

SIMSBURY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PLAN FOR REOPENING

August 2020



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Jenna Caulfield – Parent Representative

Simsbury Public Schools Teaching & Learning Task Force

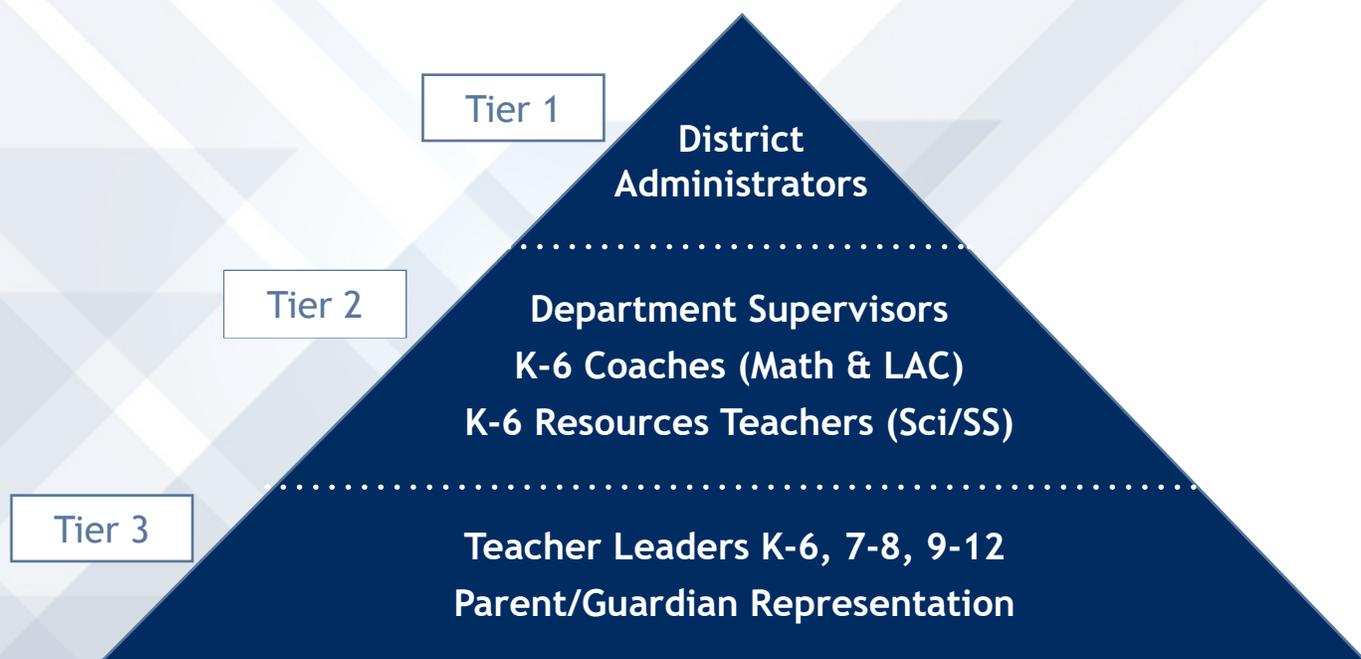


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Message from the Superintendent

Our world has changed significantly in the past several months, disrupting both our professional and personal lives on a variety of fronts. I want to start by thanking all of our stakeholders for your support, effort, and feedback as we navigate through uncharted waters. We have demonstrated a great deal of strength as a community. Despite the many challenges thrust upon us, we continue to pull together in large part due to the support of our parents/guardians, the dedication of our students, and the efforts and commitment of our staff.

As we prepare to reopen our schools in the fall, we are faced with uncertainty due to the COVID-19 virus. On June 29, 2020, the Connecticut State Department of Education released its plan to reopen schools. The plan entitled “Adapt, Advance, and Achieve” requires all districts to create and submit a plan that addresses the requirements outlined by the state to fully reopen K-12 schools in the fall. We are fortunate that, at the current time, we in Connecticut are able to engage in conversation about bringing our students back. Connecticut is currently viewed as a state with very low transmission of the virus and is doing well compared to many other states in the country. However, we also recognize that this is a fluid situation, and the ability of school districts to adapt and remain flexible will be the key to a successful year for our staff, families, and students. As such, the Connecticut plan also requires school districts to articulate a half capacity hybrid approach to the school schedule, where approximately half of the students attend in-person while the other half learn remotely. In addition, for those students who choose not to come back to our school buildings in the fall, our plan articulates the distance learning option that will be available. Finally, if we find ourselves in a more severe situation with high community spread that would require the shutdown of the school system, we would transition to an all distance learning model.

The Simsbury Public Schools’ number one priority is to return students and staff back to our school facilities safely this fall. We have grounded our re-entry plan in the following four guiding principles:

- *Health and safety of students and staff*
- *High-quality, engaging instruction for all students*
- *Social and emotional health and support*
- *Access and equity*

As a district committed to continuous improvement, we will refine and improve the elements outlined in this plan over time. We recognize that nothing here is set in stone. As long as the virus is active in our state and our communities, there will be some element of risk, and the district will need to adjust accordingly. I am committed to proactive communication regarding our re-opening and will continue to be in contact frequently.

As our team has worked through the planning process, we have done so in conjunction with other local districts and the Farmington Valley Health District. We will continue to keep you apprised of any changes or updates in guidance that we receive. This document is meant to serve as a guide as we move forward with plans to return our students and staff to school. We acknowledge that this document does not address every detail of our operations or of the three learning models, as these continue to be a work in progress. I want to thank you for your continued patience, trust, support, and partnership as we face the road ahead.



Matt Curtis

Superintendent of Schools

Guiding Principles

There are four guiding principles that drive our decision-making surrounding the reopening of the Simsbury Public Schools.

Health and safety of students and staff

High-quality, engaging instruction for all students

Social and emotional health and support

Access and equity

Our schools will reinforce healthy practices, including cohorting, social distancing, face covering, and self screening.

Using assessment data to gauge student learning and providing individualized instruction will occur whether instruction is in person, delivered using a hybrid model, or full distance learning.

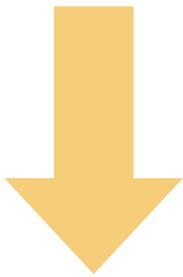
Our schools will reopen knowing that the COVID-19 pandemic has created trauma and stress for staff, students, and families.

All students will be provided equal access to technology, supports, and quality instruction.

