

# Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

Connecticut State Department of Education and Thomaston Public School ARP ESSER



June 23, 2021

## Connecticut State Department of Education Introduction

Our Connecticut school communities — with students at the center — continue to be bold and innovative as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The United States Department of Education (USED) has recognized the importance of supporting these efforts, particularly with the infusion of resources to support education in Connecticut. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ES- SER) has granted the State of Connecticut an additional \$1,105,919,874, providing the opportunity to develop bold, high-impact plans to address the substantial disruptions to student learning, interpersonal interactions, and social-emotional well-being. While earlier sources of federal relief funding during the pandemic supported our ability to first survive, and then thrive, ARP ESSER is Connecticut's opportunity to transform our schools.

The federal government requires that each Local Education Agency (LEA) create a *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan* (the Plan). This plan must be publicly available online by June 23, 2021 and submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) as a part of the ARP ESSER application due mid-August 2021. To aid in the planning process, CSDE is providing this template to guide LEAs planning

as well as serve as an opportunity to share the Plan with the public.

Due to the expansive efforts of the CSDE and the educational community, as of the week of May 3–7, no district in the state of Connecticut was fully remote. This was achieved through extensive planning by each LEA; therefore, this template should be seen as a means to support LEAs' efforts to date and can be used to expand upon or revisit previous Reopening School Plans.

There are five areas that LEAs must consider when developing the *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan*:

- I. Health and Safety Strategies
- II. Continuity of Services
- III. Public Comment
- IV. Periodic Review Process
- V. Understandable and Uniform Format

The CSDE has maintained consistently that in-person learning is the preferred opportunity for students and that schools should work to safely open their buildings for the 2020–21 school year. We are proud to have led the nation in safe return to in-person instruction — as of April 30 nearly 82.7% of Connecticut school districts were offering a predominately fully in-person learning. Thank you for your work and helping us continue to be an example of how we can best serve our children safely in school buildings.

## Thomaston Public Schools Introduction

The COVID-19/Coronavirus pandemic began with formal communication to the district from the Connecticut State Department of Education on January 27, 2020. The last day of in-person instruction in the 2019-2020 school year was Friday, March 13, 2020. Thomaston Public Schools reopened to in-person instruction in a hybrid (50% of students at one time) model on Tuesday, September 1, 2020. Opt-out students in Grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 received their instruction from a dedicated remote only teacher while opt-out students in Grades 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 received their instruction from the same teacher as their in-person counterparts.

Full, in-person instruction (100% of students at one time) began on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 with in-person instruction occurring for all students on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays; Wednesdays were early dismissal remote learning days for all students.

On November 30, 2020, remote only teachers were reassigned. A Grade K/Grade 1 remote only teacher and a Grade 2/Grade 3 remote only teacher reduced the number of remote only teacher assignments in harmony with the natural attrition of opt-out students in those grades. Opt-out students in grades 4, 5 and 6 received their instruction from a dedicated remote only teacher and opt-out students in Grades 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 continued to receive their instruction from the same teacher as their in-person counterparts.

From November 30, 2020 through January 15, 2021, remote instruction was the exclusive mode of instruction for all students. The district returned to the full, in-person instruction model (100% of students at one time) on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 with in-person instruction occurring for all students on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, with early dismissal remote learning Wednesdays for all students.

On February 25, 2021, Governor Lamont announced a change to the COVID-19 age-based vaccine rollout, allowing educators to receive the COVID-19 vaccine beginning on March 1, 2021, regardless of age. Thomaston Public Schools gathered information from all eligible educators in the Town of Thomaston, specifically the names, email addresses and birth dates for all Pre-K through 12th-grade educators and staff who work onsite with students, as well as childcare professionals, to share with the Torrington Area Health District which used that information to schedule educator-only vaccine clinics on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, Thursday, March 4, 2021, Sunday, March 7, 2021, Tuesday, March 9, 2021, Friday, March 12, 2021, and Saturday, March 13, 2021 for Thomaston Public Schools (and several other districts). All educator-only vaccine clinics offered either the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines, so a second educator-only vaccine clinic was scheduled either three weeks or four weeks after each initial clinic.

On March 3, 2021, the early dismissal remote learning Wednesdays were lengthened in duration of instruction by one hour for all students through Grade 6. Opt-out students in Grades 4, 5 and 6 began receiving their instruction from the same teacher as their in-person counterparts.

On March 23, 2021, the Thomaston Board of Education held an Emergency Meeting to discuss district's response to the staff absences that could occur on multiple days in March 2021 and April 2021 as a result of the anticipated reaction to the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine. The Thomaston Board of Education voted to notify parents of the list of dates when these staff absences would most likely occur and to alert parents of a change from in-person instruction to remote instruction on a day-by-day basis.

After this decision, the Superintendent directed the School Principals to determine the number of staff needed to keep each school open for in-person instruction. School Principals and School Secretaries tracked staff absences and substitute availability on the potential high absence dates. School Secretaries checked the online absence system at 8:00PM and again at 5:00AM, informing the Superintendent of the in-person status for each school. These efforts by the School Principals and School Secretaries allowed parents to be notified as early as possible each time instruction needed to be changed from in-person to virtual instruction.

On March 29, 2021, the Thomaston Board of Education held a Special Meeting to discuss the next instructional model that was scheduled to begin on April 19, 2021. The Thomaston Board of Education took action to enact changes to the quarantine duration, specifically, stop quarantining after day ten (10) without testing for COVID-19 or after day seven (7) after receiving a negative COVID-19 test result on day five (5) or later. This shortening of quarantine also included a continued watch for symptoms until fourteen (14) days after exposure as well as a requirement for Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) athletes to quarantine per the CIAC guidelines of a full fourteen (14) days.

Finally, during the same Board of Education meeting, the Thomaston Board of Education took action to open schools to in-person instruction on Wednesdays beginning on April 21, 2021 and continuing through June 9, 2021. Wednesdays shall be in-person, early dismissal days for all students.

Immediately following the Thomaston Board of Education decision to shorten the duration of quarantine for students and staff, Central Office emailed updated quarantine end dates to the students who were on quarantine. These personalized quarantine messages were followed by a general quarantine duration update which was emailed to all parents and staff.

The first in-person Wednesday (early dismissal) of the 2020-2021 school year occurred on April 21, 2021, putting an end to scheduled remote-only school days.

The Connecticut State Department of Education provided information related to the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Public Act 21-6, "An Act Concerning Immunizations", Transition to Kindergarten for Fall 2021, and Universal Mask Policies in School Buildings.

On May 20, 2021, Governor Lamont amended Executive Order 12, replacing it with Executive Order 12a, "Protection of Public Health and Safety during COVID-19 Pandemic – Revised Order for Masks and Face Coverings," which loosened mask wearing obligations in most venues for only fully vaccinated individuals; one of the venue exceptions is school buildings.



Spring/end-of-school year events such as the Thomaston High School Prom, the Thomaston High School Graduation, other promotion and recognition ceremonies, field trips and Step Up Day have been/are being offered in-person whenever feasible and some events offer a virtual option for remote-only students. These spring/end-of-school year events have been/will be planned in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Connecticut Department of Public Health, Torrington Area Health District, Connecticut State Department of Education, and Connecticut COVID-19 Public Sector Guidelines. Two large tents have been temporarily installed on the grounds of Thomaston High School to allow for more opportunities for in-person spring/end-of-school year events.

As a contingency for the disbursement of American Rescue Plan Act funds, the Connecticut State Department of Education has required districts to prepare and submit a “Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan.” A Plan template was distributed to districts on May 27, 2021. This plan is due in June and must be reviewed and revised, as appropriate, according to a prescribed schedule of at least every 6 months through September 30, 2023. Each review must include evidence that public comment on the plan was sought and that public comment was considered when developing/revising the plan. Districts will be obligated to submit a refreshed or updated plan to the Connecticut State Department of Education by June 23, 2021, December 23, 2021, June 23, 2022, December 23, 2022, and June 23, 2023. The 2020-2021 Thomaston Public Schools Reopening of Schools Plan will serve as the draft version of this “Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan.”

**I. Thomaston Public Schools - Health and Safety Strategies**

The Thomaston Public Schools Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan, formally named the Thomaston Public Schools Reopening of Schools Plan, includes information related to the adoption of policies and a description of policies related to each of the strategies listed in Table 2 (below). The Thomaston Public Schools Plan includes information gained through the review and consideration of the [CDC guidance](#) and the [Connecticut DPH and CSDE guidance](#) for each category. NOTE: *Thomaston Public Schools shall implement, to the greatest extent practicable, each element of the most up-to-date guidance.*

	<b>Mitigation Strategy</b>	<b>District Response</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Universal and correct wearing of masks	Universal and correct wearing of masks is required for all public schools per State government mandate; once this State government mandate is lifted, TBOE Policy 5132 shall be amended and universal mask-wearing shall be eliminated. If a staff member, student or visitor voluntarily wears a mask after the mandate is lifted, they will be permitted to do so as long as it is neither disruptive of the educational process nor endangering to persons or property (see TPS Plan pages 19, 23, 24, and 27).



	<b>Mitigation Strategy</b>	<b>District Response</b>
✓	Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/ podding)	Physical distancing and cohorting is a mitigation strategy recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CTDPH) and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and shall be used as a mitigation strategy by the Thomaston Board of Education staff, students and visitors whenever feasible (see TPS Plan pages 14 and 17).
✓	Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	Handwashing and respiratory etiquette are as recommended by the CDC (see TPS Plan pages 15, 16, 23, 24 and 25).
✓	Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation	Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation are as recommended by the CDC, the CSDE and the CDPH (see TPS Plan pages 8, 13, 14, 15, 19, 23, 25 and 32).
✓	Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments	Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments is employed and described in the TPS Plan on page 28.
✓	Diagnostic screening and testing	Diagnostic screening and testing are performed at area screening and testing facilities.
✓	Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible	Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students have been made through the Torrington Area Health District and Hartford HealthCare as those individuals became eligible for vaccination.
✓	Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies	Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies are described in the TPS Plan on page 15.

## II. Continuity of Services

Thomaston Public Schools will ensure continuity of services including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services as described in the attached TPS Plan.

## III. Public Comment

Thomaston Public Schools agrees with the opinion of the CSDE in that public comment is a key element of stakeholder engagement, and at times a stand-alone element which may include dedicating time to open forums at board of education meetings, conducting surveys, or soliciting written input from external residents not involved in the decision-making process. Thomaston Public Schools has and will continue to provide the public the opportunity to provide input and for public comment in the development of the plan, a summary of the input (including any letters of support) through surveys, email, social media, text messages and in-person/virtual meetings (see list below of communication about or in response to public comment since the start of the pandemic).

