Frequently Asked Questions
Regarding Reopening K–12 Public Schools

Connecticut State Department of Education • July 17, 2020

The purpose of this Frequently Asked Questions document is to provide clarification on a variety of topics outlined in Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together (referred to here as the "Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document"). Keep in mind that plan guidance is offered in an effort to give general direction to all of Connecticut's different and diverse school districts and school operators to afford local educational agencies (LEAs) maximum flexibility in developing their own unique plan, rather than on overly prescriptive "one size fits all" model. Thus, additional questions specific and unique to any one district will require additional cooperation and collaboration at the local level among members of a Reopening Committee, Superintendent and district leaders, local public health officials, and Boards of Education.

This is a working document, which may be updated due to the rapidly changing response to this pandemic emergency and ongoing federal guidance updates related to COVID-19.

Annual Calendar — 180 Days

Q: **How will the statutory requirements for schools to hold 180 days of school and 900 hours of instruction be affected if there is a future need to cancel classes due to changing public health data? Will remote learning days "count" ?**

A: The Connecticut State Board of Education passed a resolution to waive up to three days of the school year to provide staff and families with additional time to build capacity to safely transition back to in-person classes. Therefore, the current requirement is for 177 days/900 hours for the upcoming 2020–2021 year. It would be appropriate to consult with your board counsel to ensure you are working within the existing current statutory and regulatory requirements within which districts typically function, as there are nuances related to remote learning for high school students and the number of hours in any given day.

This issue should be considered separate for those students who voluntarily opt into temporary continued remote learning. Consider that in the context of a student who is sick for a period of weeks and does not come to school during that time, for example. The school district has met its obligation to provide the 177 days, irrespective of the fact that certain students may not have been present for various reasons.

If, in the future, an LEA has to cancel classes due to changing public health data in the school or community, they are expected to provide full access to an educational program remotely. The issue of "counting" the days towards the statutory requirements may need to be addressed in the future, but LEAs are reminded that C.G.S. Section 10-15 permits the State Board of Education to authorize the shortening of any school year for a school district, a school or a portion of a school on account of an unavoidable emergency.

Q: **Are we all starting on the same date? Or is it a local decision?**

A: LEAs may determine the appropriate start date, unless future public health data requires a different approach.

Attendance

Q: **Will the attendance laws or LEA attendance policies be changed so students/families and staff do not feel compelled to come to school sick?**

A: The Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document recommends that LEAs review and consider revising policies and procedures related to student and employee absences to ensure that policies do not incentivize coming into school even if sick (for example, "perfect attendance" policies.) Human Resources officers should consult with board counsel to assess the myriad of legal protections for employees when they must be absent from work. The CSDE will also be considering whether any Connecticut State Board of Education (CSBE) guidance regarding definitions related to student attendance should include additional flexibility in the context of the pandemic.

Q: **Will there be any policy guidance on attendance in school when parents decide not to send students back in-person (students are not kept out of school due to a verifiable medical reason, but instead parents choose not to have their children participate in the return to school)?**

A: The Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document requires LEAs to develop three scenarios for fall of 2020:

1. Opening schools with a plan to provide for in-school instruction for all students on a full-time basis, unless a family voluntarily opts into temporary remote learning;
2. Opening schools, or future scaling back, with a plan to provide both in-person and remote learning support options (hybrid) accessing instruction and curriculum online resulting in limited student population on school premises at any given time; and
3. Total remote learning to provide a plan for the potential of future school closings requiring all students to access instruction and curriculum online for a period of time.

Future guidance will provide additional framework for students voluntarily choosing to learn from home, including related to attendance. It is anticipated that children will not be truant if their parents elect on a temporary basis not to send them to school, and these students will remain enrolled for the purposes of returning after a temporary period of time.

Cleaning, Ventilation, and Sanitizing

Q: **What are the expectations for LEAs to change practices around cleaning, ventilation, or sanitizing when we reopen?**

A: LEAs should implement the cleaning, ventilation, and sanitization protocols outlined in the DPH Guidance documents: Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting of Schools during COVID-19, and DPH Return to Service Guidance for Building Water Systems. This DPH guidance is referenced on pages 8–10 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document.

