keep current with the latest COVID information and guidance.

**The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:**

- Districts/schools must review and consider the number of students and staff allowed to return in person. These factors should be considered when determining resumption of in person instruction:
  - Ability to maintain appropriate social distance
  - PPE and cloth face mask availability
  - Availability of safe transportation
  - [Local hospital capacity](#) – consult your local department of health.
- Districts/schools must engage with school stakeholders and community members (e.g., administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/legal guardians of students, local health departments, local health care providers, and affiliated organizations, such as unions, alumni, and/or community-based groups) when developing health and safety reopening plans. District/school plan should identify the groups of people involved and engaged throughout the planning process.
- District/school plan must include a communications plan for students, parents/guardians, staff, and visitors that includes applicable instructions, training, signage, and a consistent means to provide individuals with information.
- District/school plan has a written protocol developed in collaboration with the district or school's director of school health services to instruct staff to observe for signs of illness in students and staff and requires symptomatic persons to be sent to the school nurse or other designated personnel.
- District/school plan has a written protocol for daily temperature screenings of all students and staff, along with a daily screening questionnaire for faculty and staff and periodic use of the questionnaire for students.
- District/school plan requires that ill students and staff be assessed by the school nurse (registered professional nurse, RN) or medical director and that if a school nurse or medical director is not available, ill students and staff will be sent home for follow up with a healthcare provider.
- District/school plan has written protocol requiring 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.
- District/school plan has written protocol to address visitors, guests, contractors, and vendors to the school which includes health screening.
- District/school plan has a written protocol to instruct parents/guardians to observe for signs of illness in their child that require staying home from school.
- District/school plan has written protocol and appropriate signage to instruct staff and students in correct hand and respiratory hygiene.

- District/school plan has written protocol to ensure all persons in school buildings keep social distance of at least 6 feet whenever possible.
- District/school plan has written protocol detailing how the district/school will provide accommodations to all students and staff who are at high risk or live with a person at high risk.
- District/school plan has written protocol requiring all employees, adult visitors, and students to wear a cloth face covering whenever social distancing cannot be maintained.
- District/school plan has written protocol regarding students taking mask breaks.
- District/school has plan for obtaining and maintaining adequate supplies of cloth face coverings for school staff, students who forget their masks, and PPE for use by school health professionals.
- District/school plan has written protocol for actions to be taken if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school.
- District/school plan has written protocol that complies with CDC guidance for the return to school of students and staff following illness or diagnosis of confirmed case of COVID-19 or following quarantine due to contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Return to school will be coordinated with the local health department.
- District/school plan has written protocol to clean and disinfect schools following CDC guidance.
- District/school plan has written protocol to conduct required school safety drills with modifications ensuring social distancing between persons.
- District/school has written plan for district/school run before and aftercare programs.
- District/school must designate a COVID-19 safety coordinator (administrator) whose responsibilities include continuous compliance with all aspects of the school's reopening plan, as well as any phased-in reopening activities necessary to allow for operational issues to be resolved before activities return to normal or "new normal" levels.

***Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.***

The health and safety of students and staff is the top priority when making decisions regarding the reopening of our campuses. The Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES has worked in collaboration with our Coordinator of Health and Safety, the New York State Education Department, the Cayuga County Health Department and our nine component school districts to develop our plan for reopening. Jack Makeel, Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES Coordinator of Health and Safety is designated as the COVID-19 safety coordinator and will oversee continuous compliance with all aspects of the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES Reopening Plan.

For programs operating on BOCES campuses, our capacity is such that all students are welcome to attend their education program all day, every day. For programs operating in host districts or off-site locations, students will follow the schedule of the host location. BOCES administrators will collaborate with host district administrators to ensure that capacity is such that social distancing can be maintained.

The following expectations will be implemented throughout our educational settings:

- Social distancing will be maintained throughout the building, with appropriate signage indicating intervals of six feet.
- Face masks will be worn by all individuals at any time unless they are stationary and can maintain social distance (six feet). Mask breaks will be accommodated when necessary providing six feet social distance can be maintained.
- Hygiene stations will be available throughout the building providing opportunities for frequent handwashing and/or sanitizing.
- Hygiene kits will be provided to each classroom and will include a supply of masks, rubber gloves and hand sanitizer.

Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES is coordinating bulk purchasing of PPE for our region.

## **Screening Protocols**

The following protocols will be utilized to screen students, staff and visitors. All staff will be trained in these screening protocols.

### **Students:**

- Students will enter the building using multiple entrances (Compass will enter through East Wing, Special Education will enter through Day Treatment Wing, CTE will enter at their assigned program door.)
- Staff will conduct screening, including temperature checks and CDC required questions:
  - Have you knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;
  - Have you tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days;
  - Have you experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature of greater than 100.0°F in the past 14 days: and/or
  - Have you traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days?
- Students who are tardy or arrive during the day will enter through the main entrance and will be screened there.

Protocol for students who exhibit symptoms at screening or answer yes to the required questions:

- The screener will contact the program administrator
- Administrator will contact school nurse and parent immediately
- Student will be escorted to isolation room by an adult and will await pick-up
- Each educational program has designated two isolation rooms
- Isolation rooms will be disinfected regularly
- Google Form will be used to maintain records by each educational department

## **Staff**

- Each staff person is required to swipe his/her BOCES ID badge to access the building. By swiping his/her ID badge, the staff person is attesting to the following statements:
  - I am feeling healthy and well today.
  - I do not have a fever of 100 degrees or greater.
  - Within the last 14 days, I have not been in close contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
  - Within the last 14 days, I have not tested positive for COVID-19, nor has a healthcare provider diagnosed me as COVID-19 positive.
  - Have you traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days?

Protocol for staff who are unable to attest to the required questions:

- Staff person should contact their direct supervisor and not report to work.

## **Visitors**

- All visitors, including parents, vendors, contractors, etc. will enter through the front entrance.
- Staff will conduct screening of all visitors, including temperature checks and CDC required questions:
  - Have you knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;
  - Have you tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days;
  - Have you experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature of greater than 100.0°F in the past 14 days: and/or
  - Have you traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days?
- Visitors must properly wear face mask to proceed to their meeting location.
- If a visitor does not meet any of the required screening criteria, he/she will be denied access to the building. In the event that a student is being picked up by an authorized person who does not meet the criteria for entering the building, the student will be escorted out to the awaiting individual.

## **Communications Plan**

The Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES Reopening Plan was developed in collaboration with stakeholders throughout the educational community to ensure that multiple perspectives were considered when developing plans for reopening. The Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES Reopening Plan will be posted on our website at [www.cayboces.org](http://www.cayboces.org).

The Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will use the following mechanisms to communicate our reopening plan to students, parents/guardians, staff, and visitors:

- Official website: Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will have a designated place on our organization's homepage for all COVID-19 information, including reopening information.

- Official social media: Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will utilize our Twitter, Instagram and Facebook pages to provide the most current information to our educational community.
- School Messenger: The School Messenger phone/text/email alert system will be used to distribute mass notifications to various groups throughout the educational community. This communication system will be used to disseminate information that is deemed time sensitive and/or urgent.
- Video: In conjunction with our Health and Safety Coordinator and Public Relations service, the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES is developing a series of brief training videos that will be used with students and staff to illustrate proper health and safety protocols including, but not limited to: hand hygiene, wearing, removal and care of face coverings, social distancing, respiratory hygiene, etc.
- Signage: Appropriate signage will be displayed throughout the building to illustrate protocols for entering the building, maintaining social distance, and expectations for healthy practices including but not limited to: hand hygiene, wearing, removal and care of face coverings, social distancing, respiratory hygiene, etc. Signage will also be displayed to indicate distances of 6 feet for social distancing purposes.
- Print Resources: Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will develop and distribute summary documents for parents to include information regarding appropriate health and safety precautions, expectations for wearing face masks, instructions on how to observe for signs of illness, etc.

## **Vulnerable Populations**

Students, faculty and staff who are at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness, and individuals who may not feel comfortable returning to an in-person educational environment, should meet with their principal or supervisor to discuss their specific situation and the factors that make them vulnerable.

The BOCES will conduct an interactive dialogue with the student, faculty or staff member regarding accommodations or modifications that can reduce their risk and to allow them to safely participate in their work assignment or educational programming. The student, faculty, or staff member should provide the BOCES with any information from their medical provider regarding their increased risk and/or recommendations for accommodations or modifications to reduce their risk.

Accommodations may include, but are not limited to, remote learning or telework, modified educational or work settings such as additional social distancing, providing additional PPE to individuals with underlying health conditions, or modifications to work schedules and educational programming. Accommodations must be designed to address the individual's increased risk to COVID-19 and to allow the individual to participate in the in-person educational or work environment.

The BOCES will identify and describe any modifications to social distancing or PPE that may be necessary for certain student or staff populations, including individuals who have hearing impairment or loss, students receiving language services, and young students in early education programs, ensuring that any modifications minimize COVID-19 exposure risk for students, faculty, and staff, to the greatest extent possible.

Any agreed upon accommodation or modification will be placed in writing and provided to the student, faculty or staff member and shared with faculty and staff at the BOCES deemed necessary to implement the accommodation or modification.

## **Confirmed Case of COVID-19**

Through our screening process, Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will closely monitor staff and students for symptoms of COVID-19. Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will immediately notify the Cayuga County Health Department upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 test result by an individual in school facilities or on school grounds, including staff, students, and visitors. If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in school, the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES may choose to temporarily move instruction to a remote format until all contacts can be identified, notified, tested, and/or cleared. Contact tracing will occur through collaboration with the Cayuga County Health Department. Potentially exposed employees should self-quarantine and follow the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES Return to Work protocol. All other employees should self-monitor for symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath. If they develop symptoms, they should notify their supervisor and stay home.

The Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will follow the CDC guidelines regarding clearing and disinfecting following a confirmed positive case of COVID-19. Specifically we will:

- Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and copier machines.
- Vacuum the space if needed.
- Consider temporarily turning off room fans and the central HVAC system that services the room or space, so that particles that escape from vacuuming will not circulate throughout the facility.
- Once the area has been appropriately disinfected, it will be opened for use.
- Workers without close contact with the person who is sick can return to work immediately after disinfection
- Continue routine cleaning and disinfection. This includes everyday practices that businesses and communities normally use to maintain a healthy environment

## **COVID – 19 Return to Work Protocols**

### **1. Employee/Student Has Tested Positive For COVID-19**

Employee/Student is to remain quarantined and may return to work/school if:

- 10 days have passed since employee/student exhibited symptoms or since they tested positive if they are asymptomatic; and
- at least 24 hours have passed since employee/student had a fever ( $\geq 100.0^{\circ}$  F) without the use of fever reducing medications; and
- at least 72 hour period where employee's/student's symptoms have improved



2. Employee/Student Is Symptomatic And Has Had Close Or Proximate Contact<sup>1</sup> With Someone Who Has Tested Positive For COVID-19

If employee/student is symptomatic, the employee/student is to remain quarantined and may return to work/school if:

- 10 days have passed since employee/student exhibited symptoms; and
- at least 24 hours have passed since employee/student had a fever ( $\geq 100.0^{\circ}$  F) without the use of fever reducing medications; and
- at least 72 hours have passed where the employee's/student's symptoms have improved

3. Employee/Student Is Symptomatic But Has Not Had Close Or Proximate Contact With Person Who Has Tested Positive

If employee/student is symptomatic, the employee/student is to remain quarantined and may return to work/school if:

- 14 days of quarantine have been completed
- or**
- 10 days have passed since employee/student exhibited symptoms; and
  - at least 24 hours have passed since employee/student had a fever ( $\geq 100.0^{\circ}$  F) without the use of fever reducing medications; and
  - at least 72 hours have passed where the employee's/student's symptoms have improved
- or**
- the employee/student has been diagnosed with another condition and has a note from their healthcare provider indicating they are clear to return to work/school
- or**
- the employee/student has a negative test result

---

<sup>1</sup> Within 6 feet of an infected person for more than 10 minutes starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the infected person was isolated.

4. Employee/Student Is Symptomatic And Has Had Close Or Proximate Contact With Someone Awaiting Test Results

If employee/student is symptomatic, the employee/student is to remain quarantined and may return to work/school if:

- the test result for the other person comes back negative
- or**
- the employee/student has a negative test result;
- or**
- 10 days have passed since employee/student exhibited symptoms; and
- at least 24 hours have passed since employee/student had a fever ( $\geq 100.0^{\circ}$  F) without the use of fever reducing medications; and
- at least 72 hours have passed where the employee's/student's symptoms have improved
- or**
- the employee/student has been diagnosed with another condition and has a note from their healthcare provider indicating they are clear to return to work/school

5. Employee/Student Is Not Symptomatic But Did Have Close Or Proximate Contact With Person Who Has Tested Positive

If the employee/student is not symptomatic, the employee/student is to remain quarantined and may return to work/school:

- after completing 14 days of self-quarantine; or
- the employee/student has had a negative test result after having had close or proximate contact with a person who has tested positive

Employees Only:

However, if the employee is deemed essential and critical for the operation or safety of the workplace, upon a documented determination by the District Superintendent in consultation with appropriate state and local health authorities, the exposed, asymptomatic employee may return to work so long as the employee adheres to the following practices prior to and during their work shift, which should be monitored and documented by the employer and employee:

- Regular monitoring: While at work the employee must self-monitor for a temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit every 2 hours and symptoms consistent with COVID-19 under the supervision of the Health and Safety Coordinator; and
- Wear a mask: The employee must wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure; and
- Social distance: The employee must continue social distancing practices, including maintaining, at least, six feet of distance from others.
- Clean and disinfect workspaces: The employer must continue to regularly clean and disinfect all areas, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared electronic equipment.
- Maintain quarantine: The employee must continue to self-quarantine and self-monitor for temperature and symptoms when not at the workplace for 14 days after last exposure.

6. Employee/Student Is Not Symptomatic And Has Had Close Or Proximate Contact With Someone Symptomatic And Awaiting Test Results

If the employee/student is not symptomatic, the employee/student is to remain quarantined and may return to work/school:

- after completing 14 days of self-quarantine; or
- the employee/student has a negative test result; or
- the person whom the employee/student had close or proximate contact with has a negative test result

Employees only:

However, if the employee is deemed essential and critical for the operation or safety of the workplace, upon a documented determination by the District Superintendent in consultation with appropriate state and local health authorities, the exposed, asymptomatic employee may return to work so long as the employee adheres to the following practices prior to and during their work shift, which should be monitored and documented by the employer and employee:

- Regular monitoring: While at work the employee must self-monitor for a temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit every 2 hours and symptoms consistent with COVID-19 under the supervision of the Health and Safety Coordinator; and
- Wear a mask: The employee must wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure; and
- Social distance: The employee must continue social distancing practices, including maintaining, at least, six feet of distance from others.
- Clean and disinfect workspaces: The employer must continue to regularly clean and disinfect all areas, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared electronic equipment.
- Maintain quarantine: The employee must continue to self-quarantine and self-monitor for temperature and symptoms when not at the workplace for 14 days after last exposure.

## 7. Employee/Student Has Traveled To A State Designated As Having Significant Community Spread

Employees/students who travel to a designated state with significant community spread must notify their supervisor/principal of their travel plans including the state being traveled to, along with the departure and return date.

If an employee/student has traveled from within one of the designated states with significant community spread, he/she must quarantine upon re-entering New York for 14 days from the last travel within such designated state.

The requirements of the travel advisory do not apply to any individual passing through designated states for a limited duration (i.e., less than 24 hours) through the course of travel. Examples of such brief passage include but are not limited to: stopping at rest stops for vehicles, buses, and/or trains; or lay-overs for air travel, bus travel, or train travel.

Employees/students may return to work/school after completing 14 days of quarantine.

## **Disinfecting and Cleaning Protocol**

The Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will follow CDC guidance regarding the development of protocols for cleaning and disinfecting our facilities. Specifically, to ensure employees comply with hygiene and cleaning requirements, Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will do the following:

- Adhere to hygiene and sanitation requirements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Department of Health (DOH).
- Maintain cleaning logs onsite that document date, time and scope of cleaning. Cleaning logs will be maintained by the Head of Maintenance and a copy of each will be kept in each room.
- Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations for personnel, including hand washing with soap, water, and paper towels, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% ethanol or 70% isopropyl alcohol for areas where hand washing is not feasible.
- Provide staff and student training to promote healthy hygiene practices. Training will include, but is not limited to:
  - Proper hand washing techniques
  - Use of hand sanitizer
  - Respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes
  - Proper use of face coverings
  - Encourage staff to stay home when sick
- Post signs on how to stop the spread of COVID-19, proper hand washing technique, promote everyday protective measures, and the proper wearing of a face covering.
- Conduct regular cleaning and disinfection daily, or more frequently as needed (every 2-4 hours), along with frequent cleaning and disinfection of shared objects and surfaces, as well as high transit areas, such as restrooms and common areas.
- Use disinfectants on the New York State Registered Disinfectants Based on EPA List: [http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials\\_minerals\\_pdf/covid19.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/covid19.pdf).

## **School Safety Drills**

Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES follows all guidance and regulations related to health and safety, including Fire Code compliance and requirements regarding school safety drills. We will continue to implement the required drills in collaboration with our local emergency response teams. When performing drills, we will adhere to social distancing measures to the extent practicable and staff and students will wear appropriate face coverings.

## **Before and After School Program**

All student programs on BOCES campuses are staffed with BOCES employees. All programs will adhere to the expectations and requirements contained in this plan.

## **FACILITIES**

When students and adults return to their school buildings for in-person instruction, it will be vitally important that the physical spaces they occupy are configured and maintained in a way that provides the maximum possible protection from spreading the coronavirus.

School districts will follow health guidance related to social distancing and other safety measures that must be put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19. To meet the requirements of that guidance, school districts or other applicable schools may need to rearrange or re-purpose physical space within their buildings, expand buildings' or districts' footprints or alter existing spaces through construction or changes in programming or operation. Several of these alternatives have implications for fire code compliance and may require code review by the New York State Education Department's (NYSED's) Office of Facilities Planning.

Many questions will arise as districts or other applicable schools balance fire safety and building security needs with efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19. NYSED's team is in consultation with other state agencies to ensure that all factors are fully considered, and the risks to building occupants are minimized across the full range of potential concerns.

## **The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:**

### **General Health and Safety Assurances**

- School districts or other applicable schools must follow all guidance related to health and safety. This will include meeting social distancing requirements and cleaning frequently touched spaces regularly to prevent spread of infection. These requirements will be addressed in more detail in other parts of the NYSED Re-Opening Guidance. The Facilities portion of the district's, or other applicable school's, reopening plan will seek assurance that school districts or other applicable schools will meet all requirements associated with building space related changes that they may elect to make.

## **Fire Code Compliance**

- Changes or additions to facilities require review by the Office of Facilities Planning (OFP), since all spaces to be occupied by public school students and staff must meet the requirements of the 2020 New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (BC) and the State Energy Conservation Code. In their plans, districts or other applicable schools will provide assurances that, should alterations be made, districts and other applicable schools will submit the proposed changes to the OFP for review and approval - just as with any other project.

## **Doorways**

- Many stairs and corridor doors have closers with automatic hold opens. These doors are normally held in the open position and are automatically released by the fire alarm system. The function, position, and operation of those doors must remain unchanged. Fortunately, they need not be touched during normal use.

## **Emergency Drills**

- Districts or other applicable schools shall conduct standard operations and procedures to the best of their abilities without deviating from current requirements. Fire (evacuation) Drills and Lockdown Drills are required by Education Law and regulation and the Fire Code and they must be conducted without exceptions. Fire Code Section 404 requires that schools maintain Fire Safety, Evacuation, and Lockdown Plans and these plans include how lockdown and evacuation drills are conducted. Methods to promote and provide for social distancing during the evacuation drills are ultimately the district's or other applicable school's decision and responsibility. Those changes must be included in the Fire Safety plans.

## **Inspections**

- Statute has not been changed to provide an extension to the submission deadline for the Building Condition Survey or Visual Inspections. These deadlines must be met.

## **Lead Testing due in 2020**

- At present, the statutory requirement that lead testing occur in 2020 continues. NYS DOH regulation 67-4, Lead-In-Water Testing, DOH requires lead-in-water testing to be conducted when the building is "normally occupied." Sampling should not be conducted when the building is vacant or has been vacant for an extended period due to COVID-19 closure. Simulation of "normally occupied operation" for the purpose of lead-in-water testing is not permitted. NYS DOH advises that schools follow recommended procedures to the extent possible to provide clean and safe drinking water upon reopening.

Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will follow all guidance related to health and safety, including Fire Code compliance and requirements regarding doorways, emergency drills, inspections and lead testing. The Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES Safety Coordinator will ensure compliance with all applicable requirements.