### Thomaston Public Schools - Public Comment/Communication Timeline:

- March 12, 2020: Email to staff and parents from Superintendent Coss alerting them to the scheduled conference call with the Commissioner of Education regarding COVID-19.
- March 12, 2020: Email to staff and parents with an update on the call with the Commissioner of Education that the schools will remain open. Superintendent Coss made the decision to close Thomaston schools for 2 weeks beginning on March 14<sup>th</sup> and ending on March 29<sup>th</sup> to promote social distancing and limit the spread of the virus.
- March 13, 2020: Email to staff and parents from Superintendent Coss on expectations during the 2 week closure period and the protocol for visiting schools during the 2 week closure period. Mrs. Coss also emailed staff regarding the Employee Assistance Program.
- March 16, 2020: Email to staff and parents regarding free meals to free/reduced lunch students.
- March 18, 2020: Email to parents from Superintendent Coss regarding access to supplemental learning options and 2 new distance learning resources.
- March 20, 2020: Email to staff from Superintendent Coss to staff and parents regarding a transition from Supplemental to Distance Learning.
- March 22, 2020: Email to Board of Education members, staff and parents regarding chromebook distribution and coronavirus data.
- March 23, 2020: Email to staff and parents from Superintendent Coss that school will be closed through April 19, 2020 per Governor Lamont.
- March 25, 2020: Email to staff and parents from Superintendent Coss regarding an update to the distance learning plan.
- April 9, 2020: Email to parents and staff from Superintendent Coss regarding the school closure period through May 20, 2020 per Governor Lamont.
- April 19, 2021 – June 9, 2021: Early dismissal on Wednesdays
- April 24, 2020: Parent Survey sent out regarding the Distance Learning Plan.
- May 4, 2020: Email to staff and parents from Superintendent Coss regarding "Thought Exchange" feedback on reopening of schools.
- May 5, 2020: Email to staff and parents from Superintendent Coss that school will be closed through the remainder of the school year.
- May 12, 2020: Email from Jeff Dunn regarding the formation of the Long-Term Recovery Committee. Superintendent Coss joined the committee.
- May 18, 2020: Long-term Recovery Committee meets via Zoom.
- June 1, 2020: Email to building principals and union presidents from Superintendent Coss with a description of the District Reopening Plan Committee and its related committees (staff group reopening committees,

school reopening plan committee, reopening committee structure). This email also requested that each principal and union president appoint members to the School Reopening Committee.

- June 5, 2020: Email to staff from Superintendent Coss providing them with a list of resources in the Thomaston Public Schools Reopening Committee for the 2020 -2021 school year.
- June 23, 2020: The Litchfield County Superintendents' Association provided an update on the reopening plan. Superintendent Coss shared this information with staff and parents.
- June 29, 2020: Superintendent Coss shared the Connecticut Reopening of Schools Plan with staff and parents.
- July 6, 2020: Superintendent Coss shared the first draft of the district reopening plan with all staff.
- July 12, 2020: Superintendent Coss shared the second draft with the district reopening committee members.
- July 13, 2020: Superintendent Coss sent out a Reopening Survey to staff.
- July 14, 2020: Superintendent Coss sent out a School Reopening Parent Survey to all parents.
- July 15, 2020: Superintendent Coss shared the "limited waiver of school sessions" information from the Connecticut State Department of Education to parents.
- July 17, 2020: Superintendent Coss shared a COVID-19 update from the CSDE with the reopening committee members.
- July 17, 2020: Superintendent Coss shared the reopening plan with an update regarding the clarification on mask wearing with the committee members.
- July 24, 2020: Superintendent Coss shared the third draft of the district reopening plan with all staff and parents.
- July 26, 2020:
  - Superintendent Coss shared the COVID-19 Parent Choice Form and the Return to In-Person Instruction form for student instruction with the administrators and the reopening committee members.
- July 27, 2020: Superintendent Coss sent out additional information to parents and staff regarding the reopening plan, as well as the COVID-19 Parent Choice Form for student instruction.
- July 27, 2020: Email to certified staff from Superintendent Coss regarding the formation of 14 specialized subcommittees that will be formed for the purpose of fleshing out the Thomaston Public Schools 2020 – 2021 Reopening Plan.
- July 30, 2020: Superintendent Coss shared the Connecticut Reopening Plan (4 Addenda) with all staff.
- August 2, 2020: Email from Superintendent Coss to All Star Transportation to discuss the special dismissal times due to the district reopening plan.
- August 3, 2020: Email from Superintendent Coss to staff and parents with a notification that the Town of Thomaston Long-term Recovery Committee has scheduled a virtual "Reopen Thomaston" public listening session for August 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- August 3, 2020: Superintendent Coss shared a CDC video from the Surgeon general, Dr. Jerome Adams on how to create your own face covering.
- August 6, 2020: Email from Superintendent Coss to parents and staff with an update on the reopening process.
- August 7, 2020: Email from Superintendent Coss to the district reopening committee members with an update on the reopening plans deadline.
- August 8, 2020: The CDC-Info on Demand Publication that was requested by Superintendent Coss has arrived.
- August 10, 2020: A letter from the Office of State Fire Marshall regarding the school reopening plan during a pandemic was shared with the administrators.
- August 12, 2020: Special Meeting of the Board of Education was held regarding the school reopening plan. Mrs. Coss also sent an email to staff and parents regarding the CIAC Fall sports plan.
- August 13, 2020: Superintendent Coss sent out an email to all parents with an update from the August 12th BOE meeting. This update includes the hybrid model that was chosen to reopen schools. The survey asks parents to identify one of three instruction models they would prefer to utilize (in-person instruction, remote instruction, or disenrollment to homeschooling or a private school).
- August 15, 2020: A google folder which contains COVID teaching posters were made accessible to the school nurses, secretaries, and administrators.
- August 19, 2020: Superintendent Coss met with the school/district secretaries to discuss items to be placed in the COVID-19 handbook for Thomaston Public School.
- August 21, 2020: Email from Superintendent Coss to parents regarding In-Person group assignments in PowerSchool.
- August 22, 2020: Superintendent Coss shared an email to parents regarding desensitizing mask wearing and an update from the CIAC for fall sports.
- August 25, 2020: Email to Superintendent Coss to staff with a CDC mask guidance update.

- August 26, 2020: Email to Commissioner Cardona from Superintendent Coss requesting assistance with transportation services not received.
- August 31, 2020: Email from Superintendent Coss to parents providing information on COVID screening resources from the Torrington Area Health District. Mrs. Coss also shared school bus information regarding the need for cloth face coverings on the bus. Mrs. Coss provided staff and parents with an update regarding the latest Addendum from the CSDE on the use of face coverings.
- September 1, 2020 – October 9, 2020: Modified Hybrid/Blended Instruction Plan period
- September 2, 2020: Superintendent Coss emailed staff and parents per the Torrington Area Health Department's executive director on the need to social distance.
- September 3, 2020: Superintendent Coss provided staff and parents with an update on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the reopening of Thomaston public schools. Mrs. Coss also shared the latest information from the CIAC regarding fall sports.
- September 5, 2020: Superintendent Coss shared the new executive order regarding guidance provisions for masks. Mrs. Coss also shared information on the process of contact tracing.
- September 10, 2020: Announcement made that future Board of Education meetings will be virtual only.
- September 16, 2020: Curbside Meal Pickup for Thomaston public school students.
- September 26, 2020: Discussion on the next instruction model begins (expanded hybrid model or restricted full in-person model).
- September 28, 2020: Special Meeting of the Board of Education to decide on the next instruction model.
- September 29, 2020: Superintendent Coss shared a notification from the CIAC regarding the CIAC alternative spring season and football activities.
- October 13, 2020 – November 24, 2020: Restricted Full In-Person Model period
- October 27, 2020: Superintendent Coss announced that snow days will be considered as remote learning days.
- November 5, 2020: Superintendent Coss shared the recent CIAC winter sports update. Mrs. Coss also notified staff and parents that the Town of Thomaston's COVID-19 spread status has changed from orange to red.
- November 14, 2020: Survey sent to staff and parents to collect parent feedback regarding the effects of COVID-19 on in-person instruction.
- November 16, 2020: Special Meeting of the Board of Education was held to discuss the potential for remote learning only.
- November 18, 2020: Email from Superintendent Coss to staff regarding the work location during the upcoming remote instruction only period.
- November 30, 2020 – January 19, 2021: Remote Instruction Period
- December 2, 2020: Email from Superintendent Coss regarding an update from the CDC on quarantine duration.
- January 8, 2020: Special Meeting of the Board of Education to discuss the next model of instruction.
- January 19, 2021 – February 11, 2021: Restricted Full In-Person Model period
- January 19, 2021: Emergency Board of Education Meeting to discuss the winter athletics plan.
- February 5, 2021: Superintendent Coss shared Executive Order 9K – Flexibility for School Nutrition programs.
- February 23, 2021 – March 31, 2021
- A number of emails from Superintendent Coss regarding Thomaston's vaccinations for staff.
- March 9, 2021: Superintendent Coss shared the new CDC guidance for post-vaccination with staff and parents.
- March 16, 2021: Emails from Superintendent Coss regarding student vaccination information.
- April 2, 2021: Email from Superintendent Coss to staff and parents regarding a COVID-19 update and quarantine change.
- April 6, 2021: Email from Superintendent Coss to Representative Piscopo and Senator Martin requesting advocacy for Thomaston's students and COVID-19 vaccine access.
- May 11, 2021: Email from Superintendent Coss regarding outdoor mask wearing for schools.
- May 18, 2021: Email from Superintendent Coss to staff and parents on the updated mask protocols.
- May 25, 2021: Email from Superintendent Coss to staff that the COVID-19 school guidance does not support the use of fans that blow across the people.
- June 14, 2021: Public comment form a concerned member of the community that is advocating to unmask the students for the upcoming 2021 – 2022 school year.



#### IV. Periodic Review Process

Thomaston Public Schools is required to periodically review and, as appropriate, revise its *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan* **at least every six months** through September 30, 2023. Each review shall include public comment on the plan and developing the plan after taking into account the public comment.

Below are the dates that Thomaston Public Schools must submit a refreshed or updated plan to CSDE via eGMS.

Review/revisit Dates:

- June 23, 2021
- December 23, 2021
- June 23, 2022
- December 23, 2022
- June 23, 2023

#### V. Understandable and Uniform Format

Federal regulations require that the Thomaston Public Schools Plan be in an understandable and uniform format, to the extent practicable and written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practicable, be orally translated. Also, upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, the TPS Plan shall be provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.

Thomaston Public Schools has population of parents of whom English is a second language and these parents are provided with access to a written language translator via the mass communication application used by the district as well as through the online Google Translate option for the district's webpage and human translators, upon request.