Cohorting

Q: **What are the size restrictions on cohorts?**

A: A cohort is defined as a group or team of students and educators with consistent members that stay together throughout certain periods of the school day. The purpose of the cohort model is to limit the number of students who are exposed to COVID-19 if there is community transmission in the school, and assist with effective contact tracing. While there is no definitive numerical restriction on cohort size, cohorts should be kept as stable as practicable.

Q: **If cohorting does not occur on transportation, how is it effective during the school day?**

A: Cohorting is one of many mitigating efforts, which layered together reduce risk. One factor related to any potential exposure is the amount of time spent with any given individual or group of individuals. Maximizing cohorting during the school day is still effective as one of many mitigating efforts, even if for shorter periods while on transportation the students are with individuals outside their cohort.

Daily Master Schedule

Q: **How do we provide planning periods?**

A: When in school for a full day of learning, district and school leaders should consider the contractual requirements and collaborate with the local union when developing the master schedule.

When off site and engaged in extended remote learning, consider the contractual requirements and collaborate with the local union to develop an alternate plan to provide planning periods. Districts can refer to page 15 of the Plan to Reimagine CT Classrooms for Continuous Learning and review the sample weekly schedule for teachers.

Digital Tools and Resources

Q: **Will a learning management system be provided by CSDE?**

A: The CSDE is offering the CT Learning Hub as a repository of universally accessible digital tools and platforms to support onsite, blended and remote learning environments. The Academic Office is reviewing additional tools and resources to be included in the Hub as Online Content and K–12 Model Curricula to support ongoing virtual learning onsite or remote.

The decision to use or acquire a standardized district learning management system (i.e. Schoology, Google Classroom, Canvas, Seesaw) to support remote learning opportunities is the decision of the district. Any procurement of resources should comply with Connecticut Data Privacy Requirements.

Additional guidance on approved and aligned Resources to Support Distance Learning during School Closures Volume 1 and Volume 2 provide names of digital tools by content and function that comply with Connecticut Data Privacy Requirements.

Distancing and Class Size

Q: **What is the requirement for social distancing, and are we expected to maintain 6 feet distancing within classrooms?**

A: Districts are required to assist staff and students to maintain social distancing between individuals to reduce the transmission of the virus per the public health guidelines in place at that time. Social distancing is one of many layers of mitigating tools being used to decrease transmission. Due to the broad range of activities that occur in the school setting and the fact that each school facility is different, guaranteeing a particular distance from others may not be possible 100% of the time. Districts should strive to maintain the recommended social distancing to the maximum extent possible under the circumstances presented.

Q: **Are there defined class sizes or ratios per square foot?**

A: Districts will need to assess the capacity of each school. There is not a defined class size or ratio. The Office of Policy and Management is available to assist the local team in assessing school buildings and capacity.

Q: **Are isolation rooms required?**

A: Yes, schools should identify an isolation room for individuals experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 when in the school building. Additional guidance regarding facilities can be found on page 9 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document.

Q: **How will social distancing guidelines work in conjunctions with instructional strategies like small group work?**

A: The Academic Office in partnership with other CSDE Departments is finalizing additional guidelines for whole group and small group instruction aligned with CDC and DPH guidelines.

Q: **Will future determinations to go to hybrid or full remote learning due to changing public health data be local by school, town, region, county, or will that be a statewide mandate?**

A: Any order or determination for a school population to shift to a hybrid or full remote learning model will depend on the specific circumstances presented with regard to transmission. Such an order could take the form of a statewide emergency order, or, if an outbreak is geographically concentrated, could be a determination made on a school, town, or regional basis in consultation with DPH, CSDE, and local Health Departments.

District Reopen Plans

Q: **Is July 24 a hard date for submission on plans?**

A: Yes.

Q: **Can you tell us more about the requirements of the district plans?**

A: Every district is expected to plan for a full reopening, and, should public health data change, a hybrid and remote model. Districts should refer to page 8 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document, which contains a link to the Connecticut LEA School Reopening Template. That document contains a compilation of the critical requirements identified within the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document that should be addressed in each district's reopening plan. LEAs are not mandated to use this template, but any plan submitted must address all of the requirements in the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document.