## Changes to Space Utilization and/or Alterations

### **Mandatory Requirements for Alterations:**

If districts/schools expect to make space alterations to the physical space or the building, these items will be required:

- Alterations to the configuration of existing classrooms or spaces or the introduction of temporary and/or movable partitions, the change must be submitted to OFP, the local municipality and/or code enforcement officials for review.
- Means of egress, fire alarm system, ventilation, and lighting may be affected and must be indicated on all submitted plans.
- Consult your architect and submit floor plans to OFP for approval.
- COVID-19 Projects shall be indicated as “COVID-19 Reopening” when submitted to the OFP. This will allow NYSED to expedite those reviews.
- The installation of movable partitions (gym, cafeteria, Library classroom dividers) and queue barricades shall require an abbreviated submission consistent with the Form FP-AU Request for Approval of Use of a Facility.
- Use of Cafeterias, Libraries, Auditoriums and Gymnasiums: A floor plan of the entire room showing the furniture layout with egress aisles shall be submitted to OFP for approval. Lighting, ventilation, means of egress, and fire alarm coverage must be indicated.

Districts or other applicable schools can utilize available space in the cafeteria, gyms, auditorium, and libraries (or sections thereof), 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 a lobby or corridor and /or interior spaces/rooms.

*Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES does not expect space alterations to be made to the physical space or buildings.

## Space Expansion

### **Mandatory Requirements for Space Expansion:**

If districts or other applicable schools choose to expand their square footage in order to enable improved social distancing (e.g. building additions, lease space, transportable classroom units or spaces such as tents) the following requirements apply for all spaces to be occupied by school district staff and students:



- Code Review: Per statute, NYSED’s Office of Facilities Planning must review and approve the above types of projects to ensure that the proposed spaces meet the fire code.
- Offsite Lease Requirements: For offsite facilities, the district or other applicable schools must contact their project manager at NYSED Office of Facilities Planning (OFP) and submit a Temporary Quarters (TQ) Project submission.

To ensure that these sites meet all requirements, TQ submissions require submission of:

- OFP Form FP\_AU-Request for Approval of Use of a Facility;
- architectural quality floor plan;
- site plan;
- AHERA Plan;
- Fire Safety Report;
- Confirmation of Americans with Disabilities Act compliance;
- Local Code Authority Certificate of Occupancy; and
- Approval of use of space.
- Please note – if a Change of Occupancy in the Existing Building Code applies (e.g. office or B-occupancy to E-occupancy) code requirements such as rescue windows; accessibility; fire protection systems such as sprinkler or emergency voice alarm communication systems; ventilation – may make it infeasible.
- Districts or other applicable schools should identify COVID-19 Projects as “COVID-19 Reopening” when required materials are submitted to OFP for review.
- Consult with OFP for a preliminary evaluation of all facilities under consideration for leasing. All leased facilities must be submitted to OFP for review and approval.

Please consult with your architect/engineer of record.

Districts or other applicable schools should identify COVID-19 Projects as “COVID-19 Reopening” when required materials are submitted to OFP for review.

***Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.***

Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES does not expect to expand our square footage in order to enable improved social distancing.

## Tents for Additional Space

### **Mandatory Requirements for the use of Tents for Additional Space:**

If tents are used as alternate spaces, then the following requirements apply:

Tents, both temporary and permanent are regulated by code and must be submitted for a building permit.

- Temporary structures and tents are those erected for 180 days or less. The Building Code Section 3103.1 indicates, “tents and membrane structures erected for a period of less than 180 days shall comply with the Fire Code of NYS”.
- The Fire Code (FC) Chapter 31 contains extensive requirements for Tents and Other Membrane Structures. FC Section 3103.2 indicates that a permit and approval of temporary tents is required. FC Section 3103 contains requirements for temporary tents and Section 3104 has requirements for permanent tents. They include requirements for construction documents, access roads, location, seating plans, means of egress, illumination, exit signs, construction, use.
- Permanent tents are considered a membrane structure and are regulated by Building Code Section 3102 and other applicable sections.
- Districts or other applicable schools must consult their design professional to prepare submission drawings for approval by OFP.
- The following information must be shown on the drawings: Dimensions, Minimum separation distance to other structures, Tent sides (yes) (no), Duration of use, Type of use/activity, Anchorage, Number of Exits, Width of each exit, Table/Chair/Contents, layout, Fire extinguisher Location, Occupant load, Heating or Cooking equipment, Utilities, Exit signs, NFPA 701 testing/label/certification.
- If the tent is used for E-occupancy, consult with local municipalities and/or code enforcers provide code-compliant design for mechanical heat and ventilation; lighting; emergency lighting; power; fire alarm; plumbing; etc. as required.
- Districts or other applicable schools must consult their architect and submit to OFP for approval. The district, or other applicable school, must provide an architectural quality floor plan, which clearly indicates existing and proposed use of space showing the furniture layout with egress aisles. Lighting, ventilation, means of egress, and fire alarm coverage must be indicated.

***Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.***

Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES does not expect to utilize tents for additional alternative space.

## Plumbing Facilities and Fixtures

**Toilet and Sink Fixtures:** Districts or other applicable schools may consider reducing the number of toilet fixtures in a building in order to facilitate frequent cleaning. However, the minimum number of toilet fixtures that must be available for use in a building is established in the building code.

The usual minimum requirement may be reduced by certain circumstances that may be relevant: (1) the building's aggregate number of toilet fixtures already exceeds the minimum amount required by the Building Code or (2) the building occupancy is reduced using partial remote learning or reductions.

Reminder: frequent handwashing is a key component to avoiding the spread of COVID-19, so sinks and soap must be available to building occupants at all times.

### **Mandatory Requirements for Plumbing Facilities and Fixtures:**

- The number of toilet and sink fixtures must meet the minimum standards of the New York State Building Code. In order to ensure compliance, a design professional should be consulted prior to any modifications to layouts or number of fixtures.
- All temporary facilities must be approved through the Office of Facilities Planning.

*Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

The number of toilet and sink fixtures in the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES meets the minimum standards of the New York State Building Code.

**Drinking Water Facilities:** Districts or other applicable schools may wish to reduce number of drinking fountains available, in order to facilitate frequent cleaning. However, drinking fountains are a code required plumbing fixture. One fountain is required for each one hundred occupants.

In the event drinking fountains need to be taken out of service, the following should be considered to provide potable drinking water to all occupants of the building:

- Drinking fountains may be replaced with units with bottle fillers.
- Supplying students with bottled drinking water or water in disposable cups at specified locations is an acceptable alternative source.

The district or other applicable school may provide student with personal containers to fill at home.

Drinking water will provided to all occupants of the building as follows:

- Career and Technical Education: Drinking fountains will be operational in each shop with disposable cups provided. Signage will be used to direct students to use the disposable cups.

- Compass Program: Common-area drinking fountains will be shut off and will not be operational. Bottled water or cups of water will be supplied to students as requested.
- Special Education: Common-area drinking fountains will be shut off and will not be operational. Bottled water or cups of water will be provided to students as requested.
- Office areas: Common-area drinking fountains will be shut off and will not be operational. Water coolers and bottle fillers will be used.

## Ventilation

### Mandatory Requirements for Ventilation:

- Maintain adequate, code required ventilation (natural or mechanical) as designed. If other air cleaning equipment is proposed, submit to OFP for review and approval.

*Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

Adequate required code ventilation will be maintained throughout the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES.

Districts and schools are encouraged to increase the fresh air ventilation rate to the extent possible to aid in maintaining a healthy indoor air quality. We recognize there are many different types of ventilation systems, natural or mechanical, that may be limited for increasing ventilation outside air due to available heat or fan/relief airflow capacity. Schools may consider installing a higher efficiency filter. A higher efficiency filter may require a larger filter housing and will create greater resistance to airflow, and the fan and HVAC system may require rebalancing to maintain the code required ventilation rate.

## New Technology

Some school leaders may have been contacted by vendors promoting new technology that claims to purify air. Some of these systems may be proven over time to have merit, but the use of new technologies in school facilities must be stringently reviewed prior to the installation and issuance of permits for those technologies. Some of them could have a negative impact on the building occupants' health and safety. New technologies must be proven safe by independent and impartial studies by a nationally recognized governing body, and the equipment must be listed/labeled for the intended use by a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory.

## NYSED Procedures

Projects that are labeled as "COVID-19 Reopening" will be expedited. Leased facilities, modular buildings, tents, additions, and alterations require an LOI and typical project submission requirements; prescreening will be waived. Questions can be directed to the OFP.

## CHILD NUTRITION

A successful nutrition program is a key component to a successful educational environment. Children cannot focus on learning when they are hungry. School meals boost learning, and studies show that students perform best academically when they are well nourished. School districts around the State did an incredible job, with tremendous community support, in ensuring that students received nutritious meals while schools were closed this past year. No child should ever go hungry, and school reopening plans must provide for the feeding of all students who require food assistance.

As school food service operations transition from serving meals during unanticipated school closures and summer meals to serving school meals, School Food Authorities (SFAs) will need to consider



national, state, and local health and safety guidelines. It is important that SFAs engage school food service directors in district or system wide discussions regarding plans for reopening schools to ensure that students participating in all learning models have access to healthy meals.

SFAs will need to consider the resources and flexibilities necessary to transition food service operations to an onsite or off-site student meal delivery system or operate both at the same time. This includes utilizing state or nationwide waivers

and updating school policies, standard operating procedures, and trainings to ensure compliance with Child Nutrition Program requirements.

### The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:

- District/School Plan must provide all students enrolled in the SFA with access to school meals each school day. This must include:
  - students in attendance at school; and
  - students learning remotely.
- District/School Plan must address all applicable health and safety guidelines.
- District/School Plan must include measures to protect students with food allergies if providing meals in spaces outside the cafeteria.
- District/School Plan must include protocols and procedures for how students will perform hand hygiene before and after eating, how appropriate hand hygiene will be promoted, and how sharing of food and beverages will be discouraged.
- District/School Plan must include protocols and procedures that require cleaning and disinfection prior to the next group of students arriving for meals, if served in the same common area.
- District/School Plan must ensure compliance with Child Nutrition Program requirements.
- District/School Plan must include protocols that describe communication with families through multiple means in the languages spoken by families.

*Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

The Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES provides access to breakfast and lunch to students in our educational programs. Each component district is responsible for providing meals to students when students are learning from home. Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES addresses all applicable health and safety guidelines and complies with Child Nutrition Program requirements.

