



# Preston Public Schools Reopening Plan UPDATE:6/30/2022 *2021-2022 School Year* ***DRAFT VERSION #4***

## **Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan: Sustaining Our In-Person Model**

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), the Connecticut Department of Health (DPH), national experts, as well as the Office of the Governor have reinforced that access to in-person learning is a priority. Preston Public Schools has experienced first-hand that in-person access to school is the best approach for students to be educated, have equitable and effective access to educational opportunities, access to necessary support and nutrition, as well as, engage in activities that promote social and emotional wellness and growth. We would like families to feel comfortable and confident to continue to send all children to in-person learning and we are prepared to keep our schools safe and secure.





Preston Public Schools is planning to return to full in-person schooling for 2022-23. The DPH and CSDE do not anticipate the need to mandate specific mitigation strategies due to public health necessity, with one condition, and that is any impact of the newest COVID variants or a different outbreak such as “monkeypox” or “polio”. In FY 22 the Preston Board of Education unanimously voted to discontinue remote learning as an option unless responding to a district-based quarantine decision or specific direction of the DPH or CDC. Thus, the remote learning option will not be in place in Preston Public Schools for the 2022-23 school year. We will continue to make targeted use of technology for innovative learning; including providing avenues for personalized learning and enrichment, supporting learning acceleration, learning gap interventions, and for specialized or higher-level courses at the middle school.





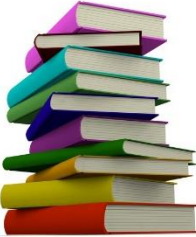
Our FY 23 plan includes a readiness to continue layers of mitigation strategies (mask-wearing, social distancing, hand-washing and rigorous cleaning of facilities) as required or needed depending upon COVID or other health circumstances. Our experience through 2021-2022 was that the virus was not extensively transmitted in school, due in part to mitigation strategies. We continue to encourage families to consider vaccinating their children, when age-eligible and use home testing to monitor health.

Version #4 of the Preston Public Schools Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan is summarized in the chart below. **Please email any feedback or comments on this plan to [homiskig@prestonschools.org](mailto:homiskig@prestonschools.org).**

# Health and Safety Strategies

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Stay Home if you Feel Ill and do not have a Negative Test</b></p> <p>Students and adults must stay home if they are feeling sick, have any symptoms consistent with COVID, or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID.</p> <p>Parents and learning community members are asked to please keep school nurses informed of any student or staff illness.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Morning Health Check/Self-Screening at Home</b></p> <p>In order to prevent transmission among the school population, check to ensure the temperature is below 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit and observe for <u>symptoms associated with COVID</u> outlined by public health officials.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Universal and Correct Mask Wearing</b></p> <p><u>IF required</u> by DPH, CDC or UNCAS Health, students and adults will wear face coverings or masks that completely cover the nose and mouth while inside the school and on the bus, with exceptions only for those students for whom it is not safe to do so due to a physician-verified medical condition.</p> <p>"Mask Breaks" will be provided. Schools will develop procedures to address mask breaks throughout the day. District schools will share these plans with their families.</p> <p>Students/staff will be allowed to remove masks while eating, drinking, during PE, or when outside; practicing effective social distancing.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Physical Distancing is Less of a Priority</b></p> <p>IF necessary, students and adults will maintain social distancing parameters between individuals to reduce the transmission of the virus per the public health guidelines.</p> <p>PPS is committed to low-class sizes. Social distancing strategies are adjusted as noted by timely state guidance.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Frequent Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette</b></p> <p>Students and adults will engage in frequent hand washing and/or hand-sanitizing upon arrival, before and after meals, after bathroom use, and after coughing or sneezing and as needed throughout the school day.</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cohorting is Currently Unnecessary</b></p> <p>However, grouping students by the same class/group of students and teacher (into a cohort) so each grade or team functions independently as much as possible. Cohort, class assignment, and seating chart lists will be maintained in the school office when needed.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities</b></p> <p>Continue increased cleaning and sanitization protocols for disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.</p> <p>Ensure that the school air handling systems are configured according to state guidelines with proper ventilation filters.</p> <p>Routine review of building and classroom spaces as well as gymnasiums, cafeterias, and auditoriums will occur to maximize social distancing consistent with public health guidelines in place at that time.</p> <p>Air quality will remain a priority for Buildings and Grounds, capital improvements plans, and environmental testing.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Contact Tracing is Situational</b></p> <p>Preston Public Schools will conduct contact tracing in certain circumstances assisted by our local health agency UNCAS Health, and acted upon by our school nurses and school principals. Preston Public Schools uses recommendations that are based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Screen and Stay</b></p> <p>This guidance has been developed to provide temporary immediate relief for families and school districts impacted by the frequent quarantine of unvaccinated or partially vaccinated students and staff due to COVID exposures experienced in the school setting. This guidance applies to In-person learning activities and Is not Intended to apply to other settings (e.g., athletics, social gatherings, or other activities outside the normal school day).</p> <p>Students or staff who are exposed to a COVID case in the school setting and remain asymptomatic have the option to continue with in-person learning or work during the entire exposure period.</p> <p>The Department of Public Health (DPH) and Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) will continue to monitor pandemic metrics and may update this guidance if/when local, statewide, or regional conditions change.</p> <p>Preston Public Schools implemented Screen and Stay along with over 80% of the schools in Connecticut. The effectiveness of the strategy is continuing to be evaluated. Up until June 2022, the strategy appeared to be helping keep students in school.</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>On-Site Testing</b></p> <p>Preston Public Schools leadership and health staff arranged for and provide on-site diagnostic testing for event-based situations, such as dances, school-based activities, and transition events such as graduation through a third-party vendor. We will continue to work with local providers and health district staff to provide onsite testing when needed.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Transportation</b></p> <p>School base strategies will carry over where appropriate onto our school buses. We will maintain hand sanitizer dispensers on each bus. We will also maintain a modified cleaning regimen. Should masks be required in school, students will also wear masks on transportation. The transportation leadership team are members of our district leadership team.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Vaccinations</b></p> <p>Preston Public Schools will work with the local Health District (UNCAS Health) and local providers as well as DPH and CSDE, to make staff and the community aware of vaccination clinics and information available. We will continue to offer vaccination events at our schools when made available through state programming.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Accommodations for Children and Staff with Disabilities</b></p> <p>All appropriate accommodations for children and staff with disabilities with respect to the health and safety of all individuals. The Preston Public Schools Leadership team will review relevant policies and procedures for compliance and implementation standards.</p>
<p><b>Continuity of Services</b></p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Academics</b></p> <p>Deliver high-quality in-person instruction aligned to priority standards; maintain delivery of on-grade level instruction while accelerating for skill gaps and differentiating instruction based on student needs;</p> <p>Use diagnostic, benchmark, and screening assessments to identify strengths and next steps as well as students in need of intervention and enrichment;</p> <p>Review data systematically, in a timely manner and adjust instruction as necessary; • Create and act on all IEP's, 504's, and behavior plans to coordinate with reopening safety strategies aligned with student needs;</p> <p>Support professional learning for educators to add to their instructional repertoire of acceleration and social-emotional wellness strategies;</p> <p>Coordinate our district learning priorities with federal and state guidelines; and maintain and improve in-district and external communication through Facebook, PPS webpage, Blackboard Connect, email, text, and meeting notetaking; including regular feedback on this plan.</p>