**Appendix A – Thomaston Public Schools Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan (formally Thomaston public Schools Reopening of Schools Plan)**



ORIGINAL TITLE, THOMASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2020-2021 SCHOOL REOPENING PLAN

BASED ON THE CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DOCUMENT

[ADAPT, ADVANCE, ACHIEVE: CONNECTICUT'S PLAN TO LEARN AND GROW TOGETHER](#)

REVIEWED AND UPDATED PER CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REQUIREMENT



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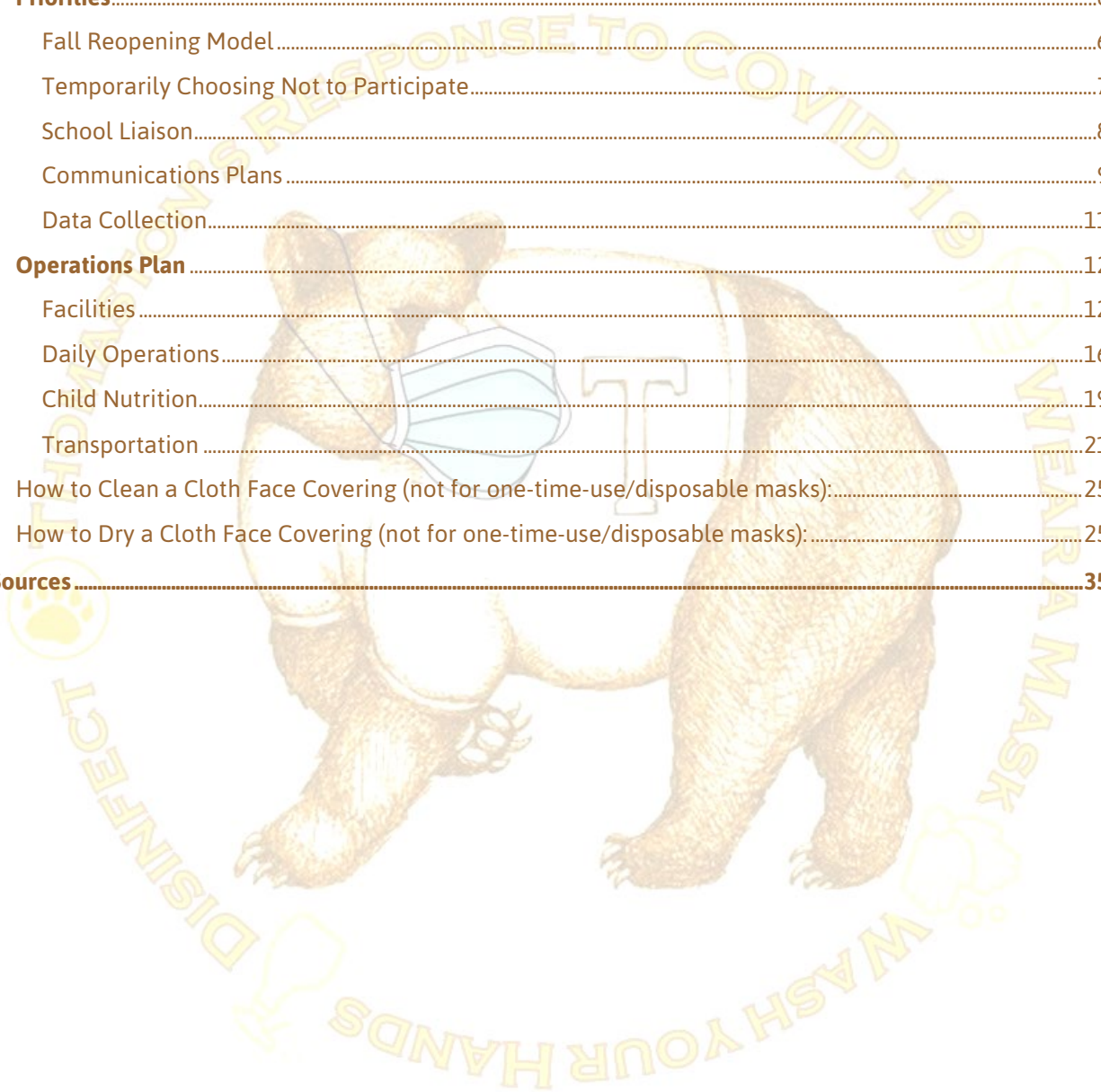
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### THOMASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN

Based on the Connecticut State Department of Education Document  
[Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together](#)

#### Forward

The Connecticut State Department of Education provided the [Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together](#) document to local educational agencies (LEAs), i.e., school districts, as a guideline for the reopening of schools in the 2020-2021 school year. The [CSDE Plan](#) is current to the conditions at the time of its publication and notes that since "experts are continuing to learn more about COVID-19 and the conditions surrounding the pandemic are continually changing, this preliminary guidance will likely evolve and be amended or supplemented." The [CSDE Plan](#) also points out the potential need for "[i]ndividualized considerations based upon unique circumstances in each school district."

Every district is expected to create three models for the reopening of school in 2020-2021: (1) a full reopening model, (2) a partial reopening model (fewer students), and (3) a distance learning model. Thomaston Public Schools used the [Connecticut Local Education Agency \(LEA\) School Reopening Template](#) that contained a compilation of the critical requirements identified within the [CSDE Plan](#) document. LEAs (school districts) were not mandated to use this template; however, district plans must address all of the requirements in the [CSDE Plan](#) document.

It is the expectation of the CSDE that each school district use the [CSDE Plan](#) as a guide in conjunction with stakeholder input to create a local district reopening plan. The CSDE expects local districts to include contingency strategies and actions in their respective local district reopening plans that provide alternatives to in-person instruction that are robust and available to all students in the event of a school closure or limitation put upon in-person instruction due to health precautions.

The CSDE document included six guiding principles (below) on which the guidance and considerations outlined in its document are grounded:

1. Safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff;
2. Allowing *all* students the opportunity to return to school *full time* starting in the fall;
3. Monitoring the school, students, and staff and, when necessary, potentially canceling classes in the future to appropriately contain COVID-19 spread;
4. Emphasizing equity, access, and support to the students and communities that are emerging from this historic disruption;
5. Fostering strong two-way communication with partners such as families, educators, and staff; and
6. Factoring into decisions about reopening the challenges to the physical safety, social- emotional well-being, and the mental health needs of our students when they are not in school.

While these six guiding principles are expected to yield consistent local plan development, the CSDE ensures that local districts will retain discretion in the planning and implementation of their respective reopening plans. Finally, the [CSDE Plan](#) assures technical support for local districts and anticipates the distribution of CSDE-created support documents, resources, and templates to assist local districts.



### Update

In May 2021, the CSDE tasked districts with reviewing their 2020-2021 Reopening of Schools Plan and required districts to refocus that plan beyond the 2020-2021 school year. The Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan would serve as the replacement to and continuation of the 2020-2021 Reopening of Schools Plan. The CSDE provided a [Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan template](#) for this updated version of the Reopening of Schools Plan which included the following information<sup>1</sup>:

*Our Connecticut school communities — with students at the center — continue to be bold and innovative as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The United States Department of Education (USED) has recognized the importance of supporting these efforts, particularly with the infusion of resources to support education in Connecticut. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ES-SER) has granted the State of Connecticut an additional \$1,105,919,874, providing the opportunity to develop bold, high-impact plans to address the substantial disruptions to student learning, interpersonal interactions, and social-emotional well-being. While earlier sources of federal relief funding during the pandemic supported our ability to first survive, and then thrive, ARP ESSER is Connecticut's opportunity to transform our schools. The federal government requires that each Local Education Agency (LEA) create a Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan (the Plan). This plan must be publicly available online by June 23, 2021 and submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) as a part of the ARP ESSER application due mid-August 2021. To aid in the planning process, CSDE is providing a template to guide planning as well as serve as an opportunity to share the Plan with the public.*

*Due to the expansive efforts of the CSDE and the educational community, as of the week of May 3–7, no district in the state of Connecticut was fully remote. This was achieved through extensive planning by each LEA; therefore, the CSDE template should be seen as a means to support Thomaston Public Schools' efforts to date and can be used to expand upon or revisit previous Reopening School Plans. There are five areas that LEAs must consider when developing the Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan:*

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<sup>1</sup> Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan Template: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Digest/2020-21/SafeReturnTemplate.pdf>

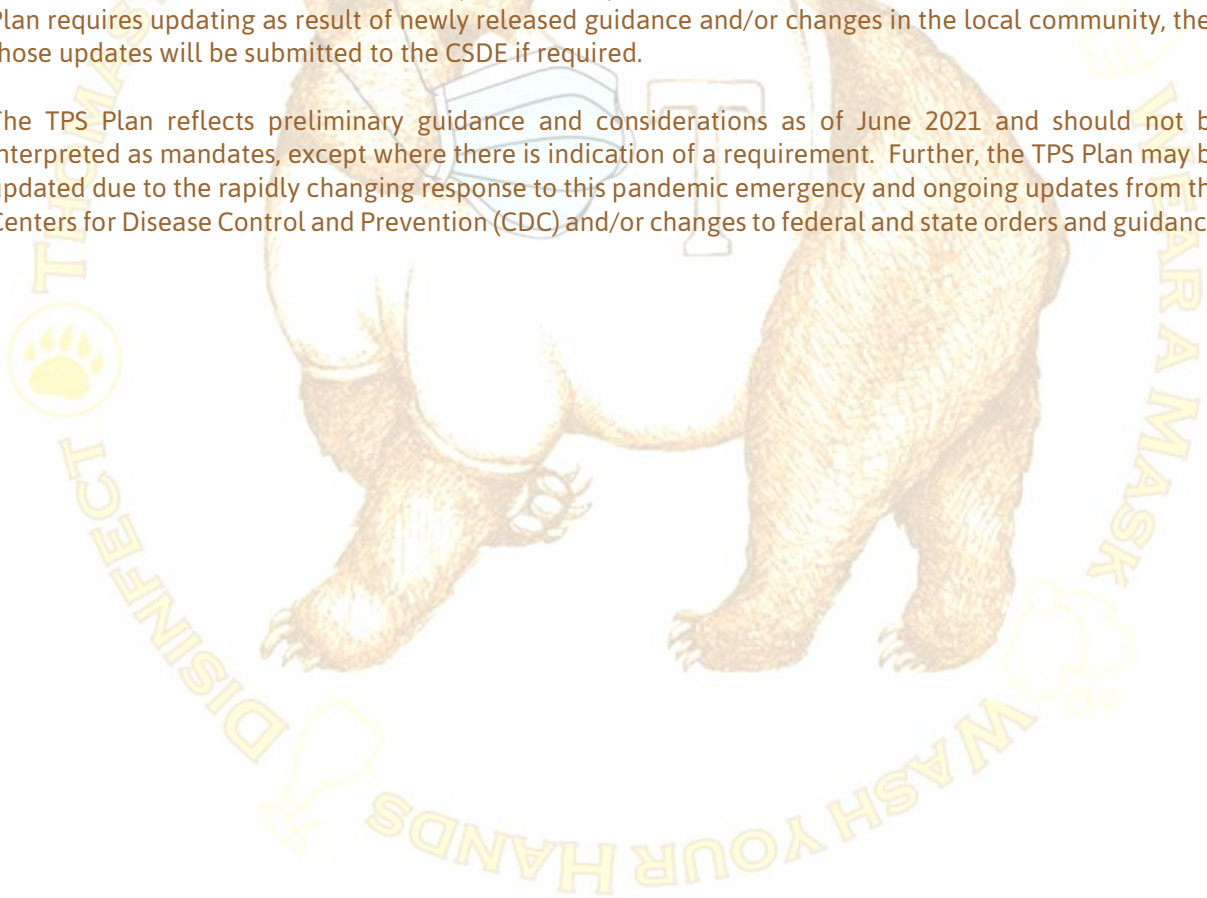


## Introduction

In June 2020, the Thomaston Public Schools 2020-2021 School Reopening Plan identified the critical “requirements” needed to submit a reopening plan in accordance with the Connecticut School Reopening Plan, [Adapt. Advance. Achieve: Connecticut’s Plan to Learn and Grow Together](#). In developing the Thomaston Public Schools (TPS) 2020-2021 School Reopening Plan, the review and consideration of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) School Reopening Plan was imperative as it elaborated on certain requirements with additional considerations and included “guidance” to consider prior to the development of the unique local approach. In June 2021, the CSDE required districts to review and update (as prudent) the 2020-2021 School Reopening Plan; part of that review and update was a change to the name of the plan: Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan (TPS Plan).