Reopening Overview

On June 29, 2020, the Connecticut State Department of Education released its plan to reopen schools in the state, entitled *Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together*. The state plan requires all districts to fully reopen and prepare for all students to return, while also determining how we would operate at half capacity (a hybrid model) and how we can transition to full remote learning. Distance learning is also to be offered to students. This decision by the state is based on the current trend data in Connecticut. These plans may need to be modified should the data change. Below is an outline of the educational opportunities based on the level of transmission as we open schools and continue through the school year.

LOW COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION



- Schools operate up to 100% in-person with a distance learning option in place for those families that choose not to send their child to the school building.
- Daily attendance rates monitored
- Teaching and reinforcing of healthy hygiene
- Masks that cover the nose and mouth required for students and staff
- Buses at full capacity, masks required
- Social distancing in place
- Cohorting of students K-6, 7-8, 9-12, where possible
- Cleaning and disinfecting in place
- Regular communication with Director of Health at the Farmington Valley Health District

LOW TO MODERATE COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION

- Instruction is up to 100% in-person or 50%/50% hybrid
- Daily attendance rates monitored and shared with local health officials
- Concentrated reinforcement of healthy hygiene
- Masks that cover the nose and mouth required for students and staff
- Buses at reduced capacity, masks required
- Sports and extracurricular activities may be suspended
- Heightened social distancing in place
- Increased cleaning and sanitization protocols
- Active preparation for distance learning and/or short-term school dismissals resulting in possible distance learning
- Coordination of possible closure with Director of Health at the Farmington Valley Health District

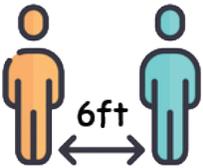
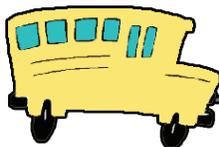


HIGH COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION

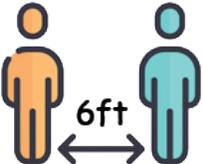


- Instruction is 100% distance learning
- Attendance for distance learning is monitored based on participation from home
- Communication to home on healthy hygiene practices
- Bus transportation suspended
- Sports and extracurricular activities suspended
- Quarantine measures in place
- Classroom and buildings sanitized and closed
- Order of closure from Farmington Valley Health District and/or Executive Order from Governor's office

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

	<p>Stay home if feeling ill Students must stay home if they are feeling sick, have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19. In addition, students must quarantine for 14 days if they have traveled to a state included in Governor Lamont’s travel advisory.</p>
	<p>Morning health check by parents required We request that parents/guardians screen their children before sending to school in order to prevent transmission among the school population. Check to make sure your child has no COVID-19 symptoms (dry cough, sore throat, sudden loss of taste or smell, etc.), and that their temperature is below 100 degrees Fahrenheit.</p>
	<p>Face masks required The State of CT is requiring that all students wear a face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth unless there is a prohibitive medical reason. Protocols for “mask breaks” during the day are under development. We ask students to use their own face coverings. We will supply disposable masks as needed. Face shields may be worn in addition, but not in place, of masks.</p>
	<p>Social distancing required Students must maintain social distancing to the greatest extent possible. Students are expected to practice social distancing when entering and upon exiting the building, in classrooms, and moving throughout the school. Students will remain in their cohort throughout the day. Hallway transitions will be minimized at all levels.</p>
	<p>Frequent hand washing or hand sanitizing expected Students must engage in frequent hand washing or sanitizing upon arrival and at dismissal, before and after eating, before and after using the restroom, after playing outside, after having close contact with others, after using shared surfaces or tools, and after blowing nose, coughing, sneezing, or touching one’s face. Hand washing and hand sanitizing stations will be available throughout the school buildings for use by students and staff. Signs to stop the spread will be posted throughout buildings utilizing grade level appropriate texts, visuals, and languages.</p>
	<p>School bus protocol Face masks must be in place prior to boarding the bus. Buses will be loaded back to front. Students will not be allowed to change seats during the route. Students may not change buses. Students will be expected to ride the same bus to and from school in the morning and afternoon daily.</p>

ADULT EXPECTATIONS

	<p>Stay home if feeling ill Teachers, staff, and outside visitors must stay home if they are feeling sick, have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19. In addition, you must quarantine for 14 days if they have traveled to a state included in Governor Lamont’s travel advisory.</p>
	<p>Morning self-screening required We request that teachers, staff, and outside visitors self-screen prior to coming to school in order to prevent transmission among the school population. Check to make sure you have no COVID-19 symptoms (dry cough, sore throat, sudden loss of taste or smell, etc.), and that your temperature is below 100 degrees Fahrenheit.</p>
	<p>Masks required All adults must wear a face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth unless there is a prohibitive medical reason. Teachers will be allowed to remove masks during direct instruction if the required 6-foot distancing has been achieved. We ask that staff use their own face coverings. We will supply disposable masks as needed. Face shields may be worn in addition, but not in place, of masks.</p>
	<p>Social distancing required Teachers, staff, and outside visitors must maintain social distancing to the greatest extent possible. Teachers, staff, and outside visitors are expected to practice social distancing when entering and upon exiting the building, in classrooms, and moving throughout the school.</p>
	<p>Frequent hand washing or hand sanitizing expected Teachers, staff and outside visitors must engage in frequent hand washing or sanitizing upon arrival and at departure, before and after eating, before and after using the restroom, after having close contact with others, after using shared surfaces or tools, and after blowing nose, coughing, sneezing, or touching one’s face. Hand washing and hand sanitizing stations will be available throughout the school buildings for use by students and staff. Signs to stop the spread will be posted throughout buildings utilizing grade level appropriate texts, visuals, and languages.</p>

Keeping schools open is everyone’s responsibility!

Calendar & Transition Planning

On July 14, 2020 the CT Board of Education voted to waive up to a maximum of 3 school days for schools to plan re-opening activities, preparation, and training on new protocols and processes implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic. Use of these days is contingent upon schools using this opportunity for additional flexibility prior to the start of the school year. The days will be used to provide support for school staff and families, so the community can build capacity to safely transition back to in-person classes, through training, preparation of facilities and classroom set-up, increased social-emotional support, and any other transition planning as recommended by the school leadership.