### **Equity**

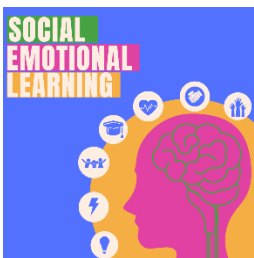
Preston Public Schools is a small rural school district located in eastern Connecticut. Our Pre-K to 8 student population is approximately 420. Currently, 33% of students meet eligibility guidelines for free and reduced lunch. Our student population includes 16% of students of color. We are committed to full compliance and assurance of the elimination of barriers that impede equitable access and participation of any person based on race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.

Due to our small student population, we can, with some confidence, ensure communication with every family and every student. We use various methods, including Blackboard connect (voice messaging to all homes), a district Facebook page (350+parents), a district Webpage, building-level newsletters, and translation services where necessary. We are able to respond to and make modifications for the sight and hearing disabled. Every student has one-to-one Chromebook capability. When necessary, any household has access to Kyjeet Hot Spots to improve WIFI functionality.

Our District Social-Emotional Equity Learning (SEEL) Team, which includes two school psychologists, two school nurses, two principals, and a full-time school social worker, meets regularly to assess and support students and families struggling with food insecurity, social-emotional issues, and school safety and inclusion issues that also address concerns of the LGBTQ community. We maintain an Alliance for Acceptance club when the middle school is in face-to-face instruction mode.

Our district staff has completed training conducted by the Anti-Defamation League and Effective School Solutions that focused on bias awareness and trauma-informed classrooms. Our entire district has registered for the training provided by The YALE Center for Social-Emotional Learning; emphasizing social-emotional wellbeing. We conducted an Equity Audit survey in Spring 2022 by The Equity Institute. Other bandwidth-expanding activities created by new partners and local staff are scheduled for the FY 23 school year. These include a partnership with Effective Schools Solutions (ESS) and an EASTCONN BCBA consultant.

In FY 23 two Board of Education members will be identified to be liaisons to the SEEL Team. In the design of all the projects, we address potential equity concerns at all levels with the goal of full participation and the achievement of the high-leverage instructional standards. Additionally, we have in place a Title IX coordinator. We work diligently to hire and support dedicated and committed staff that works on all aspects of equity in school programming.