The TPS Plan addresses the requirements outlined in each section below. The TPS Plan was developed as recommended by the CSDE, specifically, inclusive of, but not limited to school-based administrators, teachers and school staff, health and nursing staff, nutrition services, transportation services, board of education, local health officials, municipal leaders, parents and other relevant stakeholders. If the TPS Plan requires updating as result of newly released guidance and/or changes in the local community, then those updates will be submitted to the CSDE if required.

The TPS Plan reflects preliminary guidance and considerations as of June 2021 and should not be interpreted as mandates, except where there is indication of a requirement. Further, the TPS Plan may be updated due to the rapidly changing response to this pandemic emergency and ongoing updates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or changes to federal and state orders and guidance.





## Thomaston Public Schools - Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

Per the Connecticut Reopening Template for local education agency (district) reopening plans, the TPS Plan clearly and specifically details how Thomaston Public Schools will address each critical requirement<sup>2</sup> listed below. These responses were constructed by working through the [CSDE Plan](#), which elaborates on certain requirements with additional considerations and guidance.<sup>3</sup>

Priorities							
Safe Return to In-Person Instruction (formerly "Fall Reopening Model")							
<p>The Thomaston Public Schools Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan has all students in all schools returning to full-time, in-person instruction at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, as long as public health data supports such action. As public health data warrants, the TPS Plan will be supported with more intensive mitigation strategies and specific monitoring, containment and class cancellation plans. In alignment with the <a href="#">CSDE Plan</a>, the district has sought and continues to seek information from stakeholders on the conditions for reopening schools. Moreover, Thomaston Public Schools is prepared to modify the TPS Plan to allow for scaling back at a future date if the public health data changes.</p> <p>The Connecticut School Reopening Plan includes four condition levels:</p> <p>As of June 23, 2021, Thomaston Public Schools shall open the school year in the green phase (Contained/Vaccine). This phase allows all students to return to in-person instruction.</p> <p>The TPS Plan overlays the CSDE phases of reopening to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) three levels of risk:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> </td> <td> <p><b>Lowest Risk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students and teachers engage in virtual-only classes, activities, and events.</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> </td> <td> <p><b>More Risk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small, in-person classes, activities, and events.</li> <li>Groups of students stay together and with the same teacher throughout/across school days and groups do not mix.</li> <li>Students remain at least 3 feet apart and do not share objects (e.g., hybrid virtual and in-person class structures, or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes).</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> </td> <td> <p><b>Highest Risk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full-sized, in-person classes, activities, and events.</li> <li>Students are not spaced apart, share classroom materials or supplies, and mix between classes and activities.</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>			<p><b>Lowest Risk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students and teachers engage in virtual-only classes, activities, and events.</li> </ul>		<p><b>More Risk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small, in-person classes, activities, and events.</li> <li>Groups of students stay together and with the same teacher throughout/across school days and groups do not mix.</li> <li>Students remain at least 3 feet apart and do not share objects (e.g., hybrid virtual and in-person class structures, or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes).</li> </ul>		<p><b>Highest Risk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full-sized, in-person classes, activities, and events.</li> <li>Students are not spaced apart, share classroom materials or supplies, and mix between classes and activities.</li> </ul>
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<sup>2</sup> Requirements are defined as elements that the Office of the Governor, the CSDE, and/or the CT State Department of Public Health have identified as necessary for districts to complete/comply with in order to open schools successfully in 2020-2021.

<sup>3</sup> Guidance is defined as considerations put forth by the CSDE or referenced entity rooted in best practice, experience, and research that will aid in the successful opening of schools.





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The [CSDE Plan](#) relies on the CDC for guidance to respond to each COVID Spread phase, however, the CSDE phases do not completely match the CDC Risk levels. As you will see, the TPS Plan continuously parallels the CSDE phases to the CDC risk levels, utilizing the CDC guidance as appropriate. Further, this paralleling allows the TPS plan to meet the section requirements of the [CSDE Plan](#) while employing the Federal- and State-recommended CDC guidance.

The TPS Plan contains strategies and clearly defined action steps which address the student performance gaps identified by the CSDE as well as the CSDE’s priority to address student inclusion, equity, and access for all learners.

NOTE: Temporarily choosing not to participate in in-person instruction was limited to the 2020-2021 school year only. Remote learning for those students who are not able to return to in-person instruction shall not be provided by Thomaston Public Schools (See also *Temporarily Choosing Not to Participate*).



**CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENTS: N/A.**

**CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ Health and Safety Strategies
- ✓ Continuity of Services
- ✓ Public Comment
- ✓ Periodic Review Process
- ✓ Understandable and Uniform Format

## Priorities

### Temporarily Choosing Not to Participate Option Discontinued

For the 2020-2021 school year **ONLY**, the [CSDE Plan](#), “[p]arents will be permitted to choose for their family to continue to participate in remote learning.” In the 2021-2022 school year and in the school years thereafter, support options for the students who temporarily choose not to participate in in-person instruction **shall not be provided**.

If a parent decides to keep their child at home and not participate in in-person instruction, they **MUST** withdraw/disenroll their child and provide homeschooling services on their own. Homeschooling is always available to parents. The TPS Plan includes a Notice of Intent to Homeschool template for parents who wish to homeschool their child(ren).

### Participation in Extracurricular Activities, Events and Sports/Athletics for Homeschooled Students:

Homeschooled students are not enrolled in Thomaston Public Schools and, therefore, are not permitted to participate any activities offered to students who are enrolled in Thomaston Public Schools. Homeschooled students are not members of the Thomaston Public Schools’ student body.



**CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENTS: MET**

Students who choose not to participate in in-person instruction shall disenroll to homeschooling. Homeschooling shall be provided solely by parents and will not include any support from Thomaston Public Schools.

**CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ Continuity of Services
- ✓ Understandable and Uniform Format



## Priorities

### School Liaison

A School Nurse shall serve as the COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison. This Liaison is responsible for engaging with students, parents, faculty, staff, and administrators to answer questions or concerns about health and safety requirements regarding COVID-19.

All school staff and families shall receive an initial notification with the contact information for the COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison. This contact information will also be posted on the [TPS website](#).

The Liaison has been and will continue to be important for TPS to perform effective outreach to stakeholders, families, staff, advocates, and other community partners. The Liaison shall provide communication on a variety of topics, including but not limited to, COVID-19 related cleaning and hygiene protocols, prevention action items, and other information deemed necessary.

The Liaison will communicate the most up to date policies and protocols related to the considerations herein, for staff, students, and families using the typical means of communication:

- ⇒ With Staff – TPS Website,<sup>4</sup> Email and In-Person<sup>5</sup>
- ⇒ With Students – TPS Website, Email, In-Person, and School Newsletters
- ⇒ With Families – TPS Website, In-Person, and School Newsletters

The Liaison will provide ongoing two-way communication with the school community (staff, families, and students) about any new policies and/or protocols at the following times:

- ⇒ Prior to reopening;
- ⇒ Any time there is a significant policy change; and
- ⇒ Upon re-entry if a school closes temporarily during the year.



### **CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENT: MET**

A School Nurse has been designated to serve as a COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison to communicate information related to COVID-19 and student/staff health and safety.

### **CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Continuity of Services*
- ✓ *Public Comment*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*

<sup>4</sup> TPS Website makes communication available in relevant languages to families in the district through Google Translate; it also makes communication accessible to those with visual and/or hearing impairments through the built-in Accessibility Menu.

<sup>5</sup> In-person communication shall occur only when circumstances require such.



## Priorities

### Communications Plans

#### District and School Administrators:

The District and School Administrators will communicate the most up to date policies and protocols related to the considerations herein, for staff, students, and families using the typical means of communication:

- With Staff – TPS Webpage, Email, In-Person, and ParentSquare<sup>6</sup>
- With Students – TPS Webpage, Email, In-Person, and ParentSquare
- With Families – TPS Webpage, In-Person, and ParentSquare

The District and School Administrators provide ongoing two-way communication with the school community (staff, families, and students) about any new policies and/or protocols at the following times:

- Prior to reopening;
- Any time there is a significant policy change; and
- Upon re-entry if a school closes temporarily during the year.

The District and School Administrators will continue their past practice related to communication expectations around frequency of communication, i.e., the weekly school newsletter, and ensure detailed updates are provided any time critical information regarding policies, protocols, or health data changes.

Also following past practice, the District and School Administrators will continue to notify community officials about changed policies, the need to cancel classes, or other changes or restrictions as warranted.

The current practice will continue for the District and School Administrators, as they will make the TPS Plan easily accessible, including but not limited to being visible on the [Thomaston Public Schools Website](#).

#### Team Leaders:

The Team Leaders will communicate the most up-to-date policies and protocols related to the considerations herein, for staff, students, and families using the typical means of communication with Staff, i.e., email and in-person during Team Meetings.

The Team Leaders will provide ongoing two-way communication between the Team and the School Administrator about the Team's concerns about and/or response to any new policies and/or protocols any time there is a significant policy change.

The Team Leaders will continue their past practice related to communication expectations around frequency of communication, i.e., scheduled Team meetings and Team Leader meetings, and ensure detailed updates are provided to Team members any time critical information regarding policies, protocols, or health data changes.

<sup>6</sup> ParentSquare makes communication available in relevant languages to families in the district.



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### Certified Staff:

Certified Staff will communicate the most up to date policies and protocols related to the considerations herein, for students, and families using the typical means of communication:

- With Students – Email and in-person
- With Families – Email

Certified Staff will provide ongoing two-way communication with families and students about new policies and/or protocols any time there is a significant policy change.

Certified Staff will continue their past practice related to communication expectations around frequency of communication, i.e., school newsletters and Team meetings, and ensure detailed updates are provided any time critical information regarding policies, protocols, or health data changes.