In our campus-based programs, student lunches will be scheduled and arranged such that social distancing can be maintained. Students will be required to wash their hands before and after eating. The cafeteria will be cleaned between groups, in accordance with the disinfecting protocol included in this plan. All staff monitoring student lunches will be informed of food allergy issues and appropriate protocols for dealing with them. Sharing of food and beverages will not be permitted and there will be no buffet or family style options.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The school bus is an extension of the classroom; therefore, many of the recommendations that apply to school buildings (like social distancing and frequent cleaning) should be applied to the school bus, as well. Pupil transportation also presents certain unique challenges, especially with regard to the transportation of homeless students, students in foster care, students in nonpublic and charter schools, and students with disabilities. So, it is critical that schools and school districts must be sure to include Transportation Department staff in all school re-opening planning.

### **School District Policies/Practices**

#### **The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:**

- School districts and other applicable schools are expected to fulfill existing mandates regarding the safe and effective transportation of students who are homeless (McKinney-Vento), in foster care, have disabilities and attend non-public schools and charter schools. Although meeting these obligations will certainly pose challenges, these expectations continue to be in place. Districts and other applicable schools should plan accordingly.

Transportation to BOCES educational programs are the responsibility of each student's component school district. BOCES will facilitate regional conversations regarding transportation challenges to explore regional efficiencies, where applicable.

## The School Bus

### Mandatory Requirements for School Bus:

Assurances of the following will be required when submitting the Reopening Plan:

- Students who are able will be required to wear masks and social distance on the bus;
- All buses (conforming and non-conforming to Federal Motor Carrier Safety Standards, as well as type A, C or D) which are used every day by districts and contract carriers must be cleaned/ disinfected once a day. High contact spots must be wiped down after the am and pm run depending upon the disinfection schedule. (For example, some buses might be cleaned between the am and pm runs while other buses may be cleaned/disinfected after the pm run);
- School buses shall not be equipped with hand sanitizer due to its combustible composition and potential liability to the carrier or district. School bus drivers, monitors and attendants must not carry personal bottles of hand sanitizer with them on school buses;
- Wheelchair school buses must configure wheelchair placement to ensure social distancing of 6 feet.

*Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

In the event that authorized BOCES personnel are transporting students in a BOCES vehicle, students and staff will be required to wear a face mask and social distance, where practical. BOCES vehicles will be disinfected after each use. Each school district that transports students to a program sponsored by the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES has assured us that protocols will be in place that meet or exceed the mandatory requirements for transportation.

## School Bus Staff

### Mandatory Requirements for School Bus Staff:

- School bus drivers, monitors, attendants and mechanics shall 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 should notify their employer and seek medical attention;
- School bus drivers, monitors, attendants and mechanics must wear a face covering along with an optional face shield;
- Transportation staff (drivers, monitors, attendants, mechanics and cleaners) will be trained and provided periodic refreshers on the proper use of personal protective equipment and the signs and symptoms of COVID-19;



- Transportation departments/carriers will need to provide Personal Protective Equipment such as masks and gloves for drivers, monitors and attendants in buses as well as hand sanitizer for all staff in their transportation locations such as dispatch offices, employee lunch/break rooms and/or bus garages.
- Drivers, monitors and attendants who must have direct physical contact with a child must wear gloves.

***Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.***

In the event that authorized BOCES personnel are transporting students in a BOCES vehicle, students and staff will be required to wear a face mask and social distance, where practical. Drivers will be trained in the proper use of personal protective equipment and the signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will provide appropriate PPE to drivers and students.

All BOCES staff will be required to perform a self-health assessment for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to arriving to work. Additionally, staff who will be driving a BOCES vehicle will be asked to repeat the self-health assessment immediately prior to driving the vehicle. If the staff person is experiencing any of the symptoms of COVID-19, he or she should contact his/her supervisor immediately and follow the protocol outlined regarding staff exhibiting symptoms.

## **Students on Transportation**

### **Mandatory Requirements for Students on Transportation:**

- As was outlined in the Health and Safety section of this guidance, all parents/guardians will be required to ensure their child/children are not experiencing any signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and do not have a fever of 100 degrees or more prior to them boarding their method of transportation to school;
- Students must wear a mask on a school bus if they are physically able. Students who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering, including students where such covering would impair their physical health or mental health are not subject to the required use of a face covering;
- Students must social distance (six feet separation) on the bus;
- Students who do not have a mask can NOT be denied transportation;
- Students who do not have masks must be provide one by the district;
- Students with a disability, which would prevent them from wearing a mask, will not be forced to do so or denied transportation.

***Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.***

In the event that students are transported in a BOCES vehicle, students and staff will be required to wear a face mask and social distance, where practical. Students who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering, including students where such covering would impair their physical health or mental health will not be required to use a face covering. Each school district that transports students to a program sponsored by the Cayuga-



Onondaga BOCES has assured us that protocols will be in place that meet or exceed the mandatory requirements for transportation.

## Pupil Transportation Routing

### Mandatory Requirements for Pupil Transportation Routing:

- If the school district is in session remotely or otherwise, pupil transportation must be provided to nonpublic, parochial, private, charter schools or students whose Individualized Education Plans have placed them out of district whose schools are meeting in in-person sessions when/ if the district is not;
- 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.

*Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

Transportation for students enrolled in BOCES programs is the responsibility of the student's component district. BOCES administrators will collaborate with the component districts to ensure student needs are met.

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Communities and schools are facing unprecedented challenges as they respond to the compounded difficulties of a global pandemic, an economic recession, and civic unrest in response to structural racism. But these challenges also offer unprecedented opportunities to re-envision and renew the capacity of our schools and communities to be welcoming, supportive, inclusive, and equitable environments.

To meet these challenges, individuals must start with the inner work of healing their own hearts and minds, finding the capacity within themselves to support healing for students, families, peers, and communities. While district and school personnel cannot solve every problem, collectively they are a powerful force in improving the well-being of themselves and those around them.

As district and school personnel adapt to environments that result in substantially reduced time spent interacting in-person, ensuring intentional and meaningful inclusion of social emotional learning (SEL) across all aspects of operating strategies is critical to supporting the well-being and success of students, staff, and families. Along with physical health and well-being, schools and districts must prioritize social emotional well-being -- not at the expense of academics, but in order to create the mental, social, and emotional space for academic learning to occur.

It is unrealistic to expect that students will return to instruction as they left it months ago. Students have experienced an extremely stressful, and for many, traumatic experience while isolated from school, friends, and community.

Some students have had positive experiences during school closures, learning, growing, and discovering new identities as activists, caregivers, and leaders in their communities. Schools should support and nurture new skills and mindsets.

Students known to be vulnerable, as well as those not previously on district and school radars, may return to instruction anxious, fearful, withdrawn, grieving, and/or unprepared to self-manage new or exacerbated negative behaviors. And some students have thrived in an on-line environment, as school anxiety has lessened. Should additional periods of remote learning be required, students who had an adult available to assist them previously may now be home alone as adults return to work. Older students may be tasked with the care of younger family members. Schools and districts must be prepared to meet students where they are, regardless of the circumstances in which they find themselves.

During the Regional Task Force Meetings, stakeholders discussed the variety of student, family, and school personnel needs that must be addressed during transitions back to school in the fall, whether that is in-person, remote, or a hybrid. Overall, worry was expressed that many students, families, and staff will return with fear or anxiety, and school and district staff will need to balance physical safety with social and emotional needs.

Stakeholders expressed concern over local capacity to address increased social and emotional needs with existing staff, and discussed opportunities to better position existing staff to build capacity around student and family engagement, trauma-responsive practices, social emotional learning, restorative practices, and fostering relationships, within both in-person and virtual environments. They further expressed concerns about screen time for students should remote or hybrid learning be necessary, and the ability of students and families to access resources during periods of remote learning.

Stakeholders stressed the importance of clear communication with all stakeholders including students, families, staff, and community, and considered how community partnerships could be leveraged to increase capacity. They recommended that social and emotional well-being be prioritized during transitions back to school and for as long as necessary to appropriately support student needs; physical and emotional safety is necessary for the brain and body to be ready to learn.

Finally, stakeholders stressed the critical need to address adults' social and emotional needs before the return to school and on an ongoing basis. Adults must have systems of support including meaningful peer relationships, opportunities to connect, and resources to support self-care. Without these supports in place, adults will not have optimal capacity to support the needs of students and families.

The following considerations are intended to assist in creating a welcoming and caring school community that ensures its members are met with compassion and the support they need to achieve and thrive. Academic learning cannot be effective until the basic human needs for physical and emotional safety are met. This is an embodied practice. Breathe, notice, feel, and be present.

**The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:**

- Ensure that a district-wide and building-level comprehensive developmental school counseling program plan, developed under the direction of certified school counselor(s), is reviewed and updated to meet current needs.
- Establish an advisory council, shared decision-making, school climate team, or other collaborative working group comprised of families, students, members of the board of education, school building and/or district/charter leaders, community-based service providers, teachers, certified school counselors, and other pupil personnel service providers including school social workers and/or school psychologists to inform the comprehensive developmental school counseling program plan.
- Address how the school/district will provide resources and referrals to address mental health, behavioral, and emotional support services and programs.
- Address professional development opportunities for faculty and staff on how to talk with and support students during and after the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency, as well as provide supports for developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty, and staff.

***Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.***

In partnership with our component school districts and local agencies, the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES provides resources to staff and families regarding mental health as well as behavioral and emotional support services and programs. Each educational program has one certified school counselor. Licensed school social workers, school psychologists and mental health therapists are also available to support students and families in our educational programs.

The Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES Professional Development Unit provides training to BOCES and component district staff in the areas of trauma informed practice, therapeutic crisis intervention and supports, behavioral management and social emotional learning. Additionally, all BOCES teachers will receive training in trauma informed practice in order to support staff in facilitating conversations with students regarding the pandemic.

## SCHOOL SCHEDULES

COVID-19 required schools to make critical adjustments to their instructional model in March 2020 with little or no time to plan. As schools devise their re-opening plans for the 2020-21 school year, plans must address resuming in-person instruction. However, scheduling decisions must be informed by health and safety standards and the most up to date guidance from the New York State Department of Health.

Consideration must also be given to the needs of students, families, and staff as well as the realities of available space and student enrollment in each unique school and district. Schools are given the ability to restructure their programs using flexible scheduling models—taking advantage of in-person, remote, or hybrid learning models—and to provide synchronous and/or asynchronous instruction.



Per the New York State Department of Health guidance, plans should address a combination of in-person instruction and remote learning to facilitate a phased-in approach or hybrid model, which may be necessary at various times throughout the 2020-2021 school year. In cases where in-person instruction is not feasible, phased-in and hybrid models of education will need to consider if certain students will be prioritized for in-person instruction first or more frequently based on educational or other needs (e.g., early grades, students with disabilities, English language learners), and must balance this with equity, capacity, social distancing, PPE, feasibility, and learning considerations. These priorities if applicable shall be determined at the individual school or district level based upon the needs of student populations within such schools or districts.