Educational Programming – Teaching and Learning

Q: **Will there be modifications to PE, music and art?**

A: Districts should plan to balance the importance of engaging students in a well-rounded educational opportunity, including physical education, unified arts, and extracurricular activities, with the need for modifications to avoid any increased public health risk. Additional recommendations and requirements and these areas are outlined on pages 35–37 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document.

Q: **What is the guidance for athletics and extracurricular activities?**

A: Page 36 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document provides guidance on how to best plan for physical activity including interscholastic athletics and activities. For further considerations, consult the guidance provided by CIAC, also found on page 36 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document. Page 40 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document provides guidance on After-School Programming.

Q: **With the suggestion that we repurpose gyms and auditoriums, is there any guidance on band/chorus and physical education classes?**

A: Page 37 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document provides guidance on how to plan the delivery of an arts program in schools. Resources to support planning by program are provided by the Connecticut Arts Administrators Association. For handling musical instruments, consult the National Association for Music Education's COVID-19 Instrument Cleaning Guidelines.

For Physical Education guidance, consult pages 35 and 36 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document.

Executive Orders

Q: **Will the executive orders regarding 180 days/900 hours, data privacy, and others be extended? Any consideration of new Executive Orders regarding certification or graduation requirements?**

A: Presently, the civil preparedness and public health emergencies declaration in March ends on September 9, 2020. At this time, LEAs should plan to work within existing statutory requirements for the next school year, including those requiring school be offered for 177 days/900 hours, unless a further waiver is approved by the State Board of Education. Connecticut law allows for remote credit only for high school students. CSDE will consider as needed policy or guidance flexibilities under CSDE or CSBE authority.

Facial Coverings and Masks

Q: **Will we be required to provide masks or state coverings for all students and staff?**

A: The Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document does not require LEAs to provide masks or face coverings for all school participants, but LEAs must be prepared to provide a mask to any student or staff member who does not have one. This would include, but not be limited to for those who forget their mask, lose their mask, or cannot procure or afford a mask. LEAs must also prepare to supply face coverings and PPE if otherwise required by law or agreement with the staff union representative. Staff working with students who are not wearing face coverings due to one of the exceptions and also cannot maintain social distancing should be provided increased protective equipment, including but not limited to medical-grade masks and disposable gowns.

Q: **Will students be obligated to wear masks?**

A: Barring limited exceptions, the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document requires that children must wear masks in order to go to school. This requirement is not just for their own safety, it is for the safety of their peers and their teachers.

Food and Dining Service

Q: **What is the guidance on food service (and cafeterias)?**

A: District and school leaders will need to determine 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, etc. Additional guidance can be found on page 13 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document provides guidance regarding Child Nutrition and the delivery of meals.

Funding — Finance

Q: **How do FEMA funds work for Charter Schools and regional school districts?**

A: To access FEMA funds, Charter schools and districts should consult initially with the municipality in which the school building is located.

Q: **Who do charter schools contact for PPE funds?**

A: Charter schools may use their ESSER funds for this purpose.

Q: **How do we handle the additional personnel needs fiscally?**

A: Districts should develop various budget scenarios addressing the potential different educational models they may need to implement. Based on these estimates they can determine whether their budgeted appropriations and the additional federal funds they will receive will be sufficient to cover these costs. If they anticipate a shortfall, they should immediately begin communicating with the municipality.

To inform state funding, districts should prioritize response to the questions on the CSDE survey about the costs they anticipate incurring beyond what they have budgeted for the 2020–21 school year. This will help us provide information to the Office of Policy and Management and the Office of the Governor as they do budget planning.

Q: **Will the State provide additional funding to the Districts?**

A: We are collecting the district cost estimates to help inform what additional resources might be made available. The state is facing the same revenue issues as local municipalities which will impact its ability to provide additional revenue to towns.

Q: **Can districts use CARES Funding to purchase devices for Teachers and Staff?**

A: Yes. If the expenditure is related to their ability to provide remote learning in response to COVID, it is allowable.