### **CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENTS: MET**

One-way and two-way communication systems and schedules for staff, students, families and community officials are in place to disseminate the most up-to-date policies and protocols related to the considerations herein, inclusive of but not limited to TPS Webpage, Email, ParentSquare, virtual and in-person discussions.

### **CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Continuity of Services*
- ✓ *Public Comment*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*



## Priorities

### Data Collection

Online surveys were conducted prior authoring the original 2020-2021 Reopening of Schools Plan with additional surveys conducted throughout the Summer of 2020 and the 2020-2021 school year. Online surveys will continue to be utilized for stake holder feedback throughout the timeline for the updated TPS Plan. Examples of the type of data collected during these surveys are listed below:

- How many/which students intend to participate in in-person instruction in 2020-2021, including extracurricular activities and sports/athletics;
- Which in-person lunch options are supported by parents;
- How many/which students intend to utilize TPS school bus transportation;
- How many/which parents planned to educate their children on the proper use of cloth face coverings;
- How many/which parents needed additional resources to educate their children on the proper use of cloth face coverings;
- How many/which parents did not plan to educate their children on the proper use of cloth face coverings;
- How many/which parents planned to have their children routinely practice the proper use of cloth face coverings prior to returning to in-person instruction;
- How many/which parents needed additional resources to have their children routinely practice the proper use of cloth face coverings prior to returning to in-person instruction;
- How many/which parents did not plan to have their children practice the proper use of cloth face coverings;
- How many/which parents intend to have their children utilize other protections; and,
- How many/which staff are unable to report to work in-person.

The results of these surveys are shared after each surveying period ends.



### CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENTS: MET

Initial information gathering from families and staff occurred July 2020 and will continue throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

### CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:

- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Continuity of Services*
- ✓ *Public Comment*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*



## Operations Plan

### Facilities

#### Use of Facilities - Priority:

The prioritized use of all school buildings is to provide instruction to students enrolled in Thomaston Public Schools. All other uses for school buildings shall be, at least limited and at most prohibited.

Maximizing social distancing between student workstations when feasible in each CSDE phase shall define classroom layouts. Other protections may not be permitted if such protections disrupt the educational process in any way.

Each school shall identify an isolation room for individuals experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 when in the school building.

School facilities shall be used for in-person instruction on a schedule described below:



#### Lowest Risk (CSDE High COVID Spread):

- All school buildings shall be closed.
- All students and teachers shall engage in remote learning, activities, and events in accordance with the TPS Plan.
- All in-person extracurricular activities, events and sports/athletics will be prohibited.



#### More Risk (CSDE Moderate Spread):

- All students and teachers shall engage in a hybrid of reduced-sized classes of in-person instruction in school buildings and remote learning.
- All in-person extracurricular activities, events and sports/athletics will be prohibited.
- Reduced-sized classes will be scheduled. Reduced-sized classes will stay together in cohorts with the same teacher throughout/across school days as feasible with limitations on mixing cohorts as feasible.
- Students shall be spaced at least 6 feet apart whenever feasible and will not share objects.
- All students, teachers and staff shall wear a cloth face covering at all times except when eating.



#### More Risk (CSDE Minimal Spread):

- All students and teachers shall engage in full-sized classes.
- All extracurricular activities and events will be prohibited; all sports/athletics will be at least restricted or at most prohibited.
- Full-sized classes will be scheduled. Full-sized classes will stay together in cohorts with the same teacher throughout/across school days as feasible with limitations on mixing cohorts as feasible.
- Students shall be spaced at least 3 feet apart whenever feasible and the sharing of objects will be limited whenever feasible.
- All students, teachers and staff shall wear a cloth face covering at all times except when eating.



#### Highest Risk (CSDE Contained/Vaccine):

- All students and teachers shall engage in full-sized classes in school buildings.
- All activities, events and sports/athletics will be at least restricted or at most prohibited.
- All students will attend school in-person every school day.<sup>7</sup>
- Students will not be spaced apart and will share classroom materials or supplies. Mixing between classes, activities, events and/or sports/athletics will occur.
- All students, teachers and staff shall wear a cloth face covering at all times except when eating.

<sup>7</sup> Under the current COVID-19 pandemic conditions, parents/guardians may voluntarily choose to have students temporarily engage in learning from home. TPS has developed and enhanced its Distance Learning Plan for students who wish to temporarily continue remote learning from home (*See also Temporarily Choosing Not to Participate*).



## Operations Plan

### Facilities

*(continued from previous page)*

Any shift to a hybrid or full remote learning model will depend on specific circumstances regarding virus transmission. Such a shift could come from a statewide emergency order, or, if an outbreak is geographically concentrated, could be made by the district, town, or region in consultation with DPH, CSDE, and local Health Departments ([Torrington Area Health District](#)).

#### Use of Facilities – Training:

All staff and students shall complete training in health and safety protocols. The COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison shall address such training in collaboration with the Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. The initial health and safety protocol training for staff will be provided prior to the first day of school for students. Said training shall also be provided throughout the school year as deemed necessary. Training days related to health and safety protocols will include the practice of new protocols with staff. Students shall receive training in health and safety protocols on the first day of school, regardless of their instruction status, i.e., in-person or online.

Attendance for such training shall be mandatory for all students and staff. Such training shall be made available to interested families upon request and contracted service providers (bus drivers, occupational therapists, building substitutes). Training shall be repeated during the first months of in-person instruction as warranted. Training shall also be provided after the start of in-person instruction as new staff is hired. Practice time related to the training shall be provided to staff and students whenever possible.

Health and safety protocols training for staff shall include:

- Social distancing;
- Cleaning protocols; and
- Hygiene practices.

Health and safety protocol training shall be:

- Mandatory for all staff and shall be repeated and updated as needed;
- Mandatory for all substitute staff or others who may work in a school building on a regular basis; and
- Made available to families upon request.

#### Use of Facilities – During Regular School Hours:

Staff, students, and contractors shall be permitted in school buildings only after participating in Health and Safety Protocol training. Emergency Responders, Crisis Mobile Intervention Services staff, and Department of Children and Families (DCF) staff shall be permitted in school buildings with no Health and Safety Protocol training. No visitors shall be permitted in the school buildings. All meetings typically held in-person shall be held virtually.

Classroom, gymnasium and cafeteria spaces shall be used as typical unless otherwise indicated. All staff and students shall wear cloth face coverings when in school buildings and wherever social distancing is not practicable (outdoors, on school buses, etc.). Spaces may be repurposed for instruction in each school to maximize social distancing; such repurposing shall not occur until deemed critical.



## Operations Plan

### Facilities

*(continued from previous page)*

#### Use of Facilities - Layout:

The [CSDE Plan](#) requires districts to assist staff and students in maintaining social distancing between individuals in order to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 per the public health guidelines in place at this time. Social distancing is one of many mitigating tools to decrease virus transmission. Due to the broad range of activities that occur in the school setting and the fact that each school building in Thomaston is different, guaranteeing a particular distance between individuals may not be possible all of the time. The TPS Plan endeavors to maintain the recommended social distancing to the maximum extent possible under the circumstances presented.

TPS assessed the capacity of each school building and has taken an approach to building use that parallels the phases of spread in the [CSDE Plan](#).

#### Use of Facilities – Not During Regular School Hours:

If a school building is to be used outside of regular school hours, that use shall follow the same rules of use as practiced during the regular school day.

#### Ventilation:

School ventilation systems will be assessed in compliance with [DPH Guidance for School Systems for the Operation of Central and non- Central Ventilation Systems](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic. The past practice of regularly checking ventilation systems shall continue. For schools with central ventilation systems, whenever possible, ventilation rates and the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system shall be increased. For schools where a central ventilation system is not used, window air conditioning units shall be adjusted to maximize fresh air intake into the school, blower fans shall be set on low speed and pointed away from room occupants to the extent possible.

Window fans shall be turned to exhaust air out of the window in the direction of the outdoors. Window fans that blow air into a room or freestanding fans that only serve to circulate existing air around a room shall not be permitted.

#### No-Touch Usage:

Wherever possible, the installation and usage of no-touch items such as doors, trashcans, and bathroom fixtures shall occur. Remove lids from lidded trashcans.

#### Locker Protocol:

All school lockers shall be secured (shuttered) and use of school lockers shall be prohibited. Students shall use alternative means to securing their personal items.

#### Bathroom Protocol:

Bathroom usage will comply with [DPH guidance for cleaning and disinfecting of schools during COVID-19](#). Per the [CSDE Plan](#), a separate bathroom will be identified in each school near the isolation room that will be used by any individual who began experiencing COVID-19 symptoms while at school. Multi-stall bathrooms will be utilized to maximize social distancing. If cohorting, specific bathrooms shall be assigned to specific cohorts whenever possible.

Storage of any personal items within the bathroom (including staff bathrooms) shall be prohibited.





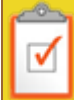
## Operations Plan

### Facilities

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#### Signs and Messages:

The purpose of signs and messages shall be to distribute information and provide regular communication about the actions students and staff should take to stop the spread of COVID-19. Signs and messages will serve to educate students and staff about how coronavirus is spread and how preventative actions can help avoid the spread. As required by the [CSDE Plan](#), the district will post signs related to stopping the spread of COVID-19 in multiple locations inside each school building. These signs shall be accessible for students with disabilities and in languages appropriate for the school population. Signs will promote everyday protective measures and that provide instruction related to properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face covering. Messages related to stopping the spread of COVID-19 shall be distributed in multiple formats including but not limited to email, websites, social media, and public address systems in each school building. These messages will be accessible for students with disabilities and in languages appropriate for the school population.



#### **CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENTS: MET**

The use of facilities will maximize social distancing when determining the classroom layout. Desks shall face in the same direction and students shall sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart. Space may be repurposed as deemed necessary. The reopening of facilities shall comply with DPH guidance. Signs and messages related to stopping the spread of COVID-19 will be posted/distributed and shall be accessible for students with disabilities and in languages appropriate for the school population. Ventilation systems will be assessed in compliance with DPH Guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bathroom protocols shall comply with DPH guidance for cleaning and disinfecting of schools during COVID-19 and the use of disposable towels will be maximized wherever possible. The Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment and the TPS Plan identified the training needs of staff related to health and safety protocols. Attendance shall be required for COVID-19 related trainings. Trainings shall also be made available to parents/families.

#### **CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ Health and Safety Strategies
- ✓ Continuity of Services
- ✓ Public Comment
- ✓ Periodic Review Process
- ✓ Understandable and Uniform Format





**Operations Plan**

Daily Operations

The TPS Plan aligns with the [CSDE Plan](#) in that it seeks to initiate in-person instruction for the full student population at once.

Length of School Year:

The most current district calendar has been emailed to parents and posted online at <https://www.thomastonschools.org/DistrictCalendar>.

Flexibility and Compartmentalization of Protective Measures:

Policies and protocols related to facilities and operations have been created with the understanding that schools may need to react quickly to changing conditions. Options to increase or relax restrictions will be available throughout the school year to respond effectively to changes in public health data, i.e., compartmentalized solutions that can be deployed or recalled in a timely and organized way (See also *Cancellation of Classes, Remote Learning, and Reopening Plan*).