Recent adjustment of student days to allow for necessary professional development/front-loading for staff:

- August 24, 2020–August 28, 2020: Professional Development (PD) Days
 - Health and safety protocols
 - Social and emotional health – information and practices
 - Organization of physical spaces
 - Technology training for staff
 - The week has been designated as a training time for staff prior to student orientations. Supporting the social emotional needs of students upon their return to the building will be a major emphasis of this PD.
 - COVID-19 Compliance Liaison and Human Resources Department will produce a training video covering all safety protocols to be shown during this week.
- August 31 and September 1: Student Orientation Days (Varied Grade Levels)
 - Principals will ensure that instructional time is given for the purpose of students’ education relative to policies and protocols.
 - In-person and distance learning activities
 - Review classroom/building layouts and new protocols
 - Technology training for students
 - Instructional videos and developmentally appropriate materials will be developed to address public health policies and protocols for classroom use/student education.
 - Use of masks and face coverings will be a primary emphasis of our training. All schools are developing protocols for “mask breaks” during the day, primarily during time outside.
- September 2–4, 2020: Student Early Release Days/Adult PD
- September 8, 2020: Full days begin

OPENING SCHOOL CALENDAR				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
August 24	August 25	August 26	August 27	August 28
Staff PD	Staff PD	Staff PD	Staff PD	Staff PD
August 31	September 1	September 2	September 3	September 4
Students in shifts	Students in shifts	Student half-day	Student half-day	Student half-day
September 7	September 8	September 9	September 10	September 11
Labor Day Holiday	Full student day	Full student day	Full student day	Full student day

Health and Safety of Staff and Students: Mitigation Strategies

COHORTING

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS In almost all cases, student groupings will be limited to a maximum of 18 students, and those students will remain static throughout the day—remaining together for class, recess, lunch, specials, etc. In a few cases, classes may exceed 18 students, but those cohorts are being housed in oversized classrooms (art, music, etc.) that allow for social distancing. Specials teachers (art, music, PE) will travel to the cohort’s classroom, and specials will not rotate on a day-to-day basis in order to limit the contact that those teachers have across the school population. Specials classes will occur outside, where feasible.

In grades 5 and 6, teachers will continue to “departmentalize” with one instructor, for instance, teaching math and science while a colleague teaches writing and social studies. In those cases, the teachers will transition between classrooms while the student cohort remains static in its own space and desks.

MIDDLE SCHOOL The cohort structure at the middle school level will be the assigned team that the student is on. Teams consist of approximately 100 students that share teachers for core subjects (English, math, science, and social studies). This year, students will remain “on team” when they travel to music, PE/health, unified arts, and world languages. In the past, students mixed with peers from other teams when they travelled to those subjects, but the HJMS schedule has been revamped over the summer to prevent that from happening in 2020-21. Team classrooms have been situated as close as possible to one another so that traffic patterns in the school will minimize interactions between teams and the 7/8 grade levels.

HIGH SCHOOL Given the wide variety of elective course selections and academic levels, cohorting is not a strategy that works effectively at the high school level—a fact that was readily admitted in the reopening document issued by the State of Connecticut. Given that constraint, we have chosen a strategy of limiting the movement that students have among each other on any given day. Therefore, every day at SHS will be a “block day,” with odd periods and even periods alternating in longer instructional segments. Students are certainly used to this structure given that it has been the organizational method for instruction on Wednesdays and Thursdays in Simsbury for a number of years.

SCHEDULING

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS Windows for arrival time and dismissal procedures will be extended to help with the organization of these activities while maintaining social distancing. Future communications from individual principals will outline the details. Otherwise, elementary schedules will remain largely unchanged, though specials may need to be a few minutes shorter in order to allow for teacher transitions. As mentioned above, specials will not rotate on a day-to-day basis in order to limit the number of students in the school with whom those teachers interact. Lunch will be eaten in classrooms and be contiguous to the recess block.

MIDDLE SCHOOL Henry James will run a block schedule each day, alternating longer instructional periods of odd period days (1, 3, 5, 7) with even period days (2, 4, 6, 8). This strategy will minimize mixing of students on any given day within the overall team structure. Like the elementary schools, windows for arrival and dismissal will be extended to minimize crowding, and details will be forwarded in August by Principal Scott Baker.

HIGH SCHOOL As mentioned above, SHS will also run an alternating block schedule of odd period days (1, 3, 5, 7) and even period days (2, 4, 6, 8) in order to lessen the mixing of students on any given day. Extended windows of time for arrival and dismissal have been built and will be communicated to families in August by Principal Steve Patrina.

NOTE: At the secondary level (HJMS and SHS), the alternating block day schedule will remain in use no matter which instructional delivery model is in place (in-person school, hybrid, or distance learning). If public health conditions require us to pivot to a different platform, students and teachers can expect a predictable structure for classes that will hopefully ease those potential transitions.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Seating arrangements in classrooms have been designed to maximize social distancing; in the vast majority of cases, students can be seated at least five feet apart and will be wearing masks. At the elementary level, cohorts have been limited to 18 students in order to accomplish that level of social distancing, and cohorts that are larger than that number are being moved to larger spaces (music rooms, art rooms, etc.). At the secondary level, classes that are larger are being scheduled into oversized spaces such as science rooms, some oversized classrooms, or the amphitheater at SHS in order to maximize social distancing.

Principals are working with the District's COVID-19 Compliance Officer (Neil Sullivan) to develop specific protocols for social distancing during arrival, dismissal, recess, lunch, etc. Arrival and dismissal windows will be expanded to mitigate the kind of crowding that would typically occur. In addition, hallway transitions at all levels will be minimized through alterations to the daily schedule.

FACE COVERINGS

Connecticut's reopening plan requires that masks or face coverings be worn by all staff and students unless there is a prohibitive medical reason. The mask must completely cover the nose and mouth, and students will be trained about how to properly wear a face covering. While we expect that most members of the school community will provide their own masks or face coverings, we have purchased a large supply of disposable masks that will be provided if somebody forgets one or does not have one. While face shields may be worn, they are considered to be protection that is in addition to rather than in place of a mask.

Protocols for mask breaks are in development. Times when students are outside and can easily accomplish social distancing are ideal for mask breaks, and all schools are planning for more frequent use of outdoor spaces. Teachers may also allow for short and limited indoor mask breaks when students are seated in a socially distant manner. The state guidelines also indicate that teachers can remove their masks "during instruction" as long as they have achieved a full six feet of social distancing from the class.

LUNCH

At the elementary level, meals will be delivered to classrooms so that lunch can be eaten in that cohort's space. At the secondary level, all meals will be offered in a Grab & Go style, where students will pick up a prepackaged option, select their milk, and move directly to the register. Social distancing, plexiglass cashier stations, and touchpad sanitation will be utilized. Families are encouraged to utilize pre-paid options and accounts (cash, checks or MyPaymentsPlus) for efficiency of sale.

If we utilize the hybrid model for learning, students may access lunch options as noted above while in-person. On distance learning days, students will have the opportunity to pre-order and take home lunches for distance learning days.