Health and Safety (Screening)

Q: **Will the health data focus on the state level or local level to determine ramping up or down?**

A: Decisions to change the operational model 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 is possible if public health data requires it.

Q: **What are the mitigation strategies schools can implement when they are not able to remain at a minimum of 6 feet apart?**

A: The Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document was drafted with input from the State Department of Public Health outlining a layering of multiple mitigation strategies. Minimizing risk requires schools engage this combination of mitigation strategies, including facial coverings, regular handwashing, deep cleaning of rooms and high touch points, and distancing to the extent possible. Where social distancing is difficult, schools will need to prepare to engage even more diligent oversight on some of the other mitigating efforts.

Q: **Has there been any discussion on vaccine exemptions for the start of school?**

A: The Department of Public Health issued guidance on this on June 17, 2020 requiring vaccinations be up-to-date.

Instructional Learning Models – Teaching and Learning

Q: **Is providing a distance learning option to parents in order to achieve social distancing in crowded schools a possibility for districts?**

A: Due to positive containment efforts in Connecticut, reopening schools can be achieved successfully based on current data. As such, districts should plan for all students, in all districts, to return to schoolhouses for full-time instruction in 2020–21, so long as public health data continues to support this model. However, some subset of students will choose not to participate in the return to school for a verified medical reason, and parents may voluntarily choose for students to engage temporarily in learning from home for a variety of other reasons. Additional information about students choosing not to return to school is available on page 6 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document.

Q: **Will social distancing guidelines come with statements about instructional strategies like small group work, etc.?**

A: Yes. Page 8 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document provides guidance on Classroom Layout and the strategy to assess current instructional spaces to maximize teacher and student workspaces and social distancing. Additional guidance and examples will be forthcoming on how to provide small-group instruction.

Q: **If a student chooses to opt into remote learning, are they counted as part of the school and district enrollment?**

A: Yes. All students who opt into remote learning are considered full-time public school students. They should be reported in PSIS and will be counted toward school and district enrollment.

Q: **What is the difference between Synchronous and Asynchronous learning? What is the guidance for balancing both at the district level?**

A: ***Synchronous learning*** is when classes occur on set schedules and time frames. Students and instructors are online at the same time in synchronous classes since lectures, discussions, and presentations take place at specific hours. When blended or remote, all students must be online at that exact time in order to participate in the class.

Asynchronous classes let students complete their work assigned on their own time. Students are given a time frame — it's usually a one-week window — during which they need to connect to their class daily or as determined by the teacher. When asynchronous, students can access assignments and content at any time of the day (or night).

The CSDE recommends districts should plan learning using a 50/50 rule; 50% synchronous and 50% asynchronous in a week of instruction:

- Schools/Teachers determine the mode — synchronous or asynchronous — that best supports the learning outcomes/targets
- Determine group size for synchronous learning as follows:
  - Group of 2–4 to promote engagement and participation
  - Group of 3–6 to promote collaboration and discussion

For Additional information on how to reimagine teaching, learning and classrooms refer to CSDE Plan for Reimagining CT Classrooms for Continuous Learning.

Liability

Q: **What should school boards and educators know about potential liability if someone comes down with COVID after reopening?**

A: Just like there is some potential risk any given day when running a school, there is potential exposure related to COVID-19 for foreseeable breaches of a duty of care resulting in injury. In Connecticut, boards of education should understand the context related to their liability. Depending on the circumstances, school boards may already be entitled to governmental immunity from liability in lawsuits against the entity or employees. This is not unique to the COVID-19 pandemic. School districts may wish to consult with counsel on the extent to which immunity may shield the school district from liability and as to policies, practices, and behaviors which may provide some measure of protection from liability irrespective of the existence of immunity

Q: **Will parents and guardians be required to sign a waiver to attend in-person classes?**

A: No, it would not be appropriate for LEAs to ask parents or guardians to sign a waiver related to any of the mandatory aspects of public education. LEAs should consult with board counsel regarding waivers for any voluntary or extracurricular activities.