If COVID-19 cases develop, schools/districts may consider restricting access within school facilities and across school grounds, particularly in affected areas to avoid full school closures. In such instances, schools/districts may choose to temporarily move classes where an individual has tested positive for COVID-19 to remote/virtual format until all contacts can be identified, notified, tested, and cleared. To maximize in-person instruction, Schools/districts should consider measures that can be implemented to decrease density and congregation in school facilities and on school grounds, when possible, such as:

- finding alternative spaces in the community to allow for more in-person instruction;
- adjusting class or work hours, where appropriate and possible;
- limiting in-person presence to only those staff who are necessary to be at the school during normal school hours;
- maintaining or increasing remote workforce (e.g., administrative staff) to accommodate social distancing guidelines;

- staggering schedules and allowing more time between classes to reduce congestion in hallways, walkways, and buildings; and/or
- shifting design of class schedules to accommodate social distancing guidelines, including cohorts (e.g., alternative classroom schedules, full-time in-person learning for younger students, and part-time distance learning for older students).

Schools/districts should collaborate with stakeholders including, but not limited to, teachers, staff members, parents, and community groups when considering alternate schedules. Plans must include how schedules will be shared and made available to the school community. Schools should share their scheduling plans with students, families, and staff as soon as possible before the start of the school year and anytime a change is required in order to allow families to plan childcare and work arrangements. If schools/districts begin to implement in-person and hybrid learning models, they must also be prepared to shift back to fully remote learning models should circumstances change and school buildings are required to close.

Regardless of the instructional model implemented, equity and access must be the priority for all students including, but not limited to, students with disabilities, English language learners, and students experiencing homelessness.

In accordance with the New York State Department of Health and New York State Education Department guidance, the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES is prepared to open safely for as much in-person instruction as possible. Recognizing the diverse needs of the students in our nine component districts, all BOCES educational program leaders are prepared to be solution-driven and adventurous in our thinking to ensure we are able to meet the needs of the students in our region.

At this time, Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES is prepared to welcome back all of our students in person, while also having the flexibility to provide remote learning opportunities for students that need it. Districts have multiple options to choose from when considering programming for students who attend BOCES educational programs.

#### Compass Program

- All students attend the Compass program all day, every day for a full-day program; OR
- Students follow their home district schedule and BOCES teachers provide hybrid instruction.

#### Special Education

- Campus-based programs (Day Treatment, Alternative 8:1:1 and 6:1:2 SEL)
  - All students attend their educational program per their IEP all day, every day for a full-day program; OR
  - Students follow their home district schedule and BOCES teachers provide hybrid instruction.
- District-based programs (Auburn 8:1:1, Jordan-Elbridge 6:1:2 Autism, Moravia 12:1:1, Port Byron 12:1:1 and 12:1+3:1, Skaneateles 8:1:1 and 12:1+3:1)
  - Students must attend their educational program in accordance with the host-district schedule. Students in the BOCES classrooms follow the same schedule as their peers in the host district.
  - Considerations:

- Integration may need to be provided through remote instruction or synchronous video conferencing.
  - Social distancing will need to be maintained in these classrooms as with general education classrooms.
- Career and Technical Education
    - All students attend their CTE program every day (seniors in the morning and juniors in the afternoon) and return to the home district for the remainder of their educational program in-person; OR
    - All students attend their CTE program every day (seniors in the morning and juniors in the afternoon) and complete the rest of their educational program virtually, facilitated by their home district teachers; OR
    - All students attend their CTE program every day (seniors in the morning and juniors in the afternoon) and complete the rest of their educational program virtually, facilitated by BOCES core area teachers (ELA, Math, Social Studies, PE); OR
    - Students follow their home district schedule and attend their CTE program in accordance with their home district schedules (i.e.: A/B day or Monday, Thursday, etc.), CTE teachers provide hybrid instruction, and students return to their home district for the remainder of their educational program in person; OR
    - Students follow their home district schedule and attend their CTE program in accordance with their home district schedules (i.e.: A/B day or Monday, Thursday, etc.), CTE teachers provide hybrid instruction, and students complete the rest of their educational program virtually, facilitated by either BOCES teachers or home district teachers.

# BUDGET AND FISCAL MATTERS

## Economic Overview

Both the national economy and New York State's economy have been dramatically impacted by the COVID-19 crisis and the various mitigation efforts that have been undertaken since March 2020. What is still unknown is the extent to which the impact will improve or worsen, how long it will last, and which sectors of the state economy will be most severely impacted.

It is important to understand the fundamentals of education finance policy in New York State to develop the most responsible—and flexible—budget plans for reopening schools. The economic demographics of school districts across the state vary widely, from some of the wealthiest districts in the country to some of the poorest. The various state aid formulas work to complement that reality, with the wealthiest district receiving less state aid and the districts with less local fiscal capacity receiving more.

New York State government operations are funded through a blend of many revenue sources, including the personal income tax, sales tax, corporate taxes, user fees, and federal grants and entitlements. Each of these sources is impacted in different ways by the changes in economic activity in the state due to COVID-19.

## School District Fiscal Preparedness

Another major factor in the fiscal outlook for school districts is the availability of undesignated reserve funds, which districts set aside for times of fiscal hardship. Again, the individual district circumstance can vary widely. According to the most recent data available to the Department, overall unexpended fund balances total 13.83 percent of all school spending outside the big five city school districts,<sup>2</sup> but the level available in individual districts ranged from 0.04 percent to 86.19 percent.

These reserves are approximately two thirds capital, retirement, and employee benefit accrued liability reserve (EBALR) reserves. Unrestricted reserves total approximately 4.5% of total proposed spending, again excluding the five dependent city school districts. Relaxing rules around withdrawals from certain purpose driven reserves would provide districts additional flexibility in budgeting for the upcoming years with a diminished prospect of increases in state aid, but such changes would require enactment of legislation.

When districts consider how much of those reserve funds should be tapped into during any single school year or crisis, they should remember that this situation has the potential to be long-lasting.

## 2020-21 Enacted State Budget

Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget proposal in January 2020 initially called for a statewide increase in school aid for the 2020-21 school year of \$825 million, or 3 percent. As the COVID-19 crisis emerged prior to the enactment of the final budget, that planned increase did not materialize, resulting in a school aid apportionment

---

<sup>2</sup> Source: PTRC balance divided by budgets



that held unrestricted funds flat for districts and maintained reimbursements at statutory levels. A reduction in state-funded aid was partially offset by an increase in emergency federal funds.

### **Pandemic Adjustment and CARES Act Funds**

State Aid was reduced in the 2020-21 school year by a total of \$1.13 billion through a “Pandemic Adjustment”, which reduced school district aid allocations at their bottom line, commensurate with the amount of federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES Act) funds each district was projected to receive. Districts were then allocated an amount of federal funding through the combination of the CARES Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSERF) and the Governors Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEERF). As a result, school districts will experience a decrease in state aid payments but will be eligible to apply for an amount from these federal grants. However, it should be noted that the CARES Act requires a portion of the funds to be used to provide equitable services to non-public schools.

### **Potential Further Aid Reductions**

The 2020-21 Enacted Budget also included provisions that will allow the Director of the Budget, subject to amendment by the Legislature, to reduce appropriations across any and all program areas of the state budget should actual revenues come in at levels that are below the assumptions made in the Executive Budget. As of April 2020, this projected total shortfall was \$13.3 billion for the 2020-21 state fiscal year. The actions noted above reduced this gap by nearly \$1.2 billion.<sup>11</sup> Combined with other budget actions, the remaining gap was projected to be \$8.2 billion. Absent additional federal support, the Division of Budget has stated that further reductions to school aid, Medicaid, social services, and transportation might be necessary to eliminate that projected budget gap.

### **180 Day Calendar and Attendance Reporting for State Aid Purposes**

School districts report certain enrollment, attendance, and school calendar information through the State Aid Management System (SAMS). While this data submission process differs from other procedures, the underlying data provided should be consistent with all other attendance reporting and requirements.

The minimum annual instructional hour requirement and 180 days of session requirement are also both reported through SAMS. For both the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, school districts will be required to continue the same information, based on the schedule provided for the average student, rather than reporting for each individual student. Under regulatory changes adopted as an emergency rule by the Board of Regents on July 13, 2020, school districts may be eligible to apply for a waiver from the minimum instructional hour requirement for both the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years

Successful application of the waiver will shield school districts from a reduction in aid for failure to meet the minimum instructional hour requirement. However, the 180 days of session requirement is in statute, and for the 2020-21 school year there are currently no statutory provisions that would allow a school district to provide fewer than 180 days of instruction over the course of the full school year.



## **Impact of Low Attendance on State Aid**

School districts have expressed concerns about the impact that students choosing to stay home during the pandemic will have on their state aid calculations. State Aid formulas use multiple attendance counts in the calculation of aid apportionments for school districts. Statewide over 70 percent, largely in Foundation Aid, is based on Average Daily Membership or district enrollment, which is a measure of student registration in the district and does not take attendance into account. These aid formulas should not be impacted by attendance rates. Some formulas use Average Daily Attendance in the calculation of reimbursement rates, and Education Law §3602(1)(d)(2) provides for the commissioner to exclude from that calculation “days on which school attendance was adversely affected because of an epidemic...”. NYSED plans to advance a proposed COVID-specific change to such regulations in September for consideration by the Board of Regents.

## **Flexibility in Non-NYSED-Governed Activities**

While budget and fiscal matters have implications in nearly all operational and instructional program areas, the laws, regulations, and business rules are largely outside of the discretion of the State Education Department. Below are a few areas where recommendations have been made to NYSED staff that deserve further consideration by state policymakers:

- Reserve funds: consideration for providing temporary flexibility in the immediate use of designated or restricted reserve funds, and requirements to repay funds over a set period of time;
- Transportation issue: as mentioned in the Transportation section of this guidance, providing flexibility on the adoption of contracts with providers and pursuing a streamlined bus driver licensing process with the Department of Motor Vehicles to ease the burden of hiring new bus drivers;
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and technology purchases: provide more avenues for shared service agreements and ease burdens on BOCES to expanding service in this area.