RECESS

Recess will be reconfigured to allow each school to design social-distancing opportunities throughout the day for students to have simultaneous movement breaks and to allow time without face coverings. There will be a more detailed plan provided by each school.

IN PERSON VISITATION

Unless approved by the Principal and the Superintendent of Schools, there will be no visitors to school. Schools will be modifying their procedures for late arrivals and early pick-ups to limit the exposure of parents/guardians within the school. When it is not feasible for virtual meetings, social distancing and face masks will be required for meetings.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The Principal, in conjunction with the Superintendent of Schools, will approve school assemblies, in-school concerts, other in-school programs and field trips with a larger number of student participants. Decisions will be made based on the size of the activity, ability to maintain proper social distancing, and safety expectations.

ATHLETICS

At the end of June, the CIAC put out guidelines for return to play for the State of CT member schools. This statement specifically addressed the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the deconditioning and skill regression that likely resulted among student-athletes. As such, the organization feels it is important for student-athletes to re-engage in structured physical activity as soon as possible in order to return safely to sports. "The CIAC believes that it is essential to the physical, mental, and social-emotional well-being of Connecticut students/youth to safely re-engage in extracurricular experiences, physical activity and athletic competition." The CIAC is expected to update their announcement in early August based on the most current information from the Governor and local health officials at that time.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The district is considering both in-person and virtual extra-curricular activities, depending on community transmission factors and outside guidance. If held virtually, each school must ensure equity by examining the time of day these opportunities are offered, as all students may not be able to participate immediately after

school. The district shall make provisions, when possible, to provide opportunities for students to participate in enriching activities across schools. All protocols for masks and face coverings, social distancing, and hand hygiene remain in place for in-person after school programming.

During the transition back to school (through Columbus Day), in-person extracurricular activities are limited to those sanctioned by the CIAC. The district will revisit that decision in October.

TRANSPORTATION

Based on low transmission rates in Connecticut and the community, guidance from the state has provided the following protocols:

- Provide back-up masks if students do not have face covering when boarding the bus or van
- Face coverings or masks should be in place prior to boarding the bus
- Develop clear expectations for drivers related to face coverings and other safety measures
- Load bus from back to front
- Do not allow passengers to change seats during the route
- Plan to increase cleaning and sanitizing for all vehicles, and keep associated logs
- Students may not change buses. Students will be expected to ride the same bus to and from school in the morning and afternoon daily
- District will send communication to families of bus passengers to describe new loading procedures, and these will be practiced during student orientation on August 31st and September 1st

Health Practices & Protocols

HAND HYGIENE

- Frequent hand washing for both students and staff, including key transitions (lunch, recess, etc.)
- Hand washing routines explicitly taught skills at the elementary level
- Hand sanitizer has already been purchased in bulk
- Bottles of hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms, and custodians will be able to refill from the 55-gallon drums
- Hand sanitizing stations placed throughout school, including main entrances
- Plexiglass partitions and shields are being installed/purchased
- Seek out and follow all medical advice offered to us through our partnership with the Farmington Valley Health District

CLEANING PROCEDURES

- Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of classrooms on a daily basis. To that end, we have purchased electrostatic spraying machines that will increase efficiency in disinfecting surfaces
- Head custodians developing plans for overtime and added manpower
- Bathrooms cleaned and disinfected twice daily
- Use of cleaning logs—occupants know that space has been sanitized
- Disinfecting wipes remain a hard-to-get item—vendor has told us that we are a priority institution and that the supply chain will catch up before the start of school

- Added sanitizing wipes to the district’s “keep stock” program
- If no wipes for start of the year, spray bottles and paper towels
- [CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)

VENTILATION

- Following guidance issued by Department of Public Health (DPH)
- Working with commissioned engineers to evaluate, adjust, and balance HVAC systems
- Goal is to maximize fresh air intake
- Improve air filtering, where possible
- Air conditioners set to low speed and direct flow away from students
- Box fans must send air out windows
- Ceiling fans must draw air up
- Take advantage of outdoor space
- [CT Department of Public Health Guidance for School Ventilation Systems](#)

SELF-SCREENING FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

- Stay home if you are sick!
- Parents/Guardians and staff members: Requested self-screening/check prior to leaving for school:
 - No COVID-19 symptoms (dry cough, sore throat, sudden loss of taste or smell, etc.)
 - Temperature below 100 degrees Fahrenheit*

*Given the number of students and staff that would need to be monitored on a daily basis, we have been advised against daily temperature screenings upon arrival to school.

COVID-19 CASES IN SCHOOL

A CONFIRMED CASE IN THE SCHOOL BUILDING	
 	Assess risk with local health officials
	Communicate to parents/guardians and school community
	Schools may implement a short-term closure (2-5 days CDC recommendation) to clean and contact trace

In consultation with local health officials, determine appropriate next steps, including decision on an extended closure.

CONTAINMENT

- Students who are symptomatic while entering school or become symptomatic during the school day will be separated from others immediately and assessed by the school nurse. Students exhibiting symptoms will be required to continue to wear a mask and wait in a supervised, designated isolated area through which others do not enter until the student has left for home. If more than one student is in the isolation area, physical distancing will be maintained. The school nurse will have a plan for treating other students in the health office, recognizing that not all symptoms are COVID-19 related. The school nurse will advise parents/guardians of students who are ill that they are not to return to school until they have met CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation. Students will be allowed to return 24 hours after symptoms resolve without the use of fever-reducing medicines, or with a note from their healthcare provider, or