Q: **Will Boards of Education have any role to play regarding District Plans?**

A: The Board's oversight of the district always continues, even in the face of the COVID crisis. It should ensure that the district's policies align with the needs of the district, superintendent, staff and students as they prepare for reopening. Resources available related to new or amended policies are available from the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE), including a sample policy related to the of wearing of masks

Magnets, Charters, and Other Programs

Q: **How should magnets address the mitigation process based on data given? We have students come from all over the state. What data will be suggested for magnets to use?**

A: Magnets should follow the same guidance and protocols as any school district when it comes to COVID-19 mitigation. Acknowledging that the fact that students come from multiple home districts, school buildings and transportation (even though sometimes at a greater distance) are the same, and should be treated in the same manner, with an emphasis on — according to DPH (scroll down for copied email below) — face coverings, distancing, hygiene, cleaning, cohorting, symptom management.

With regard to what data choice programs should use, if there are different indicators of community spread in different districts, DPH and the local health department officials will work together to provide consistent advice to the school, taking into consideration the data from the relevant districts to ensure not contradictory advice.

Opting into Virtual, Remote Learning (formerly referred to as Choosing Not to Participate)

Q: **What if families choose not to have their children return to school? Will we be required to provide online learning for them?**

A: Parents will be permitted to choose for their family to continue to participate in remote learning. LEAs are expected to provide temporary support options for these students. The ability for parents and students to choose not to participate is an important part of planning. CSDE, in consultation with stakeholders, plans to issue additional guidance shortly.

Q: **If a parent decides to keep their child at home in the fall, do they withdraw their child and consider it homeschooling?**

A: They will remain public school students unless a parent formally advises a district they intend to 'home school' their child.

Q: **If we build school structures and courses based on survey data and reallocate staff, are you thinking we can hold families to their decision to only be remote?**

A: No, while parents may temporarily determine it best for their child to remain at home, it would be inappropriate to exclude students for any period of time if they wish to return to school, while schools are open.

Special Needs — Special Populations

Q: **What is CSDE guidance for the SPED population?**

A: Pages 32–34 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document preliminarily addresses serving special populations including Special Education and ELs. The CSDE will also be issuing additional guidance documents on this topic.

State Assessments

Q: **What are the state summative assessment requirements during the 2020–21 school year ?**

A: Page 29 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document states that by the end of the school year students will be administered the on-grade summative assessment in grades 3–8 and 11.

Additional guidance on how to support learners upon return utilizing Sensible Assessments Practices can also be found on pages 30 and 31 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document with a link to the CSDE Sensible Assessment Practices guide.

Q: **What is the CSDE guidance on SAT and SBAC testing for this upcoming school year?**

A: The state summative assessments are important measures of student achievement on the state's content standards and guideposts of equity. While the CSDE is exploring flexibilities with the federal government as it relates to school and district accountability based on 2020–21 data, the CSDE fully expects that all students will be assessed on the state summative assessments in 2020–21. This is important as it will allow us to monitor our continued progress toward our promise for high academic achievement for all students.

For students in their junior year in 2019–20 who missed the opportunity to take an SAT in spring 2020, the CSDE has already made arrangements with the College Board. Districts are permitted to offer the SAT in fall 2020, either during a weekend or a school day. This weekend or fall SAT School Day would be an optional test for students. There are no state requirements for having students take this test. Check out the CT SAT page for a Q&A document.

Talent – Certification, Return to Work, Hiring

Q: **Will SDE and TRB allow flexibility in certification?**

A: At this time, the was provided limited authority under executive orders to allow for flexibility outside of the authority where requirements are mandated by statute or regulation. The authority that has been provided as of this date, is limited to the period of emergency, which ends on September 9, 2020. CSDE will consider as needed flexibilities under its authority that are not statutory or regulatory, such as CSDE policies or State Board of Education directives.