## **Flexibility for Budgetary Transfers**

It is anticipated that there may be costs in 2020-21 that districts did not budget for in necessarily the correct account codes. In particular, the need for additional equipment has been noted above. Flexibility for budget transfers in the 2020-21 school year only for additional equipment needed (associated with re-opening and the maintaining of buildings primarily) would help school districts in that position. Historically, school districts have been advised that money cannot be transferred into an equipment account code because equipment is considered a non-contingent expense (generally) and transfers into non-contingent line items are prohibited. This determination appears to be based primarily on Formal Opinion of Counsel No. 213 ([www.p12.nysed.gov/mgtserv/budgeting/handbook/appendixg.html](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/mgtserv/budgeting/handbook/appendixg.html)).

In addition, school districts are encouraged to maximize their state-aided hardware in order to ensure that all necessary equipment is being purchased.

## **Tax Collection**

School districts that rely on banks or other outside entities, such as a town, to collect school taxes, could face an issue of capacity for in-person collection. Limited staffing or hours may make it more difficult for taxes to be

paid in the period without penalty. In addition, at least one instance of a bank not wanting to have citizens coming in to pay taxes and bank staff having to handle all of that paper has resulted in a district needing to have to come up with a new process. Having to change to a collection process that is all in-district may not be feasible, either due to costs or staffing.

Districts should be reviewing their tax collection process to try and anticipate any issues or problems that they may face based on the ability of residents to pay taxes in person and without penalty.

## **ATTENDANCE AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM**

As described in the Technology and Connectivity section of this guidance, remote learning did not work for everyone during the spring 2020 school closures. In many schools and districts, large numbers of students did not log on or otherwise participate in online learning opportunities. It is therefore critical for schools to use a variety of creative methods to reach out to students and their families who did not engage in distance learning. School policies and procedures must focus on the academic consequences of lost instructional time and address absences before students fall behind in their learning. Initiating an educational neglect or Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) proceeding should be a last resort; schools and districts should work with their local departments of social services prior to bringing any legal action against students or their families.

### **Attendance for Instructional Purposes**

#### **The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:**

- Schools are responsible for developing a mechanism to collect and report daily teacher/student engagement or attendance regardless of the instructional setting.

***Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.***

Attendance will be taken daily, either in-person or when students log onto their remote learning platform. Each teacher will be responsible for maintaining student attendance records and for reporting attendance issues to their program administrator.

### **Attendance for Reporting Purposes**

#### **Reopening Mandatory Requirements**

- Attendance of any school-age student of compulsory age, who resides in the district or is placed by a parent/guardian in another public school district, a charter school, or is placed by a district administrator or the CSE of the school district in educational programs outside the district (such as, another school district, BOCES, approved private in-State or out-of-State school, and State supported school) must be reported in SIRS. To date, the reporting of daily attendance of Prekindergarten students is not required;

- Attendance must be reported by any reporting entity that is required to take attendance;
- Resident students of compulsory age who were not in attendance in a public school, including charter schools, nonpublic school, or approved home schooling program in the current school year must be reported until they exceed compulsory school age, they no longer reside in the district, or the district has documentation that the student has entered another educational program leading to a high school diploma;
- Students who drop out while still of compulsory school age must be kept on the school attendance register until they exceed compulsory school age or move out of the district.

***Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.***

Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will utilize SchoolTool to collect and report daily teacher/student attendance.

### **Attendance for State Aid Purposes**

School districts report certain enrollment, attendance, and school calendar information through the State Aid Management System (SAMS). While this data submission process differs from other procedures, the underlying data provided should be consistent with all other attendance reporting and requirements.

As discussed in the Budget and Fiscal Matters section of this guidance, the minimum annual instructional hour requirement and 180 days of session requirement are also both reported through SAMS. For both the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, school districts will be required to continue to submit the same information through SAMS that has been required in previous years, namely aggregate instructional days and hours, as well as daily calendars. Under regulatory changes adopted as an emergency rule by the Board of Regents on July 13, 2020, school districts may be eligible to apply for a waiver from the minimum instructional hour requirement for both the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years to the extent that “the district is unable to meet such requirement as a result of an Executive Order(s) of the Governor pursuant to the State of emergency declared for the COVID-19 crisis, or pursuant to Education Law §3604(8), as amended by Chapter 107 of the Laws of 2020, or reopening procedures implemented as a result of the COVID-19 crisis”. Successful application of the waiver will shield school districts from a reduction in aid for failure to meet the minimum instructional hour requirement. However, the 180 days of session requirement is in statute, and for the 2020-21 school year there are currently no statutory provisions that would allow a school district to provide fewer than 180 days of instruction over the course of the full school year.

For charter schools, instructional time requirements are set forth in Education Law Section 2851(2)(n) and Commissioner’s Regulation Section 175.5. These requirements were effectively waived as stated above. See the Budget and Fiscal Matters section of this guidance for additional details.

## Chronic Absenteeism

Extensive research indicates that missing ten percent of school days tends to be the “tipping point” when student achievement declines.<sup>3</sup> Chronic absence, or absenteeism, is defined as missing at least ten percent of enrolled school days, which in New York State is eighteen days per school year, or two days per month.

- Chronic absence includes all absences from instruction, both excused and unexcused. Instead of school policies and procedures focusing on truancy, it is essential for school attendance policies to focus on the academic consequences of lost instructional time and for the school procedures to address absences before students fall behind in school.
- During these challenging times, the development of positive school relationships may be a lifeline for students disconnected from school.
- Although flexibility is recommended when monitoring attendance in a remote instructional model, for students who have not engaged in remote learning and school staff outreach to parents/guardians has been unsuccessful, districts and other schools should explore a variety of methods for reaching out such as:
  - phone calls to families are often the simplest solution and provide an immediate opportunity to offer resources and assess student and family needs
  - where families do not respond to phone calls, texting may offer a lower-stress alternative and a subsequent phone call can be arranged
  - seeking out adults in the school who have established a connection with the student and/or family may yield improved results. Counselors, coaches, social workers, and psychologists are often logical choices, in addition to teaching staff. Social media contact or using friends to reach out can also be effective strategies.
- Assign each student an “ally” – an adult who is responsible to check in on the student every day, whether instruction is in-person, remote, or online.

School districts and other school entities have the responsibility to provide translation for families who speak a language other than English in the home. Once contact is made, emphasis should be on addressing the student’s or family’s barriers to “attendance” or engagement with instruction.

For students who have not engaged in remote or in-person learning, and school staff outreach to parents/guardians has been unsuccessful, Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will deploy a number of strategies for reaching out including:

- phone calls to families with translation services were necessary.
- collaborating with the home school district to see if the student is participating there (for students who spend part of their school day in their home district).
- physical distancing check-ins with students whose families are not responding to phone calls or other methods of communication.

Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will work closely with the home school district and the Cayuga County Department of Social Services to increase the likelihood of student attendance.

---

<sup>3</sup> Balfanz, Robert & Byrnes, Vaughan, Chronic Absenteeism: Summarizing What We Know from Nationally Available Data, John Hopkins University Center for Social organization of Schools, May 2010.

## **Educational Neglect**

An allegation of educational neglect may be warranted when a custodial parent or guardian fails to ensure a child's prompt and regular attendance in school or keeps the child out of school for impermissible reasons resulting in an adverse effect on the child's educational progress, or imminent danger of such an adverse effect. Educational neglect should not be considered where the parent/guardian has kept their child home because they believe it is unsafe for their child to attend school in person during the pandemic, and the child is participating in remote learning opportunities.

Schools and districts are urged to reach out to their local departments of Social Services (LDSS) with any questions or concerns related to child welfare. The LDSS point of contact (POC) for your area may be found through the following link: [LDSS POCS](#). The Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Neglect, the hotline to report child abuse and neglect, should be contacted only as a last resort, after you have exhausted all other strategies to connect with students and families.

Reporting and investigation of suspected cases of educational neglect present a range of complex issues and challenges for local social services districts and school districts. It is in the best interest of these agencies, school districts, and the families they serve, to collaborate in addressing their concerns. From the process of reporting - a school responsibility - and throughout the process of investigation, which is the purview of Child Protective Services (CPS), there will be numerous opportunities for timely intervention and collaboration involving students, parents, school officials, and CPS staff. This collaborative approach should lessen the need for Family Court referral and proceedings.

## **Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS)**

Under the Family Court Act Article 7, a PINS proceeding may, in certain circumstances, be initiated to have a person under eighteen years of age, who does not attend school, is incorrigible, ungovernable, habitually disobedient and beyond the lawful control of a parent, or other person legally responsible for such child's care, or appears to be a sexually exploited child, adjudicated by the Family Court as a PINS.

Before taking such drastic action, outreach to the appropriate LDSS may provide the student and family access to additional services designed to prevent a young person from being adjudicated a PINS. Family Support Services programs have been established to provide comprehensive services to children and families. The LDSS point of contact (POC) for your area may be found through the following link: [LDSS POCS](#).

## **Resources**

[Attendance Playbook: Smart Solutions for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism in the COVID Era](#)

## TECHNOLOGY AND CONNECTIVITY

For New York State students to lead productive and successful lives upon graduation, they must understand and know how to use digital technologies. Technology knowledge and skills are vital for full participation in 21st Century life, work, and citizenship. Sufficient access to computing devices and high-speed internet are essential for educational equity. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the inequitable access to technology and internet services in students' places of residence was a priority to be addressed. The closure of New York schools and subsequent shift to remote learning only highlighted this urgent need. The



period of remote learning due to school closures presented significant challenges, especially due to the digital divide, but also unprecedented opportunity for schools, students, and families to leverage technology to support instruction, learning, communication, and meaningful connections. The effective use of digital technology can assist educators in differentiating and personalizing learning; provide flexibility in scheduling and pace; and provide multiple entry points for students to engage in learning. As schools plan for reopening, technology and connectivity must remain essential areas of focus.

Regardless of whether in-person, remote, or hybrid models are utilized, schools should seek to provide students and teachers, for use in their places of residence, with access, to the extent practicable, to:

- A computing device, such as a laptop, desktop, Chromebook, iPad, or full-size tablet, for their exclusive use; and
- Consistent, reliable access to high-speed internet at a sufficient level to fully participate in remote/online learning (e.g., a hotspot).

In alignment with the Board of Regents' vision for teaching and learning, as articulated in the [USNY Statewide Learning Technology Plan](#) (2010), NYSED is committed to working with schools and partners to help ensure students have “all the time, everywhere” access to devices and high-speed internet, both at school and at their places of residence. NYSED is aware that in specific, limited areas of the state, high-speed internet is not yet available. Students' places of residence may not be connected to fiber, and/or cellular service may not be available. In these limited cases, assisting students in obtaining access to high-speed internet may not be possible at the school or district level at this time.

In the limited cases where students may still lack internet access in their places of residence, despite best efforts, districts and schools must ensure that all efforts are being made to provide some form of internet access availability, such as by boosting WIFI signals to parking lots.