with a documented negative COVID-19 test. The school nurse will monitor testing results of students once made available by parents, complying with relevant privacy and health laws. If a student has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, the school nurse and the building principal will contact the Central Office. The Superintendent of Schools will immediately notify the Director of Health for the Farmington Valley Health District. In addition, the superintendent will be notified by school personnel if a student is suspected of being sick, maintaining confidentiality in accordance with FERPA, privacy expectations, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- The Superintendent of Schools or designee may exclude staff and/or students who have signs or symptoms of COVID-19 until a documented negative COVID-19 test result or note from a healthcare provider clearing them to return to schools is provided. The Superintendent of Schools or designee may exclude staff and/or students who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 for a duration that is appropriate given the situation. The Superintendent of Schools may suspend any activity or program at any time due to health and safety risks. Students must stay home if they are feeling sick, have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19.
- In order to prevent transmission among the school population, morning health checks are the responsibility of families and staff prior to school arrival. Check to ensure temperature is below 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit and observe for symptoms associated with COVID 19 outlined by public health officials.
- If a student, staff member, volunteer, or visitor who has been present in school has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, the School Nurse and the building principal will contact the Central Office and the Superintendent of Schools. In addition, the Superintendent will be notified by school personnel that a student is suspected of being sick, maintaining confidentiality in accordance with FERPA, privacy expectations, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- The Superintendent of Schools notifies the Director of Health for the Farmington Valley Health District immediately. The Farmington Valley Health District will assess risk of further transmission in the school. In conjunction with the Farmington Valley Health District, decisions will be made concerning: contact tracing, closure, cleaning and reopening of schools. The decision to suspend or close a school (or the entire school district) will be made by the Superintendent or designee based on information and recommendation from the Director of Health at the Farmington Valley Health District. Board of Education members and town officials are notified of closure as well as the State Department of Education.
- Schools may implement a short-term closure (2-5 days) or longer regardless of community spread if an infected person has been in a school building. The CDC currently recommends dismissal of students and most staff for 2-5 days. This initial short-term dismissal allows time for the Director of Health for the Farmington Valley Health District to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school. This allows the Superintendent, in consultation with the Farmington Valley Health District, to determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended dismissal duration is needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19. This is subject to change as the Connecticut Department of Public Health will be providing a tiered system to assist leaders and define the decision-making approach should partial or full class-cancellation become necessary. It is anticipated this will be available at the time decisions will need to be made related to containment and possible school class cancellations.
- Response teams at each school are chaired by the school principal.

ISOLATION ROOM

Each school shall designate an isolation room for students who exhibit symptoms consistent with COVID-19. This room will be located near the nurse's office, if possible. A log of who enters the room will be maintained.

Communication Plan and Practices



Reopen Simsbury Public Schools
Parent/Guardian Questionnaire

Since the onset of the pandemic, the Simsbury Public Schools have established communication protocols that ensure timely dissemination of policies and updates related to school closure, distance learning, and our reopen plans. Communication in large part will originate from the Superintendent's office via listserv and will be posted on the school district coronavirus website. Important information will be shared via social media platforms such as our Facebook Page. Building principals will establish regular updates as to

their specific building-based plans as we move toward the start of the school year.

The Simsbury Public Schools has and will continue to survey parents and staff for important input regarding our programming. As we are in a fluid situation, we do plan to send a survey to parents on August 3rd to determine your choice to return to school or engage in distance learning. This information will assist us in making final staffing determinations and class sections for the fall. Any Executive Orders from the office of the Governor or updated information from the Department of Education as to the status of schools and reopening will be communicated to ensure all stakeholders are informed of information that may impact our planning to reopen in the fall.

Provided are a listing and timeline of communication pertaining to the reopening of schools.

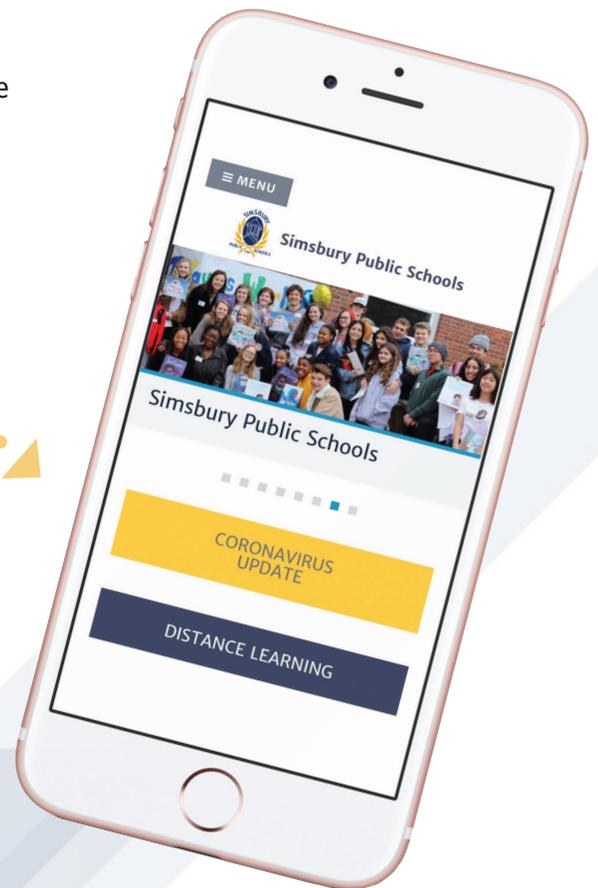
- District and staff listserv, posting on the school district website coronavirus page, school-based listserv, Facebook, Board of Selectmen meeting communications.
- Listserv to families and staff schedule.
 - ✓ June 25 - CT to reopen schools
 - ✓ July 1 - Guidelines for reopening
 - ✓ July 6 - Parent survey
 - ✓ July 9 - Survey reminder
 - ✓ July 15 - Reopening plans update
 - ✓ July 20 - BOE presentation reminder
 - ✓ July 23 - BOE re-opening plan presentation and video; calendar change
 - ✓ July 29 - Community Re-open Plan
 - ✓ Week of August 3 - Second parent survey

Board of Education meeting dates dedicated to discussions on reopening our schools in the fall.

- ✓ May 26
- ✓ June 9
- ✓ June 23
- ✓ July 21
- ✓ July 28
- ✓ August 11
- ✓ August 25

Return to Simsbury Schools (RSS) Task Force meeting dates.

- ✓ May 11
 - ✓ May 27
 - ✓ June 8
 - ✓ June 22
 - ✓ July 8
 - ✓ July 22
 - ✓ August 5
- If an emergency closure is necessary, communication will be provided via district and staff listserv, posted on the school district website coronavirus page, and Facebook. Communications will also be distributed via School Messenger emergency call system and Town Manager notification to residents.
 - The district posts a [Coronavirus Update link](#) on our home page.



Delivery of High Quality Instruction

Message from the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning

The Simsbury Public Schools have been actively planning and preparing for the start of the 2020-21 academic year. As you can imagine, this work has been challenging and incredibly complex. On June 29, 2020, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) released the reopening schools plan, entitled Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together, to districts in order to guide expectations and to focus district discussions about instructional delivery. Since then, the SPS Reopen Teaching & Learning Task Force members have reviewed and discussed the requirements, guidelines, and recommendations that define the three teaching and learning models for reopening schools, understanding that no one option can address all of the instructional, operational and logistical challenges that face our school system. These three models are as follows: 1) a full return to in-person schooling (with a distance learning option for families who choose not to send), 2) a hybrid model with about 50% of students in school and about 50% of students at home on a given day, and 3) a revamped distance learning model for all.