The [CSDE Plan](#) defines remote learning as “situations where students and educators are not physically present in a traditional classroom environment, and where instruction is relayed through technology, e.g., learning management systems.” The learning management system employed by TPS is Google Classroom.

Equity:

The CSDE annually identifies gaps and requires districts to develop action plans to address those gaps. All State or district-identified gaps shall be addressed as they were addressed in previous years. In addition to these gaps, the [CSDE Plan](#) requires districts to address inclusion, equity, and access for all learners. Strategies and clearly defined action steps have and will be taken to align the TPS Plan to these requirements

Cohorts:

Per the [CSDE Plan](#), cohorts group students with and teacher so each group functions independently as much as possible. Even with cohorting, all staff and students shall wear cloth face coverings when in school buildings and wherever social distancing is not practicable (outdoors, on school buses, etc.).

Outside Time and Playgrounds:

Ways to minimize exposure from playground and fitness equipment use, including but not limited to ensuring only one cohort uses such equipment at the same time shall be employed. Hand washing or use of hand sanitizer before and after shared equipment use shall be made routine. Disinfecting fitness equipment or other smaller outdoor equipment after each cohort’s use shall occur whenever feasible. Staggering of recess times for each cohort shall be implemented whenever feasible and monitoring of social distancing shall occur as appropriate.

*(continued from previous page)*

Foot Traffic, Hallways, and Shared Areas

Foot traffic in hallways and shared areas shall be organized so that it limits face-to-face encounters. Foot traffic patterns like one-way hallways and staircases and entrance-only/exit-only doors shall be



utilized whenever feasible. Staggering passing in hallways shall be employed as feasible. Hallway and stairwell traffic shall not stagnate.

### Other Individuals Entering the School Building:

Consistent policies shall address when clubs, before- and after-school programs, or other voluntary groups may be allowed to use school space and include ways to safely allow access for these programs. School building access shall be limited or restricted for nonessential volunteers and visitors. Emergency Responders, Crisis Mobile Intervention Services staff, and Department of Children and Families (DCF) staff shall be permitted in school buildings with no Health and Safety Protocol training. No visitors shall be permitted in the school buildings.

Building access for parents shall be prohibited and replaced with highly restricted and virtual access whenever possible. Highly restricted access is defined as parent access for child health emergencies only and shall comply with CDC and other public health recommendations.

Before School and Afterschool Programs: Before and after school programs may be canceled due to daily disinfecting schedules.

- School-Sponsored Programs: If school-sponsored before school and afterschool programs are deemed permissible, then all Health and Safety Protocols shall apply. All staff and students shall wear cloth face coverings when in a school building and whenever 6 feet of distance is not practicable.
- Non-School-Sponsored Programs: Other groups or activities that are not school-sponsored shall not be permitted to use any indoor school space.



**CSDE REQUIREMENTS: MET**

Compartmentalized solutions exist and can be deployed or recalled in a timely and organized way. Consistent policies to address when clubs, before- and after-school programs, or other voluntary groups may be allowed to use school space exist and include safe ways to allow access for before- and after-school and childcare programs.

**CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Continuity of Services*
- ✓ *Public Comment*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*



<b>Operations Plan</b>	
<b>Child Nutrition</b>	
<p>TPS participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Special Milk Program (SMP) and, therefore, must continue to determine eligibility for and make available free and reduced-price meals and free milk to all eligible students. TPS must comply with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) regulations and policies for school meals and milk including the meal pattern requirements and is required to claim meals/milk provided to eligible students using accurate counting and claiming methods.</p> <p><u>On-Site Meal Service (for students while in school):</u> The appropriate meal distribution method(s) (i.e., Cafeteria or alternate pick-up model/classroom delivery model or a hybrid delivery model) of meal service based on social distancing, physical location, student traffic, space, staffing, shall be employed.</p>	
<b>Financial Considerations:</b>	
<p>To access Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds that may offset increased Child Nutrition costs related to COVID-19, TPS has provided COVID-19 related expenditure information to the Town of Thomaston. The increase in cost to operate the school nutrition program during a school closure period and the decrease in food service revenue (the inability to offer a la carte sales, catering, decrease in meal counts, increased food costs/supplies) is a clear financial consideration.</p> <p><u>Cleaning and Sanitation:</u> The district shall consult with local health departments regarding COVID-19 safety protocols, including standard operating procedures for sanitation of school kitchens, cafeterias, food warehouses, alternative meal distribution locations, and central production kitchens.</p> <p><u>Communication with Families:</u> The district shall notify parents and the school community about school meal service/options using a variety of communication methods such as social media, email, newsletters, and district/school websites.</p>	
<b>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):</b>	
<p>Food Service Staff shall have access to PPE for food service operations such as masks, gloves, physical barriers in serving areas, etc. A clear plastic protective barrier shall be installed at each point of sale in each school cafeteria.</p>	
<p> <b>CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENTS: MET.</b> TPS shall continue to comply with the requirements of all applicable national meal/food programs including the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) regulations and policies.</p> <p><b>CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Health and Safety Strategies</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Continuity of Services</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Public Comment</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Periodic Review Process</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Understandable and Uniform Format</i></li> </ul>	





Operations Plan
<p>Transportation</p> <p><u>Prioritized Use:</u> The prioritized use of district-provided transportation (i.e., school bus, van or car) shall be to provide in-person instruction to students enrolled in Thomaston Public Schools.</p> <p><a href="#">Per Policy 3451.311 - Business/Non-Instructional Operations Transportation Riding Other Than Assigned Bus</a>, “School bus transportation is provided at district expense to move children requiring transportation from their home pickup point (a designated school bus stop) to school, and from school back to their home drop off point (a designated school bus stop)...Parents or guardians of students shall not discuss request with bus drivers, teachers, or other school personnel, changes for student bus assignment. All such requests shall be made to the School Principal.”</p> <p>Thomaston Public Schools also provides transportation to some school-aged Thomaston residents who are enrolled in a Thomaston Public Schools-approved<sup>8</sup> public vocational-technical school, public vocational-agricultural school, public magnet school, and public/private outplacement facilities/schools. Based on the community spread of COVID-19 in the schools, districts and regions where these TPS-approved schools are located, district-provided transportation to these schools may be restricted or prohibited.</p> <p>All other uses for district-provided transportation shall be at least limited and at most prohibited depending upon the CSDE Spread phase.</p> <p><u>Transportation Change Requests:</u> No school bus changes shall be permitted under any CSDE Spread phase. Students shall be restricted to riding the school bus assigned to their home address listed in the district’s student information system (PowerSchool). Per <a href="#">Policy 3451.311</a>: “Requests for long-term change shall be made in writing, stating the reason for such change...Long-term change is defined as consistently on a given day(s) of the week throughout the school year.”</p> <p>If a student move to another Thomaston address, then a <a href="#">Bus Route Change Request Form</a> must be submitted to the School Principal of the school the child attends at least one week in advance of the anticipated start date for the requested change. If the Superintendent approves the requested change, then the change shall occur. If the conditions of the change do not meet the requisite criteria for such a change, then the requested change will be denied. Changing district-provided transportation without an approved form shall be grounds for student discipline up to and including suspension from all district-provided transportation.</p> <p>This process holds for all district-provided transportation passengers including some school-aged Thomaston residents who are enrolled in a Thomaston Public Schools-approved public vocational-technical school, public vocational-agricultural school, public magnet school, public outplacement facility/school, or private outplacement facility/school.</p>

<sup>8</sup> General education transportation, via All-Star Transportation, is provided to school-aged Thomaston residents who attend Wamogo, Waterbury Arts Magnet School (WAMS), Bristol Technical School, Oliver Wolcott Technical High School, Kaynor Technical High School, Maloney Magnet School, and Rotella Magnet School. Special education transportation, via KidsWheels and all other transportation subcontractors, is provided to school-aged Thomaston residents who attends a public or private outplacement facility/school as approved by Thomaston Public Schools through the Planning and Placement Team process.



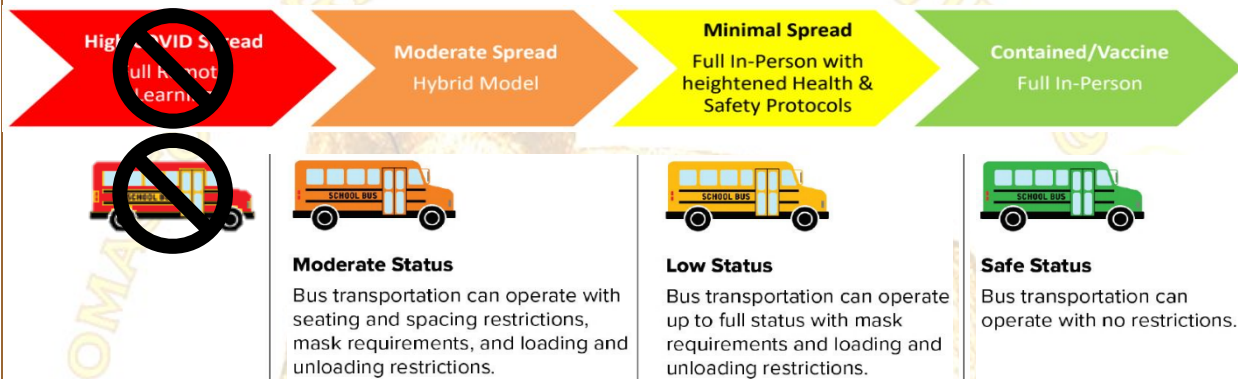
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## Out-of-District Transportation – Transportation Change Requests:

The above “Transportation Change Requests” section holds for all out-of-district transportation.

Thomaston Public Schools will offer district-provided transportation in three of the phases: Contained/Vaccine, Minimal Spread, and Moderate Spread; no district-provided transportation will be offered in the High COVID Spread phase.

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Per the [CSDE Plan](#), protective strategies for district-provided transportation should align with a tiered system that will be established by the CT Department of Public Health (not yet available). School bus transportation in Thomaston will be provided as described below:

All district-provided transportation shall be provided as described below:



### Lowest Risk (CSDE High COVID Spread):

- All district-provided transportation shall be canceled; this includes transportation to district-approved schools/facilities, even if those schools/facilities are providing in-person instruction.
- All extracurricular activities, events and sports/athletics shall be canceled.



### More Risk (CSDE Moderate Spread):

- District-provided transportation vehicles shall operate at full capacity while maximizing health and safety protocols; since reduced-sized, in-person classes will be scheduled through a rotation of in-person and remote learning days, full capacity at this risk level is defined as a distribution of 50% of the student population.
- Passengers will not be permitted to change seats during the route.
- All in-person extracurricular activities, events and sports/athletics shall be canceled.
- All drivers and passengers are required to wear a cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth prior to boarding the vehicle and the entire time in the vehicle (when stopped and during transit). All drivers and passengers must keep their cloth face coverings in place until they are completely out of the vehicle.
- All functioning windows shall be open when the vehicle is on duty.
- Passengers shall load the vehicle from the back row to the front row, i.e., the first passengers picked up walk to the last seat in the vehicle, filling in the back row, then the second to last row, then the third to last row until all rows are filled, back to front. To unload the vehicle, passengers shall reverse the way they loaded with the front row disembarking first, then the second row, then the third row until all rows are emptied, front to back. NOTE: This method of loading and disembarking is not typical; TPS has typically seated students by grade-level and/or behavior





support needs.