## The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:

School and District Reopening Plans must include information on how the school will:

- Have knowledge of the level of access to devices and highspeed broadband all students and teachers have in their places of residence;
- To the extent practicable, address the need to provide devices and internet access to students and teachers who currently do not have sufficient access; and
- Provide multiple ways for students to participate in learning and demonstrate mastery of Learning Standards in remote or blended models, especially if all students do not yet have sufficient access to devices and/or high-speed internet.

***Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.***

The Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will administer a survey to families of students enrolled in our educational programs to ascertain the level of access to devices and internet connectivity. A separate survey will be administered to staff to ascertain similar information. Where students do not have access to devices or reliable internet connectivity, BOCES staff will collaborate with the student's home district to ensure the student has a device available. Additionally, where paper learning materials are more conducive to the student's learning and demonstration of mastery of the learning standards, these materials will be provided.

While the mandatory shift to remote learning in Spring 2020 has highlighted the work that must be done to ensure all New York State students have equitable access to technology, it also revealed a significant capacity for innovation. Districts and schools are encouraged to reflect on lessons learned during remote learning, and to assess the effectiveness of digital tools, platforms, and resources utilized.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

New York students are entitled to a free public education, even as we face the unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. All students must have the opportunity to feel safe, engaged, and excited about their learning, whether in-person, remote, or some combination of the two. At the heart of teaching and learning are the relationships that students have with their peers, teachers, and school community members. Students are searching for a return to their routines and a sense of normalcy,



so all efforts should acknowledge the importance of setting a positive routine and welcoming environment that supports students during this unpredictable time. During the upcoming school year, it is of the utmost importance that individual student needs and equity are put at the center of all learning experiences. Flexibility is essential when planning for the fall, and schools should be prepared to shift between in-person, remote learning, and a hybrid model in a way that is least disruptive to students.

All schools must provide 180 days of instruction each school year to their students. Instructional days shall be counted for programs that are delivered in-person, remotely, or through a hybrid model.

The following section includes information about the mandatory requirements and recommended practices for schools as they prepare for the 2020-2021 school year, including information about Prekindergarten, K-12 Programs, and Career and Technical Education.

**The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:**

- All schools must ensure that they have a continuity of learning plan for the 2020-2021 school year. Such plan must prepare for in-person, remote, and hybrid models of instruction.
- Instruction must be aligned with the outcomes in the [New York State Learning Standards](#).
- Equity must be at the heart of all school instructional decisions. All instruction should be developed so that whether delivered in-person, remotely, or through a hybrid model due to a local or state school closure, there are clear opportunities for instruction that are accessible to all students. Such opportunities must be aligned with State standards and include routine scheduled times for students to interact and seek feedback and support from their teachers.
- Instruction aligned to the academic program must include regular and substantive interaction with an appropriately certified teacher regardless of the delivery method (e.g., in person, remote or hybrid).
- Schools must create a clear communication plan for how students and their families/caregivers can contact the school and teachers with questions about their instruction and/or technology. This information needs to be accessible to all, available in multiple languages based on district or charter school need, widely disseminated, and include clear and multiple ways for students and families to contact schools and teachers (e.g., email, online platform, and/or by phone).

***Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.***

Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES is prepared to offer in-person, hybrid and remote learning experiences for students enrolled in BOCES programs. Students in campus-based programs are invited to attend every day and students in district-based programs will attend in accordance with the host district schedule.

Regardless of the delivery model, all instruction will be aligned to New York State Learning Standards, with an emphasis on providing equitable learning experiences for our students. To facilitate student learning in each of the instructional models, our teaching and learning plan will outline routines, expectations, and scheduled times for students to interact and seek feedback and support from their teachers, providing the



opportunity for students to have regular and substantive interaction with an appropriately certified teacher. Parents will be notified of our instructional plans through various communication channels, including the BOCES website, social media posts and direct contact.

To ensure high-quality remote learning experiences, BOCES will standardize the use of a limited number of platforms across our educational programs, to the extent practicable. Professional development will be provided to teachers in the use of the platforms, to include support for designing remote lessons in accordance with the principles of learning. Supplemental parent guides and tip sheets will be developed to assist parents in supporting their students in a remote environment.

### **Reopening Plan Mandatory Requirements**

- Districts and schools operating Prekindergarten programs must include Prekindergarten in the mandatory requirements outlined under Teaching and Learning above.
- All Prekindergarten programs that have a direct contract or a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NYSED must submit a Reopening Plan to the Office of Early Learning. Additional information on the format and submission requirements will be forthcoming.
- Districts that contract with eligible agencies, including CBOs, to provide Prekindergarten programs must attest that they have measures in place to ensure eligible agencies with whom they contract will follow health and safety guidelines outlined in this guidance and required by the New York State Department of Health. The district must also ensure their eligible agencies have a Continuity of Learning plan that addresses in-person, remote, and hybrid models of instruction.

*Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

The Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES Prekindergarten program will follow the same health and safety protocols as our K-12 student programs. Prekindergarten programming will be available to students every day and students will be socially distanced in the classroom. Our Prekindergarten program will follow our K-12 continuity of learning plan, providing flexibility for in-person, remote or hybrid instructional models.

### **Health and Safety Considerations**

State-administered Prekindergarten Programs should follow all guidelines set forth by the New York State Department of Health when planning for 2020-21 Prekindergarten programming. The following health and safety guidance should also be considered:

- Family style eating should not be practiced due to social distancing requirements and for health and safety requirements.

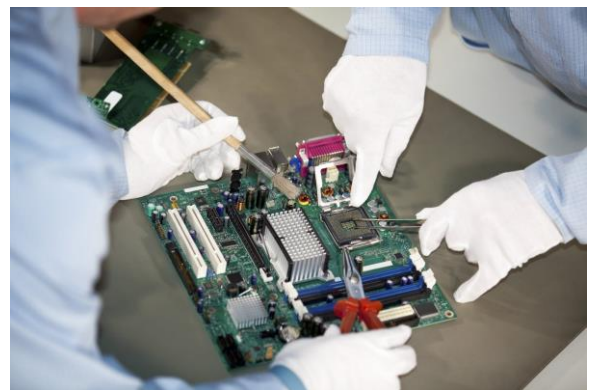
- For classrooms without an interior bathroom, an adult should accompany each child to and from the bathroom outside the classroom and ensure that proper handwashing protocols are followed.
- Napping materials should be sanitized daily and, to the extent practicable, assigned to individual students for the school year.
- Center-based and small group learning is a critical component of a Prekindergarten instructional program. Districts, schools, and eligible agencies (including CBOs) should:
  - avoid centers that include multiple students using it at one time, such as water/sand tables, sensory tables, etc.; o provide students with individual sets of materials to avoid sharing of common items; and
  - follow proper sanitation guidelines from the Department of Health after children have been at a learning center or in small groups.

## CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

### CTE Content and Delivery

While planning for CTE instruction, whether through in-person, remote, or hybrid models, school districts and BOCES must ensure that all applicable NYS Learning Standards are met and content that is critical for meeting these standards as well as requirements for applicable industry certifications or other postsecondary credentialing is identified. Additionally, for those programs in fields such as health sciences, barbering, and appearance enhancement where specific curricula and/or clinical hours are mandated by other state

agencies (Department of Health and Department of State respectively), consideration must be given to ensuring requirements of the programs are met. All planning should be done within the context of meeting NYS Department of Health guidelines for health and safety and social distancing policies. CTE laboratory spaces should be set up to accommodate all such policies.



CTE coursework must continue to be taught by appropriately certified CTE teachers. Instructors who are required to hold a NYS professional license for a particular content area (i.e., health sciences, barbering, appearance enhancement) must maintain such license without lapse. All CTE laboratory/clinical instruction and supervision must be delivered by the appropriately certified CTE teacher. Flexibility is allowed for other staff (under the guidance of the CTE teacher) to supervise student groups in a non-laboratory/clinical setting to better adhere to social distancing guidelines.

The Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will make all 19 of our Career and Technical Education programs available to our region's students. Curriculum and learning experiences will be prioritized to ensure alignment with all New

York's State Learning Standards as well as industry standards. Students enrolled in programming that requires the accrual of laboratory hours to meet licensure requirements will be provided many opportunities to accomplish said hours. Lastly, all CTE programs at the BOCES will strictly adhere to the aforementioned health and safety protocols.

## **ATHLETICS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Interscholastic sports, and extracurricular activities are an important aspect of student life and the school community. During the COVID shutdown students were unable to engage in and enjoy these social activities that are part of the fabric of any school program. As schools plan for reopening in September, attention should be paid to bringing back activities that can be conducted in a safe environment with appropriate social distancing protocols. In addition, schools might consider the creation of extracurricular activities that can be continued remotely in the event of another shut down.

Per the [reopening guidance issued by the NYS Department of Health](#), schools/districts must develop policies regarding extracurricular programs including which activities will be allowed, considering social distancing, PPE usage, and cleaning and disinfection, as well as risk of COVID-19 transmission (e.g., interscholastic sports, assemblies, and other gatherings). Policies should consider how to maintain cohorts, if applicable, or members of the same household. Schools/districts should refer to [DOH's "Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency"](#) to assist in development of these policies; however, interscholastic sports are not permitted at the time of publication of this guidance, and additional information on athletic activities is forthcoming.

### **Interscholastic Athletics**

Per the [NYDOH Guidance](#) Interscholastic sports are not permitted at the time of publication of this guidance, and additional information on athletic activities is forthcoming.

The [New York State Public High School Athletic Association](#) (NYSPHSAA) has established a COVID-19 Task Force comprised of NYSPHSAA member superintendents, principals, athletic directors and executive directors in addition to representatives from New York State Athletic Administrators Association and State Education Department. The Task Force will provide guidance when New York high school student-athletes are allowed to return to athletics. The task force is reviewing State and local health guidelines, as well as NYSED guidance, regarding the 2020-2021 school year to determine, among other things, the extent to which changes may be needed for each interscholastic sports season. The COVID-19 Task Force will continue to review all aspects of the fall 2020 season and the 2020-2021 school year related to the COVID-19 crisis, such as practice requirements; fan attendance; resocialization efforts; protocol; procedures; transportation; etc. As more information becomes available it will be shared on the [NYSPHSAA website](#)

## Considerations for Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

- Restrict and/or limit use of school/district facilities to district or school sponsored extracurricular activities and groups. If any external community organizations are permitted to use school/district facilities, schools/districts must ensure such organizations follow State and locally developed guidance on health and safety protocols.
- Maximize the use of technology and online resources to create or continue some extracurricular activities that may not need or has limited person-to-person contact.