Significant time has been spent to reflect, to learn, and to improve upon our practices following the abrupt departure from school in March, inclusive of feedback and survey data from staff, students, and families. The members of the SPS Reopen Teaching & Learning Task Force have worked to improve instructional practices, uses of technology, support services, and student learning expectations to ensure that students will grow and reach higher levels of academic achievement across all learning models. Above all, we are committed to ensuring that every component of these learning models are examined through the lens of equity and excellence, while simultaneously ensuring the health and safety of our students and staff.

In preparing to reopen the 2020-21 academic year, our goal is to bring all of our students and staff back to school safely -- while acknowledging the fluidity of potential change in these three learning models throughout the months ahead depending upon trends in public health data and viral spread. At the center of the discussions and decision-making process has been the understanding of providing equitable opportunities for learning, using creative methods to support all students, and supporting the social/emotional learning for all stakeholders in the approaches used. Our students and staff deserve a strong foundation for a safe and positive learning environment that will enhance the ability for students to succeed in school, while preparing all learners, K-12, to be adaptable, flexible, and able to respond to an ever-changing world.

*Families that choose to opt into voluntary **Distance Learning (DL)** for their child(ren) at the start of the school year will receive their instructional program online while other students attend in-person instruction. The elementary (K-6) students will be assigned to a district classroom for their 2020-21 grade level with the DL teacher implementing the curriculum aligned to their grade level using the Google Classroom or Seesaw platforms for delivery. Students in grades 7-12 will be expected to login daily to their teacher classrooms as assigned by the periods listed on their schedule using the G Suite Enterprise platform. The SPS distance learning instruction will be a balanced combination of synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (independent) instruction and learning throughout the regular school day schedules, which is developmentally aligned and appropriate to student grade levels and courses.*

Despite these unprecedented and uncertain times in education, the Simsbury Public Schools continue to be committed to engaging all students in rigorous, dynamic, and relevant learning experiences in alignment with the Simsbury Vision of the Graduate. The following pages will provide a full overview of the in-person, hybrid, and fully distanced learning models.



Erin Murray
Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning

SPS CONTINUUM FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

The Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning, Director of Elementary Curriculum, and school administrators are leading and working collaboratively with SPS educators to ensure that all students are engaged in rigorous, dynamic, and relevant learning experiences in alignment with the Simsbury Vision of the Graduate.

IN-PERSON LEARNING	HYBRID LEARNING	FULL DISTANCE LEARNING
Fall Reopening (low community transmission)	Alternate Model (low to moderate community transmission)	Alternate Model (high community transmission)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students attend in-person school with mitigation strategies • Full distance learning option available K-12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced student attendance with mitigation strategies • Alternating attendance (50% in school/50% at home) • Full distance learning option available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0% in-building student attendance

Delivery of high-quality instruction to students, regardless of delivery model

SPS GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ALL TEACHING & LEARNING MODELS

- Social and emotional support will be continued to promote student and family well-being.
- High quality, engaging instruction with clear expectations for learning outcomes in each content area / grade level—communicated clearly to students/families.
- Educators will regularly assess student understandings in order to identify effective methods to reach all students in order to address learning gaps and to provide learning extensions.
- Equity and rigorous content is at the forefront of all decisions on what and how to teach students.
- Educators will structure instructional time flexibly and creatively to maximize the amount of support students receive, as well as allow them to work at their own pace and on differentiated content/tasks.
- Educators will have set times to collaboratively create unit/lesson plans on an ongoing basis Professional Learning Community (PLC) conversations.
- PLC and data teams will continually meet to identify needs of students in order to determine necessary support.
- Daily attendance rates will be monitored for all students (in-school/Distance Learning).

IN-PERSON LEARNING

Structures for 100% In-person Teaching & Learning (with a plan for those families choosing to participate in DL)

- K-6 Class Cohort model, 7-8 Team Cohort Model, 9-12 Block Schedule**
 - Clearly articulated grade level schedules K-6
 - Grades 5/6 Departmentalization of content areas, students will not move classrooms
 - K-6 Specials will require teachers to move classrooms, students will not move classrooms
 - Block Schedule in grades 7-12 (Blue Day - Periods 1-3-5-7; Gold Day - 2-4-6-8)
- High quality, engaging, rigorous instruction for learning outcomes in each content area**
 - Standards-based instruction in all content areas/grade levels
 - Equitable access to learning
 - Regular assessment of student learning reviewed through school-based Data Teams
 - Time for teacher collaboration (PLC) to regularly communicate about curriculum, instruction, & student learning
 - Ongoing Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) instruction and support
- Purposeful use of technology to enhance instructional practices**
- Attendance, Assessment, and Grading**
 - Ongoing assessment of understanding and feedback to students
 - K-6 Standards-Based Report Cards; 7-8 Trimester Grading; 9-12 Quarter Grading
 - Attendance taken in/out of school
- Face coverings/masks for students and staff while inside buildings at all times**
 - Students & staff encouraged to bring their own
 - Schools will supply, when necessary
 - Periodic mask breaks
- Classrooms and all school spaces set up to achieve maximum distance between individuals**
- Required hand washing/hand-sanitizing throughout the school day**

FAMILIES CHOOSING DISTANCE LEARNING DURING IN-PERSON LEARNING

Comprehensive virtual learning opportunities for students not participating in in-person instruction when the school year begins

- K-6 students assigned to a grade level Distance Learning teacher that will be maintained throughout the year
- K-6 students from throughout the district will be grouped by a district grade level teacher, not by school
- 7-12 students access courses/classes virtually on a daily basis based on their schedule

ELEMENTARY (GRADE LEVEL SCHEDULES WILL VARY)

In Person Sample Schedule	
8:00-8:45	Staggered Student Arrival and Student Transition Time
8:45-10:00	ELA Block <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Aloud • Reading Workshop • Language Arts
10:00-11:00	Specials/Social Emotional Instruction
11:00-12:00	Math Block
12:00-1:00	Lunch/Recess
1:00-2:00	Writing Workshop or Science/SS Block <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing x3 per week • Science / SS x2 per week
2:15	Staggered Student Dismissal

**HJMS / SHS
BLOCK SCHEDULE**

BLUE DAY (PERIODS 1, 3, 5, 7)

GOLD DAY (PERIODS 2, 4, 6, 8)

Time		
Arrival		
	Period 1	Period 2
	Period 3	Period 4
Lunch		
	Period 5	Period 6
	Period 7	Period 8
Dismissal		