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**Minimal Spread**  
Full in-person with  
heightened health &  
safety protocols.

**Low Status**

Bus transportation can operate  
up to full status with mask  
requirements and loading and  
unloading restrictions.

### More Risk (CSDE Minimal Spread):

- District-provided transportation vehicles shall operate at full capacity while maximizing health and safety protocols.
- Passengers will not be permitted to change seats during the route.
- All extracurricular activities, events and sports/athletics will be at least restricted or at most prohibited.
- All drivers and passengers shall be required to wear a cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth prior to boarding and the entire time in the vehicle (when stopped and during transit). All drivers and passengers must keep their cloth face coverings in place until they are completely out of the vehicle.
- At least fifty-percent (50%) of all functioning windows shall be open when the vehicle is on duty.
- All passengers shall load the vehicle from the back row to the front row, i.e., the first passengers picked up walk to the last seat in the vehicle, filling in the back row, then the second to last row, then the third to last row until all rows are filled, back to front. To unload the vehicle, passengers shall reverse the way they loaded with the front row disembarking first, then the second row, then the third row until all rows are emptied, front to back. NOTE: This method of loading and disembarking is not typical; TPS has typically seated students by grade-level and/or behavior support needs.



**Contained/Vaccine**  
Full In-Person

**Safe Status**

Bus transportation can  
operate with no restrictions.

### Highest Risk (CSDE Contained/Vaccine):

- District-provided transportation shall operate as it did prior to the pandemic, with no restrictions.
- Passengers will not be permitted to change seats during the route.



### CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENTS: MET

Protective strategies for district-provided transportation will align with the forthcoming tiered system established by DPH to assist leaders define the decision-making approach applied to individual school districts.

### CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:

- ✓ Health and Safety Strategies
- ✓ Continuity of Services
- ✓ Public Comment
- ✓ Periodic Review Process
- ✓ Understandable and Uniform Format



### Health Practices and Protocols

#### Personal Protective Equipment:

The [CSDE Plan](#) does not require districts to provide cloth face coverings for all school participants; however, TPS is prepared to provide a cloth face covering to any student or staff member who does not have one or whose cloth face covering becomes soiled or wet during the course of the school day.

TPS is also prepared to supply face coverings and PPE (personal protective equipment) if otherwise required by law or agreement. Staff who assist students with toileting shall be provided increased protective equipment, including but not limited to medical-grade masks and disposable gowns.

The [CSDE Plan](#) requires children to wear cloth face coverings in order to go to school. All staff shall have access to emergency PPE if their personally owned PPE is damaged, soiled or become wet. Food Service Staff shall have access to PPE for food service operations such as masks, gloves, physical barriers in serving areas, etc. A clear plastic protective barrier has been installed at each point of sale in each school cafeteria.

#### Phase Change Determination:

Health data will focus on the state or local level to determine ramping up or down the TPS Plan phases, whichever level is deemed a priority at the time. Decisions to change the phase of the TPS Plan will not be made in a vacuum, but will be informed by input from state, regional, and local leaders. Depending on circumstances, a statewide order may require a ramping up or down regardless of health data in Thomaston.

#### Mitigation Strategies:

The mitigation strategies to be implemented through the TPS Plan are:

- Facial coverings;
- Regular handwashing;
- Deep cleaning of rooms and high touch points; and
- Social distancing to the extent possible.

All students and staff shall wear a cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth when inside school buildings and wherever social distancing is not practicable (outdoors, school buses, etc.).

#### Health and Safety Protocol Training:

Students shall be educated and engaged in the new expectations related to public health policies and protocols. As part of this requirement, age/grade-level appropriate communication of these expectations and policies shall be utilized. Health and Safety Protocol Training shall be provided at the start of the school year with frequent reminders throughout the school year.

#### Example of Training:

The following is an example of the information that will be provided to students and staff regarding the proper use and cleaning of cloth face coverings (per the TPS Plan and the CDC). Cloth face coverings must be in place prior to using district-provided transportation or entering a school; all cloth face coverings must be kept in place at all times except when eating.



## Health Practices and Protocols

(continued from previous page)

### How to Wear a Cloth Face Covering Correctly:



- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily
- Don't put the face covering around your neck or up on your forehead
- Don't touch the face covering, and, if you do, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer to disinfect

### Take Off Your Cloth Face Covering Carefully, When You're Home:



- Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops
- Handle only by the ear loops or ties
- Fold outside corners together
- Place covering in the washing machine
- Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing and wash hands immediately after removing.

### How to Clean a Cloth Face Covering (not for one-time-use/disposable masks):

#### Washing Machine



- You can include your face covering with your regular laundry.
- Use regular laundry detergent and the warmest appropriate water setting for the cloth used to make the face covering.

#### Washing by Hand



- Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
  - 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) household bleach per gallon of room temperature water or
  - 4 teaspoons household bleach per quart of room temperature water
- Check the label to see if your bleach is intended for disinfection. Some bleach products, such as those designed for safe use on colored clothing, may not be suitable for disinfection. Ensure the bleach product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.
- Soak the face covering in the bleach solution for 5 minutes.
- Rinse thoroughly with cool or room temperature water.

Make sure to completely dry the cloth face covering after washing.

### How to Dry a Cloth Face Covering (not for one-time-use/disposable masks):



#### Dryer

- Use the highest heat setting and leave in the dryer until completely dry.



#### Air dry

- Lay flat and allow to completely dry. If possible, place the cloth face covering in direct sunlight.



## Health Practices and Protocols

(continued from previous page)

All students and staff shall wear a cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth when inside district vehicles and buildings and wherever social distancing is not practicable (outdoors) until further notice.

Other protections may not be permitted if the District cannot be assured of the proper cleaning and disinfection of those protections by parents (in accordance with CDC guidelines) and if such protections disrupt the educational process in any way.

All staff, students and contractors shall be trained on the standard public health practices used to prevent the spread of diseases. These practices include, but are not limited to:

- Social distancing,
- Frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer,
- Use of face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth,
- Respiratory and cough etiquette, and
- Enhanced cleaning/disinfection of surfaces.

Thomaston Public Schools shall provide adequate supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethyl alcohol or 70% isopropyl alcohol (for staff and older students who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, and no-touch/foot-pedal trash cans as feasible.

An emergency supply of cloth face coverings shall be provided for those staff and students who soil, wet or damage their personal cloth face coverings. Staff and students who attempt to enter a school building without a cloth face covering shall not be permitted to enter until they secure a cloth face covering.

Cleaning and hygiene protocols shall be as recommended by the CDC. In addition to full cleaning and disinfection prior to the first day of school, daily cleaning and disinfection will occur with spot-disinfection of high-touch surfaces throughout the day. High-touch surfaces include soap and paper towel dispensers, doors within toilet stalls, and toilet handles and doorknobs. Cleaning and disinfecting when school is not in session such as over the weekend or on a school day when in-person instruction is not scheduled shall maximize passive decontamination.



### **CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENTS: MET**

The TPS Plan ensures that staff and students will be educated and engaged in the new expectations related to all public health policies and protocols, inclusive of communicating the information for participant age. Training in the new policies and protocols will occur prior to the start of school and throughout the school year. Adequate supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethyl alcohol or 70% isopropyl alcohol (for staff and older students who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, cloth face coverings (as feasible), and no-touch/foot-pedal trash cans (as feasible) shall be provided by the district.

### **CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Continuity of Services*
- ✓ *Public Comment*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*



## Health Practices and Protocols

### Reporting Illnesses and Addressing Vulnerable Populations

Staff and students will be instructed on how to inform the school that they are sick with COVID-19 related symptoms.

#### Immunization and Health Assessment Requirements:

The DPH guidance and the CSDE guidance related to immunization and health assessment requirements shall be applied.

#### Reporting Illnesses and Addressing Vulnerable Populations:

The TPS Plan instructs students and staff to inform the school if they are sick with COVID-19 related symptoms, particularly if they had a known contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 and have also had contact with the school population. These students and staff must stay home when they are presenting COVID-19 symptoms.

The TPS Plan shall follow the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) pandemic guidance that confirms it is permissible to ask employees if they are experiencing symptoms of the pandemic. TPS will continue to maintain all information about employee or student illness as a confidential medical record.

The COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison in collaboration with and with support from the Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment shall:

- Create and distribute consistent protocols for information reporting and shall serve as the point person to appropriately receive and safeguard this information.
- Educate staff and families about when to [stay home](#).
- Communicate the content of this or any updated guidance
- Instruct staff and students (or their parents/guardians) to perform a self-assessment prior to leaving for school to identify fever and other possible COVID-19 symptoms.
- Communicate this expectation and provide parents with reminders about the [symptoms consistent with COVID-19](#) that require keeping their students at home.
- Establish and communicate school-wide sick protocols, including signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and temperature thresholds requiring students or staff to stay home.
- Offer options for school/work to students/staff with special healthcare needs (e.g., remote learning opportunities for all students and alternative/modified work responsibilities for staff) as feasible.

### **CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENTS: MET**

The immunization guidance from the DPH shall be applied. The TPS Plan includes information related to the reporting of illnesses and addressing vulnerable populations and instructs students and staff to inform school if they are sick with COVID-19 related symptoms and that they must stay home when they are sick. EEOC guidance shall be followed when asking staff if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. All medical information for students and staff shall be confidential. Consistent reporting protocols and self-assessment education will be provided. Communication related to COVID-19 will be continuous and ongoing. Options for school/work for students/staff shall be consisted with applicable laws and district policies.

### **CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Continuity of Services*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*



## SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN

### Health Practices and Protocols

#### Social Distancing

Health practices and protocols shall serve to assist staff and students to maintain maximum social distancing to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 per the public health guidelines at that time. The TPS Plan shall adjust the approach to social distancing if guidance from the CDC or DPH changes due to shifting public health data or evolving understanding of COVID-19 disease, including transmission.



#### **CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENT: MET**

The TPS Plan assists staff and students to maintain social distancing between individuals and is written to allow as guidance from the CDC or DPH changes.

#### **CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*

### Health Practices and Protocols

#### Use of Face Coverings, Masks, and Face Shields

The TBOE updated Policy 5132 - Students - Dress and Grooming to include the requirement of the use of cloth face coverings. An emergency supply of cloth face coverings will be provided for staff and students who soil, wet or damage their personal cloth face coverings. Staff and students who attempt to enter a school building without a cloth face covering shall not be permitted to enter until they secure a cloth face covering.