### **Social-Emotional Learning**

Preston Public Schools Social-Emotional Equity Learning Team will foster a positive, safe, and supportive learning environment and school communities;

promote supportive adult-student and student-student relationships and a sense of belonging;

implement Prek-8 research-based social-emotional curriculum;

	<p>identify strategies to re-engage populations and specific students who may be disengaged;</p> <p>address staff social, emotional, mental, and other health needs, as needed; and</p> <p>create and implement new and appropriate SEL strategies that will support and assist students and staff in reaching balanced mental health and wellness.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Health and Food Services</b></p> <p>Preston Public Schools will provide age-appropriate and school-appropriate strategies for families about school meal service and options. Meals are prepared under the National School Lunch Program guidelines. All meals offered by PPS will be free during the 2022-2023 school year until federal funding in the amount of \$57,000 is used up. The district will need to collect all the same family information as in previous years for federal and state reporting.</p>
<p><b>Periodic Review Process</b></p>	
	<p>Preston Public Schools is committed to periodically reviewing and revising our Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan at least every six months through September 30, 2023. Each review will include an opportunity for Public Comment.</p> <p>PPS review dates will be conducted on or before the following dates. New versions of the Safe Return and Continuity of Service Plan will be created as updates after each date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June 23, 2021: Version 2</li> <li>• December 23, 2021 Version 3</li> <li>• <b>June 23, 2022 Version 4</b></li> <li>• December 23, 2022 Version 5</li> <li>• June 23, 2023 Version 6</li> </ul> <p>Public input will be documented by recording the number of people that attend any open forums, respond to any surveys, or provide written documentation through email, text, or letter.</p>
<p><b>Building Specific Reopening Plans</b></p>	
<p><b>PVMS</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Five Planning Goals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Acceleration, Academic Renewal, and Student Enrichment</li> <li>• Family and Community Connections</li> <li>• Social, Emotional, and Mental Health of Students and Staff</li> <li>• Strategic Use of Technology, Staff Development, and Digital Divide • Safe and Healthy Schools</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Building Level Actions</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building leadership team meetings once a month with notes to manage multiple projects and review progress. Writing curriculum team with appropriate parameters issued by the district curriculum committee.</li> <li>• NAEYC team in direct coordination with the office of special education</li> <li>• Remodel nursing station with other building-based improvements</li> <li>• Published notes for every faculty meeting</li> <li>• Paraeducators invited to every faculty meeting</li> <li>• Establish a building-based SEL team to monitor and report on student wellness</li> <li>• Math curriculum team established to do data analysis and review math curriculum</li> <li>• Equity data analysis and strategy implementation</li> <li>• Newsletter to be issued to parents and BOE Members once a month</li> </ul>
<p><b>PPMS</b></p>	<p><b>Learning Acceleration, Academic Renewal, and Student Enrichment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPMS will use our 2022 Smarter balance and Next Generation Science student performance results as a baseline in order to identify individual student priorities for 22/23 SY as well as curricular alignment concerns.</li> <li>• Enhancing science instruction by adding a middle-school certified science position to provide 6th-grade science instruction and district-wide science coaching;</li> <li>• Enhancing English/language arts instruction by adding a part-time ELA position for 6th and 7th-grade instruction;</li> <li>• Enhancing provision of special education services by adding a part-time special education certified position to provide direct services and case management;</li> <li>• Restructure section groupings into heterogeneous groups across all academic areas, ensuring that all students have access to rigorous standards and individualized support;</li> <li>• Enhancing school-sponsored sports programs by adding assistant coach stipends to improve skill development and overall play experience.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Family and Community Connections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing an 8th-grade culmination project that is either community-based (requiring approval of the Preston Board of Selectmen) or legacy-based (requiring approval of the Preston Board of Education);</li> <li>• Improving communication to parents, families and BOE Members through the continued publication of the PPMS Newsletter at the beginning of each trimester and through redesign of the district and school webpages.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Social, Emotional, and Mental Health of Students and Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing access to a social worker for 2 to 3 days per week;</li> <li>• Continuing our collaboration with Effective School Solutions to ensure staff members have support for trauma-informed practices;</li> </ul>

- Implementing a new social-emotional learning curriculum in grades 6 through 8 that develops student understanding of mind-body connections, coping and calming strategies, interpersonal communication skills, and self-regulation strategies;
- Revising our implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention Supports to incorporate restorative justice practices.

**Strategic Use of Technology, Staff Development, and Digital Divide**

- Continuing to develop and improve digital instruction within the regular school day by judicious use of digital resources that are compatible with curriculum standards;
- Continuing to develop student familiarity with and use of electronic communication platforms;
- Enabling teacher participation in professional development opportunities that enhance their understanding and use of virtual instruction platforms.

**Safe and Healthy Schools**

- Replacing older air conditioning units to improve air quality;
- Repaving parking lots to improve safety and access.

**Understandable and Uniform Format**



The Preston Public School Continuity Plan will be read and reviewed by a small team of staff and parents to assess its understandability. The leadership of the district will provide alternative formats that are accessible to parents who need additional support. The primary methods of communication will be as follows: Webpage posts, District Facebook posts, PowerPoint presentations, Board of Education meeting updates and minutes, focused surveys, emails, and periodic letters to the Preston Learning Community.