HYBRID LEARNING

Structures for 50/50 Hybrid Teaching & Learning

- ❑ **Hybrid Instruction is 50% in-person and 50% distance**
- ❑ **Alphabetical Model K-12 - following all district health & safety guidelines**
 - Hybrid Model - A/B day
 - In-school synchronous (real-time) instruction will resemble the in-person model
 - At-home model may include some synchronous (real-time) teaching with the majority of learning to be asynchronous (independent)
 - Synchronous: new learning, reinforce or revisit content/learning from asynchronous learning, small group instruction
 - Asynchronous: video of new learning, assigned tasks, practice, and/or application of new learning, long term projects
 - Classroom/content area teachers remain with students
 - Initial family choice of DL: students remain with their preassigned DL teacher(s)/classmates
- ❑ **High quality, engaging, rigorous instruction for learning outcomes in each content area**
 - Standards-based instruction in all content areas/grade levels
 - Equitable access to learning
 - Regular assessment of student learning reviewed through school-based Data Teams
 - Ongoing Professional Learning Communities to track/discuss teaching & learning initiatives
- ❑ **Ongoing Social and Emotional Learning instruction and support (SEL)**
- ❑ **Purposeful use of technology to enhance instructional practices**
- ❑ **Attendance, Assessment, and Grading**
 - Ongoing assessment of understanding and feedback to students
 - Report Cards—continuation of model outlined in the In-Person structure
 - Attendance taken and monitored based on participation from home
- ❑ **Face coverings/masks for students and staff while inside buildings at all times**
 - Students and staff encouraged to bring their own
 - Schools will supply, when necessary
 - Periodic mask breaks
- ❑ **Classrooms and all school spaces set up to achieve maximum distance between individuals**
- ❑ **Required hand washing/hand-sanitizing throughout the school day, while in-school**

FAMILIES CHOOSING DISTANCE LEARNING DURING HYBRID LEARNING

Comprehensive virtual learning opportunities for students not participating in hybrid instruction when the school year begins

- K-6 students assigned to a grade level Distance Learning teacher that will be maintained throughout the year
- K-6 students from throughout the district will be grouped by a district grade level teacher, not by school
- 7-12 students access courses/classes virtually on a daily basis based on their schedule

HYBRID LEARNING

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULES

Elementary Hybrid Learning Model

Instructional Block	Monday <i>All students participate in Distance Learning</i>	Tuesday A Day Cohort A <i>Last Name A-LEN</i>	Wednesday A Day Cohort A <i>Last Name A-LEN</i>	Thursday B Day Cohort B <i>Last Name LEO-Z</i>	Friday B Day Cohort B <i>Last Name LEO-Z</i>
Staggered Arrival 8:00–8:30	Teacher Planning & Collaboration 8:00–9:00	Social/Emotional Check-In Technology Learning/Practice Soft Starts and Choice Time		Fact Fluency Read Aloud (5 & 6)	
Social and Emotional Learning Block 8:30–8:45	Morning Meeting (All) 9:00–9:15	All students participate	All students participate	All students participate	All students participate
Block 1 8:45	Block 1 9:15–10:00 9:15–9:45 (mini lesson) 9:45–10:00 (small group/check in)	Math <i>Students learning at home log on for mini lesson only</i>	Math <i>Students learning at home log on for mini lesson only</i>	Math <i>Students learning at home log on for mini lesson only</i>	Math <i>Students learning at home log on for mini lesson only</i>
Block 2 10:30	Block 2 10:30–11:15 10:30–11:00 (mini lesson) 11:00–11:15 (small group/check in)	Writing/Science/Social Studies <i>5/6 students only learning at home log on for mini lesson</i>	Writing/Science/Social Studies <i>5/6 students only learning at home log on for mini lesson</i>	Writing/Science/Social Studies <i>5/6 students only learning at home log on for mini lesson</i>	Writing/Science/Social Studies <i>5/6 students only learning at home log on for mini lesson</i>
Lunch/Recess		Lunch/Recess	Lunch/Recess	Lunch/Recess	Lunch/Recess
Block 3 12:35	Block 3 11:45–12:30 11:45–12:15 (mini lesson) 12:15–12:30 (small group/check in)	ELA <i>Students learning at home log on for mini lesson only</i>	ELA <i>Students learning at home log on for mini lesson only</i>	ELA <i>Students learning at home log on for mini lesson only</i>	ELA <i>Students learning at home log on for mini lesson only</i>
Specials		Specials	Specials	Specials	Specials
Staggered Dismissal 2:15–2:45	Planning/Office Hours/PD 1:00–3:00	Social/Emotional Check-In Technology Learning/Practice Soft Starts and Choice Time		Fact Fluency Read Aloud (5 & 6)	

Secondary Hybrid Learning Model (including those electing to be in Distance Learning)

Instructional Block	Monday <i>All students participate in Distance Learning</i>	Tuesday 1, 3, 5, 7 Cohort A <i>Last Name A-LEN</i>	Wednesday 2, 4, 6, 8 Cohort A <i>Last Name A-LEN</i>	Thursday 1, 3, 5, 7 Cohort B <i>Last Name LEO-Z</i>	Friday 2, 4, 6, 8 Cohort B <i>Last Name LEO-Z</i>
Extended Arrival 7:20–7:45	Teacher PLC 7:45–8:50	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival
Block 1 Times TBD	Periods 1-8 Meetings (Times TBD)	Period 1	Period 2	Period 1	Period 2
Break					
Block 2 Times TBD		Period 3	Period 4	Period 3	Period 4
Break					
Block 3 Times TBD		Period 5	Period 6	Period 5	Period 6
Lunch					
Block 4 Times TBD	Office Hours Planning Prof. Development 12:45–2:05	Period 7	Period 8	Period 7	Period 8
Extended Dismissal 2:05–2:30					

FULL DISTANCE LEARNING

Structures for 100% Distance Learning (DL)—100% of students learn virtually

- ❑ **All K-6 & 7-12 content area teachers will remain with students in DL**
 - Initial family choice of DL: students remain with their preassigned DL teacher(s)/classmates
 - A blend of synchronous (real-time) & asynchronous (independent)—50/50 approach to learning
 - Virtual learning will feature significantly more live, teacher-led instruction, offering some opportunities for small groups and flexible learning time
 - Ongoing planned opportunities for student interaction, connections, & collaboration
 - Students will utilize items from Grab & Go resources
- ❑ **DL schedules and expectations will be clearly established & communicated**
 - K-6 Content/ Special Areas defined schedules provided
 - 7-12 Block Schedule—HJ/SHS defined schedules provided
- ❑ **High quality, engaging, rigorous instruction for learning outcomes in each content area**
 - Standards-based instruction in all content areas/grade levels
 - Equitable access to learning
 - Regular assessment of student learning reviewed through school-based Data Teams
 - Time for teacher collaboration (PLC) to regularly communicate about curriculum, instruction, and student learning
- ❑ **Ongoing Social and Emotional Learning instruction and support (SEL)**
- ❑ **Purposeful use of technology to enhance instructional practices**
- ❑ **Attendance, Assessment, and Grading**
 - Ongoing assessment of understanding and feedback to students
 - Report Cards—continuation of model outlined in the In-Person structure
 - Attendance taken and monitored based on participation from home