#### **CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENT: MET**

The TBOE has adopted a policy requiring use of cloth face coverings. An emergency supply of cloth face coverings shall be provided for staff and students who soil, wet or damage their personal cloth face coverings.

#### **CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*

### Health Monitoring Plan

#### Planning and Distribution of Information

The TPS Plan shall include written protocols aligned to the protocols that will be provided by the DPH. These protocols shall be established with the goal of decreasing the risk of spreading or contracting COVID-19 and maintaining oversight related to the pandemic while complying with relevant privacy and health laws.



#### **CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENT: MET**

The TPS Plan shall follow DPH health monitoring guidelines with the goal of decreasing the risk of spreading or contracting the virus and maintaining oversight related to the pandemic while complying with relevant privacy and health laws.

#### **CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*



## Containment Plan

### Purpose:

The purpose of the containment plan is to decrease the risk of spreading COVID-19 and includes the following:

- Immediate coordination with the local health department, including being ready to comply with requests for information from the local health department to assist with contact tracing.
- Identification of a response team within the school and Thomaston Public Schools with specific responsibilities.
- Consideration of what signs and symptoms exhibited by staff, students, etc. would require their immediate dismissal from school, for what period of time, and conditions for their re-admittance.
- Identification of an "isolation room" (besides the health office) to accommodate students who exhibit symptoms consistent with COVID-19 until a parent/guardian arrives.

If a staff member, student or contractor has signs or symptoms of COVID-19, and/or there is a known exposure, and/or a member of the school community has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, Thomaston Public Schools shall immediately:

If the staff member, student or contractor is in a school building when this information is received:

- The staff member, student or contractor shall be placed in the dismissed immediately or placed in the school's isolation room until dismissal can be arranged;
- The School Nurse shall immediately contact the COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison;
- The COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison shall immediately contact the Torrington Area Health District (TAHD);
- The COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison shall contact the Superintendent of Schools;
- The Superintendent of Schools shall cancel school for a duration recommended by the TAHD; and
- The Superintendent of Schools shall communicate conditions and school cancellation duration to staff, students, parents and community officials.

If the staff member, student or contractor is not in a school building when this information is received:

- The staff member, student or contractor will be directed to not come to the school;
- The School Nurse shall immediately contact the COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison
- The COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison shall immediately contact the TAHD;
- The COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison shall contact the Superintendent of Schools;
- The Superintendent of Schools shall cancel school for a duration recommended by the TAHD; and
- The Superintendent of Schools shall communicate conditions and school cancellation duration to staff, students, parents and community officials.

A consistent policy for dismissal of students or staff who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 and must be dismissed from school will be implemented.



### **CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENT: MET**

The written protocols for containment and immediate response if an individual has signs or symptoms of COVID-19 are described in the TPS Plan. Each school shall identify an isolation room/bathroom and log all persons who enter isolation areas. Initiation of recommended CDC and CSDE procedures following a confirmed COVID-19 case shall occur.

### **CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Continuity of Services*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*




## Cancellation of Classes, Remote Learning, and Reopening Plans

The TPS Plan shall adhere to DPH guidance on the Cancellation of Classes, Remote Learning, and Reopening Plans. School cancellations due to COVID-19 will occur in the event that the Superintendent of Schools, her designee, or the state government suspends or cancels in-person classes for some or all participants. The Superintendent of Schools will notify and consult with the CSDE immediately if contemplating the cancellation of school due to COVID-19.

If in-person instruction is canceled for Thomaston Public Schools, remote instruction will be provided to all students.

Staff, students, parents and contractors will receive an announcement of the cancellation of schools with the reason for the cancellation (weather, COVID-19, etc.) and the duration of the cancellation (one day, multiple days, etc.). The roles and responsibilities of students, staff and contractors remain the same for in-person instruction and remote learning.

Ongoing educational opportunities during remote instruction will be prioritized commensurate to in-person instruction as practicable. Resources and materials for continuity of learning will be made available daily and incorporated into in-person instruction so that if a school cancellation occurs, school can continue remotely.

 **CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENT: MET**  
 The TPS Plan includes how school will be canceled and reopened.

**CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**


- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Continuity of Services*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*

## Cancellation of Classes, Remote Learning, and Reopening Plans

### Future Planning for Remote Blended Learning

Thomaston Public Schools shall provide both in-person only, with the exception that if in-person instruction cannot occur due to the cancellation of classes, remote learning will be offered to enrolled students only.

Expectations and resources related to remote learning shall be communicated to parents/guardians via ParentSquare and posted on the district's webpage.

 **CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENT: MET**  
 The TPS Plan provides remote learning opportunities if in-person classes are canceled. Parents, staff and students shall receive notice of the cancelation of classes, remote learning and reopening plans via ParentSquare and the district's webpage.

**CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Continuity of Services*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*





<b>Academics</b>	
General Education	
<u>Physical Education, Athletics, Arts, and Extracurricular Activities:</u> The TPS Plan acknowledges the importance of engaging students in a well-rounded educational opportunity, including physical education, unified arts, and extracurricular activities, with modifications to avoid any increased public health risk.	
The TPS Plan follows CDC, state, and local guidelines related to social distancing and disinfecting areas and equipment used for physical education and physical activity, including recess.	
As before the pandemic, physical education, fine arts, and music curriculum considers the needs of all students, including focusing on activities, adaptations, and modifications of all education decisions to ensure the full inclusion by all students.	
	<p><b>CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENT: MET.</b> CDC, state, and local guidelines related to social distancing and disinfecting areas/equipment shall be followed.</p> <p><b>CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Continuity of Services</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Periodic Review Process</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Understandable and Uniform Format</i></li> </ul>

<b>Academics</b>	
Special Education	
Academics related to special education will be prepared with the understanding that there has been no waiver of requirements under the IDEA for provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE).	
The wearing of cloth face coverings by the population of special education students shall be the same as the wearing of cloth face coverings by the population of general education students.	
	<p><b>CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENT: MET</b> The TPS Plan assumes no waiver of requirements under the IDEA.</p> <p><b>CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Continuity of Services</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Periodic Review Process</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Understandable and Uniform Format</i></li> </ul>



## Academics

### English Learners (ELs)

The TPS Plan indicates that like all other students, English Learners are entitled to FAPE. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IV, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (1974) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) provide guidance on the services to which ELs are entitled and such services will continue with the TPS Plan. ELs shall have access to the general education curriculum as well as to a supplemental language instruction program in both in-person and remote learning settings.

During school closures due to COVID-19, ELs shall continue to receive their supplemental EL instructional program in addition to their general education program of mainstream, grade-level and content-area instruction.

As before the pandemic, communication with parents who have limited proficiency in English shall be in a language they understand as required by Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Further, communications during school closures due to COVID-19 may be provided through translation and/or interpretation as before the pandemic.



#### **CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENT: MET**

The TPS Plan illustrates the requirements for English Learners/dually identified students. Communication with parents who have limited English proficiency shall continue as in the past.

#### **CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Continuity of Services*
- ✓ *Public Comment*
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## Family and Student Engagement

### Family Support and Communication

TPS shall comply with all state and federal family engagement requirements associated with Title I during the COVID-19 pandemic. TPS shall continue to provide families with clear and ongoing communication about what to expect when schools are open/closed. These communications include, but are not limited to, guidance on the protocols related to health and safety guidelines. TPS shall continue to engage with families and students to ensure they are informed and have the ability to provide feedback. The TPS Plan shall be posted on the TPS website and emailed to parents and will clearly identify the COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison.



#### **CSDE REQUIREMENT: MET**

The TPS Plan complies with state and federal family engagement requirements, provides continued communication and engagement with families and students, and is posted at <https://www.thomastonschools.org>.

#### **CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Continuity of Services*
- ✓ *Public Comment*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*



## Family and Student Engagement

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mental Health

Each school shall develop a detailed plan to engage all students, staff and families with particular strategies to identify and engage populations and specific students that have been disengaged. Each school shall prepare staff to identify issues related to abuse and neglect in the context of the pandemic and comply with all mandated reporting requirements.



### **CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENT: MET**

TPS shall develop a detailed plan to engage all students, staff and families. Staff shall be prepared to identify issues related to abuse and neglect in the context of the pandemic and comply with all mandated reporting requirements.

### **CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Continuity of Services*
- ✓ *Public Comment*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*

## Family and Student Engagement

Afterschool Programming

All afterschool programs shall follow the requirements outlined in the TPS Plan, including but not limited to requiring the use of cloth face coverings that cover the nose and mouth and social distancing.



### **CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENT: MET**

All afterschool programs shall follow the requirements outlined throughout the TPS Plan.

### **CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Continuity of Services*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*

## Career and Technical Education

The Vocational Technology (Industrial Arts) Teacher shall implement a plan for cleaning, disinfection, collection, sanitation, and logging of equipment and tools. Students shall be trained in all safety procedures as before the pandemic. Properly labeled spray bottles and/or disinfectant wipes shall be available in the space along with a trash receptacle.



### **CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENT: MET**

The VT/IA teacher shall implement a plan for cleaning and disinfecting shared equipment which shall include student training in all safety processes and procedures as before the pandemic.

### **CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Continuity of Services*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*



# SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN

## Staffing and Personnel

### Certification and Personnel Planning

The TPS Human Resources Specialist and the TBOE Attorney shall provide support and resources for staff to comply with legal and regulatory requirements related to personnel, including but not limited to the [EEOC guidance](#) related to the ADA and the COVID-19 pandemic.

**CSDE REQUIREMENT: MET**

The staffing and personnel plan was prepared with support from the Human Resources Specialist and board counsel and complies with legal and regulatory requirements.

**CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Continuity of Services*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*

## Staffing and Personnel

### Professional Development

Ongoing, mandatory training will be scheduled for all staff related to the symptoms of COVID-19, Standard Public Health protocols, Hygiene Practices, the proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), how to report illnesses, and supporting Social Emotional Learning.

**CSDE REQUIREMENT: MET**

Mandatory training will be scheduled for all staff.

**CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Continuity of Services*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*

## Budget

### Unanticipated Expenditures due to COVID-19

The TPS Plan includes the development of various budget scenarios addressing the CSDE phases of instruction. Based on these estimates, TPS can determine whether budgeted appropriations and additional federal funds will be sufficient to cover the unbudgeted expenses. If TPS anticipates a shortfall, it shall immediately begin communicating with the TBOE and Town of Thomaston (Board of Selectman and Board of Finance). The Superintendent of Schools shall continue her pattern of regular and transparent communications related to the TPS budget. The TPS Business Manager shall include COVID-19 expenditure information in his monthly Business Manager’s Report, which is shared with the Board of Finance and posted on the District’s webpage.

**CSDE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS REQUIREMENT: N/A****CSDE SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN REQUIREMENTS:**

- ✓ *Health and Safety Strategies*
- ✓ *Continuity of Services*
- ✓ *Periodic Review Process*
- ✓ *Understandable and Uniform Format*



## SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN

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