## Extracurricular Activities and Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours

All extracurricular activities and external community organizations that use school facilities must follow State and local on health and safety protocols and must comply with applicable social distancing requirements and hygiene protocol.

- Follow [New York State Department of Health guidelines](#) and [CDC guidelines](#) on wearing of masks, handwashing and social distancing.
- For more information on cleaning and disinfection, review sanitation guidelines from CDC at [CDC Cleaning and Disinfection Community Facilities](#) , [CDC Reopening Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfection Public Spaces Workplaces, Businesses Schools and Homes](#)

The Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES has limited extracurricular activities. For those activities that are offered to students, all health and safety protocols will be followed. Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES is temporarily suspending the use of our facilities for external community organizations, to the extent practicable. In the rare event when an external community organization is permitted to use the facility, building usage will only occur when students are not in the building and the room(s) utilized will be disinfected before being used again. Anyone from an external community organization will be asked to wear a face mask and must adhere to all health and safety protocols described in this plan.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

Students with disabilities were particularly impacted by the closing of schools in spring 2020. In some cases, these students were unable to fully access the programs and services they needed to progress academically, particularly those programs and services that are best delivered in person. School reopening plans must always consider the special needs and requirements of students with disabilities.



Special education programs and services provide equity and access for students with disabilities to be involved in and to participate and progress in the general education curriculum. School reopening plans must provide a framework to ensure that all students with disabilities continue to have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. In consideration of the health, safety, and well-being of students, families, and staff, school reopening plans must be designed to enable transitioning between in-person, remote, and hybrid learning environments to ensure the provision of FAPE consistent with the changing health and safety conditions that exist.

NYSED's Office of Special Education (OSE) has created guidance documents to address frequently asked questions raised by parents, educators, administrators, and other key stakeholders regarding the implementation of special education programs and services and the provision of FAPE during this public health crisis. The OSE guidance is based on current information released from the United States Department of Education (USDE) as well as information contained in New York State Executive Orders and New York State Department of Health guidance. For your reference, links to the relevant federal and NYS resources are included at the end of this section.

### The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:

- The school reopening plan, whether services are provided in-person, remote, and/or through a hybrid model, must address the provision of FAPE consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those providing special education and services.
- The school reopening plan must address meaningful parent engagement in the parent's preferred language or mode of communication regarding the provision of services to his/her child to meet the requirements of the IDEA.
- The school reopening plan must address collaboration between the committees on preschool special education (CPSE) and committees on special education (CSE) and program providers representing the variety of settings where students are served to ensure there is an understanding of the provision of services consistent with the recommendations on individualized education programs (IEPs), plans for monitoring and communicating student progress, and commitment to sharing resources.

- The school reopening plan must ensure access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability related needs of students.
- The school reopening plan must address how it will document the programs and services offered and provided to students with disabilities as well as communications with parents, in their preferred language or mode of communication.

***Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.***

Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES offers robust special education programs in campus-based and district-based settings. All students enrolled in BOCES special education programs will be provided a Free Appropriate Public Education. Students who attend campus-based BOCES programs will have the opportunity to attend every day. Students in district-based BOCES programs will follow the instructional model of the host district. Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES staff will collaborate with the CSE/CPSE, district, and families to ensure student needs are being met.

In order to provide meaningful parent engagement, BOCES will maintain open lines of communication with all families, including those of students with disabilities through regular phone calls, meetings, emails, and/or social media. Additionally case managers will reach out to families on a regular basis regarding the provision of services to the student. The provision of services and parent communication will be documented to facilitate transparent and thorough communication with families. All communication will be delivered in the parent's preferred language and mode of communication.

Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will continue to collaborate with the CPSE/CSE to ensure a common understanding of the provision of services as outlined in the IEP. Students will have access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services and technology to meet their needs. Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will collaborate with the home district to ensure that each student has the necessary technology to access his/her educational program.



## BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND WORLD LANGUAGES

The spring 2020 COVID-19 crisis was extremely challenging for all students, but created particular difficulties for our most vulnerable students, including English Language Learners (ELLs). These challenges exacerbated existing educational inequities, like a lack of access to technology and reliable Wi-Fi needed for remote learning. It is critical that school reopening plans address the special needs of ELLs, and that all communications with ELL students and their families be in their preferred language and mode of communication.

As schools prepare to reopen schools in 2020-21, they must remain mindful of legal requirements and proactively address inequities, including, to the greatest extent feasible, providing support and instruction to all parents/guardians regarding the use of technology in their preferred language of communication. ELLs must be provided with the supports needed to close the potential learning loss that may have been a result of the school closures due to COVID-19.

As schools design their reopening plans, ELLs must be afforded the opportunity for full and equal participation whether it be through an in-person, remote, or hybrid model of instruction. While many ELLs may have benefitted from learning through remote learning platforms, it is important to consider their unique needs and to strengthen the home language and supports necessary for English language development utilizing synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Schools are strongly encouraged to examine resources available on the [NYSED Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages](#) website as they develop their plans, as their curriculum is reviewed, as instructional plans are developed, and as educational materials are selected. Districts and schools should contact their [Regional Bilingual Education Resource Networks \(RBERNs\)](#) if they need additional guidance/support during this process.



### The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:

- Qualifying schools that reopen using in-person or hybrid instruction will be required to complete the ELL identification process within 30 school days of the start of the school year for all students who enrolled during COVID-19 school closures in 2019-20, as well as all students who enroll during summer of 2020 and during the first 20 school days of the 2020-21 school year. After this 20day flexibility period, identification of ELLs must resume for all students within required 10 school days of initial enrollment as required by Commissioner's Regulations Part 154.
- Provision of required [instructional Units of Study](#) must be provided to all ELLs based on their most recently measured English language proficiency level during in-person or hybrid instruction.

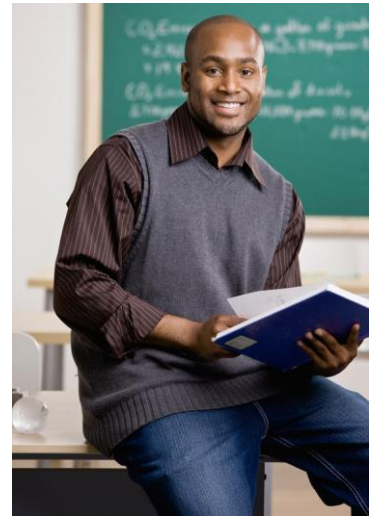
- Maintain regular communication with the parents/guardians and other family members of ELLs to ensure that they are engaged in their children’s education during the reopening process Provide all communications for parents/guardians of ELLs in their preferred language and mode of communication.

***Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.***

Regarding English Language Learners, Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will follow all processes and requirements outlined in Commissioner’s Regulations part 154. Communication will be available in parent’s preferred language in an effort to maintain communication and the parent’s engagement in their children’s education.

## **STAFFING**

Among school-based factors, teaching and school leadership are the two greatest influences on student learning. As LEAs create their plans for the 2020-2021 school year, they: must ensure that all teachers, school and district leaders, and pupil personnel service professionals hold a valid and appropriate certificate for their assignment; can continue to utilize incidental teaching when determining how to staff their classrooms; can also employ substitute teachers to address staffing needs for the allowable number of days, given their qualifications and teaching assignment; should work with educator preparation programs to identify appropriate ways in which student teachers can support classroom instruction; and should consider whether their currently approved APPR plans may need to be revised to be consistent with their plans for reopening, whether in-person, remote, or a combination of the two.



## **TEACHER & PRINCIPAL EVALUATION (EDUCATION LAW §3012-D/APPR)**

Consistent with research and best practices, the Department believes that well-designed and implemented teacher and principal evaluations (“Annual Professional Performance Review”; “APPR”) are an important tool to help support educator growth and development. With this goal in mind, the measures that are used as part of an annual evaluation should provide useful information to district administrators and the educators who are being evaluated that helps support educators and leverage their expertise. In turn, this helps ensure equitable access to effective educators for all students so that students are given the skills to succeed.

In this unprecedented time of school closures, LEAs are facing new challenges in evaluating and supporting their professional staff. Although LEAs should not penalize their educators as a result of the challenges to learning presented by the COVID-19 crisis, they must still make sure students are being taught as effectively as is practical to expect. Therefore, providing support that teachers and school leaders require is critical at this time.



Providing feedback and support to educators through the evaluation process can both equip them as they adjust their practice to distance learning, as well as guide focus areas for future growth once students and teachers return to their physical classrooms.

The following section includes information about the mandatory requirements and recommended practices for LEAs as they prepare for the 2020-2021 school year.

### **The following are mandatory requirements and must be included in the reopening plan:**

- Pursuant to Education Law 3012-d, each school district and BOCES must fully implement its currently approved APPR plans in each school year<sup>4</sup>.

*Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

In accordance with New York State Department of Health and New York State Education Department guidance, the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES is prepared to welcome back all students to our educational programs for in-person instruction. This model will allow for implementation of our approved APPR plan. Should a change to the instructional model be necessary, Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will modify our APPR plan to ensure successful implementation.

### **Reopening Plan Mandatory Requirements**

- Pursuant to Education Law 3001, individuals employed to teach in New York State public schools must hold a valid certificate. School districts, BOCES, and charter schools can review the SIRS 329 Staff Certifications report, which is available in Cognos for authorized users, to ensure that teachers hold the appropriate certificates for their teaching assignments. This report is refreshed weekly and lists all valid certificates for all staff identified in the school district, BOCES, or charter school Staff Snapshot.

*Based on the list above and the information provided, we believe we have satisfied the mandatory requirements.*

Our Human Resource function ensures that each certificated employee has the appropriate certification(s) requisite to operate in the area assigned. In some instances, we find it necessary to apply the “Incidental

---

<sup>4</sup> Governor Andrew Cuomo’s Executive Order (202.39) related to APPR only suspended the requirement to complete APPRs for the 2019-20 school year.

Teaching” avenue provided for under the State Education Department’s guidelines. Additionally, Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES Regional Certification Office serves to assist us with our certification needs.

## **STUDENT TEACHING**

Commissioner’s Regulations Section 52.21(b)(1) (xvi) defines student teaching as follows:

Student teaching means a structured, college-supervised learning experience for a student in a teacher education program in which the student teacher practices the skills being learned in the teacher education program and gradually assumes increased responsibility for instruction, classroom management, and other related duties for a class of students in the area of the certificate sought. These skills are practiced under the direct supervision of the certified teacher who has official responsibility for the class.

Any student teacher at the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES will serve under the direct supervision of a certified teacher and will follow all health and safety protocols expected of our entire staff.