FULL DISTANCE LEARNING

100% FULL DISTANCED LEARNING SCHEDULE

SHORT TERM CLOSURE (2-5 DAYS, 2 WEEKS, ETC.) OR LONG TERM CLOSURE FOLLOWING THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY ESTABLISHED SCHEDULES

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Distance Learning 100% of Students				

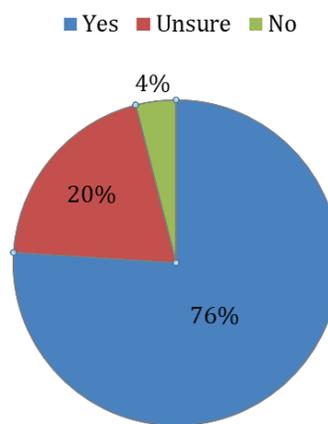
ASSESSMENT

In all three instructional models, assessment will be administered using a variety of practices that allows for students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. Teachers will regularly assess student learning in order to identify effective methods to reach all students, to address learning gaps, and to provide feedback.

PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

Clearly, many parents would like their children to return to in-school instruction. Some parents are choosing to access learning online, in a virtual school environment, others remain unsure. We hope that this document will assist those who are unsure in making their decision. We will be administering a second survey the week of August 3rd, as we need firm commitments in order to build our classrooms and determine staffing.

Do you plan to send your child to school in the fall?*



*Based on July 10, 2020 survey results

Access and Equity

Ensuring all students and staff members have what they need to be successful across learning environments/constructs (in-person, hybrid, distance learning)

TECHNOLOGY

DEVICES	
Elementary	<p>Ipads/Chromebooks: 1:1 in school and for remote learning at home with no sharing of devices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-1: iPads w/cases, stylus • 2-6: Chromebooks w/cases, mice, stylus (as needed) <p>Charging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-1: charging stands in school with chargers in cases to go home • 2-6: Charging carts for in school with chargers kept in Chromebook cases to go home <p>Repairs/Replacements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacements for K-6 provided in school library media centers, cleaning/disinfecting methods used repeatedly
HJMS	<p>1:1 Chromebooks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize Chromebook Agreement in regard to loaners and charging at home <p>Labs(Music, Technology Education)/Laptops (Art):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common Labs: disposable microphone covers for shared headsets with mics • Protocol in place for cleaning/disinfecting between users for keyboards and mice • Encourage students to bring in personal headsets • Encourage teachers to have students record audio at home with Chromebooks <p>Career & Technical Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning and disinfecting of equipment between users and at end of day • Reduce use of shared equipment

SHS	<p>1:1 Chromebooks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize Chromebook Agreement in regard to loaners and charging at home <p>Labs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common Labs: disposable microphone covers for shared headsets with mics Protocol in place for cleaning/disinfecting between users for keyboards and mice Encourage students to bring in personal headsets Encourage teachers to have students record audio at home with Chromebooks <p>Career and Technical Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cleaning and disinfecting of equipment between users and at end of day Reduce use of shared equipment
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APPLICATIONS	
APPLICATIONS DISTRICTWIDE K-12:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> G Suite Enterprise for Education <input type="checkbox"/> Pear Deck <input type="checkbox"/> Explain Everything Whiteboard <input type="checkbox"/> Screencastify <input type="checkbox"/> K-2 Seesaw for Schools 	
Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> K-2: Google login Seesaw for Schools K-2 2-6 GoGuardian Generation Genius
HJMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7-8: Vocabulary.com 7-12: Edpuzzle.com
SHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7-12: Edpuzzle.com 9-12 Math: Formative 10 Biology: Gizmos

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Simsbury Special Education Department believes that every student is a general education student first. The role of special education is to ensure students with identified special needs have access to general education curriculum and instruction.

In order to ensure that access as we re-enter schools and programming after our prolonged school closure, we will ensure that developed instructional models (in-person, hybrid, distance learning) and practices provide:

- a free and appropriate public education (FAPE)
- access to developmentally appropriate, specialized instruction to the greatest degree possible as per the student's developed individualized education plan (IEP)
- the implementation of identified student accommodations and modifications

Special Services leadership will develop and facilitate professional development sessions to address the nuances of special education instruction and practices that adhere to health and safety guidelines. If you have specific questions regarding your child's services, please contact your child's case manager, department supervisor, or the Special Services Department for Ms. Forsberg or Mrs. Homrok-Lemke.

ENGLISH LEARNERS

Regardless of the instructional model (in school or distance learning), English Learners will have access to general education and receive supplemental language services. Translated documents will be provided to families whose primary language is other than English. Regular communication will take place to ensure all families are supported and well informed.

INTERVENTIONS

Students' learning needs will be identified through both formative and summative assessment measures. In Professional Learning Communities and Data Teams, teachers will analyze assessment results to gauge impact of mastery and adjust instruction. Targeted instruction will be provided and performance will be monitored on an ongoing basis.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF

The social and emotional well-being of our students and staff is crucial as we re-enter school programming. As we plan to meet these needs, the Simsbury Public Schools will utilize the work and resources of CASEL (Collaborative for Academics and Social Emotional Learning), and its document, *Reunite, Renew and Thrive: Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Roadmap for Reopening School*.

More specifically, the following four (4) practices will be prioritized:

- time for relationships/partnerships
- adult connectivity, healing and strategy-building
- safe and equitable learning environments
- utilization of data to inform and improve our practices

Through specially designed lessons and activities, staff and students will focus on the development of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. Further, teachers and support staff will place emphasis on ensuring students feel welcomed and engaged in their classrooms and learning communities.





VISION OF A GRADUATE

- ▶ **CRITICAL THINKER**
- ▶ **COMMUNICATOR**
- ▶ **COLLABORATOR**
- ▶ **SELF-DIRECTED LEARNER**
- ▶ **INNOVATOR**
- ▶ **GLOBAL CITIZEN**