Q: **What will be the approach to hiring and certifying long term substitutes (LTS) to provide coverage during the pandemic?**

A: The employment of appropriately certified or permitted educators remains key to the success of students. To assist districts, certification forms have been adapted to help ensure the timely processing of temporary authorizations. In addition to utilizing certified educators and other bachelor degree holders as daily substitutes, other strategies include, consistent with district policies and procedures:

- ***Substitute Authorization (No BA/BS)***

  Minimum Requirements:
  - At least 18 years old
  - High school diploma or equivalent
  - Experience with school-age children

  Authorized to serve no more than 40 days in the same assignment.

  ED174 Form

- ***Long-Term Substitute Authorization***

  Minimum Requirements:
  - BA/BS
  - At least 12 credits in content/area to be taught

  Authorized to serve in the same assignment beyond 40 days.

  ED175 Form

- ***Durational Shortage Area Permit (DSAP)***

  Minimum Requirements:
  - Valid CT educator certificate in another teaching area or enrollment in a program leading to certification
  - At least 12 credits in content/area to be taught

  ED177 Form

EdSight Active Endorsement Tool
According to Connecticut Educator Certification System (CECS) and Educator Database System (EDS) records, over 21,000 certified educators with Connecticut mailing addresses were not working in Connecticut schools during the 2019–20 school year. Let us help you locate them for your staffing needs.

EdSight Active Certificate Search Tool: The CSDE has provided easier access to Connecticut Educator Certification data to assist districts in strategic recruitment and hiring so that students get increased access to the most qualified educators. For additional information, please see the report handout which provides an overview of this new report, or the EdSight Secure FAQ that answers general questions about the system. Any additional questions can be directed to the EdSight email at EdSight.SDE@ct.gov.

To learn more, visit Flexible Staffing Strategies for Districts and LEAs.

Q: **What kind of leave will educators and staff be eligible for related to COVID-19?**

A: For employee leaves prior to December 31, 2020, the recently enacted Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) provides for:

1. *Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave at the employee's regular rate of pay* where the employee is unable to work because the employee is quarantined (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a healthcare provider), and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis; *or*
2. *Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay* because the employee is unable to work because of a bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a healthcare provider), or care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19, and/or the employee is experiencing a substantially similar condition as specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Treasury and Labor.
3. *Up to an additional 10 weeks of* ***paid expanded family and medical leave*** *at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay* where an employee, who has been employed for at least 30 calendar days, is unable to work due to a bona fide need for leave to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.

Q: **What is the approach to staff members who are either (1) at risk due to the staff's verifiable medical condition or those requesting an accommodation for a disability, or (2) choose not to return for other personal reasons?**

A: The answer will depend upon the circumstances. If an employee will not be reporting to work, they should contact their supervisor and follow the established human resources protocols for either requesting an accommodation for a disability, or otherwise requesting changed job duties or authorized leave, consistent with legal requirements and any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

The Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document encourages LEAs to consider how retired teachers and/or teachers who voluntarily identify as "high risk" or otherwise need to be accommodated outside of the school house may support operational needs via remote learning, including but not limited to the following:

- Working with students (virtually) who are unable to attend school;
- Developing and implementing district professional development (PD) (virtual or in person);
- Assisting with continued PD to train teachers who need assistance with best practices for virtual teaching and learning (See also Professional Development Section); and/or
- Serving as online tutors for those who need additional assistance.

LEA Human Resources should work closely with Board counsel to consider all the legal requirements related to staff, including but not limited to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), and Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA). While any given employee request for accommodations must be individually considered, LEAs may wish to engage with union leaders to establish a consistent approach to processing requests in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Transportation

Q: **Can you address transportation collaboration with municipalities where students must take public transportation to school and clarify the transportation strategy for districts and Charters.**

A: Guidance offered to assist district and schools develop transportation strategies is outlined in on pages 14–16 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document. It is important to collaborate with all transportation providers in the preparation for reopening, "including **public** and contracted bus company representatives where applicable, in planning return to service."

Q: **Will busing remain as normal?**

A: Local policies, in collaboration with local Health Department, will guide the decision; please see page 15 of the Adapt, Advance, Achieve Reopening Document, which provides more information on bus transportation guidance depending on safe, low or moderate status. DPH and SDE will be available for technical input to assist district leaders in the decision making related to transportation.