Stockbridge Valley
Central School District

2021-22 School Opening Plan



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INTRODUCTION

The SVCS community is excited to welcome ALL students back to in-person instruction in the fall of 2021. We know that the upcoming school year will be a change from last year and hopefully one that allows for a return of our traditions. Our goal is to provide in-person learning for all students throughout the entire 2021-22 school year. However, COVID-19 issues may require the temporary remote learning for an individual student, group of students or the closure of our schools.

What we know is that as COVID-19 conditions continue to evolve, the District needs to be ready to adjust when changes to the guidance occurs. Our plan continues to follow recommendations and requirements for school opening provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the NYS Department of Health (DOH), the State Education Department (NYSED) and state and local health officials.

The health and safety of our students, our staff and their families is our top priority. We want students and employees to feel comfortable and safe returning to school campuses. Our opening plan incorporates recommendations and guidance from the following institutions/agencies:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH)

New York State Education Department (NYSED)

Preparing K-12 School Administrators for a Safe Return to School in Fall 2021

DOH Interim Guidance for In-person Instruction At Pre-k To Grade 12 Schools

OPENING ADVISORY

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

SVCS Safety Committee 2021-22

Kimberly Basford-Koe, Special Education Teacher

Malary Bingel, P.E. Teacher

Ellen Breckenridge, 7-12 Math Teacher

Kathy Carney, Food Service Director

Cassandra Gleason, Guidance Counselor

Robert Healy, 7-12 Social Studies Teacher

Beth Lamb, Business Official

Erica Laraby, Fourth Grade Teacher

Brian Leach, Head Bus Driver

Jay Lehmann, 7-12 ELA Teacher

Alison Peto, Kindergarten Teacher

Chris Peto, Third Grade Teacher

Mattie Shea, Nurse

Corey Graves, Superintendent

Julie Suber, K-6 Principal, CSE Chairperson

Andrea Smith, 7-12 Principal

Stephanie Tubbs, Special Education Teacher

Michele Wright, Fifth Grade Teacher

Mark Kiser, Athletic Director

The plan was also developed in partnership with the Madison County Department of Health (MCDOH) and SVCS Board of Education.

DEVELOPMENT ASSUMPTIONS and GOALS

for the SVCS OPENING PLAN

COVID-19 Assumptions

There will still be active cases of COVID-19 in New York State and the surrounding region at the start of school and throughout the 2021-2022 school year.

The virus can progress quickly and in many different ways throughout the school year, and guidance from local and state health officials may change quickly as a result.

Operational Assumptions

The District will need to be flexible to respond to changing COVID- 19 conditions and evolving guidance from local and state health officials.

Our schools, students, families and staff will need to be prepared to shift between in-person and remote learning as COVID-19 risks and related public health and safety needs change.

Changing COVID-19 conditions may require a temporary or partial closure.

Goals for the SVCS Opening Plan

Keeping students, faculty and staff safe and healthy.

Being empathetic and respectful of each individual's choices and individual needs.

Protecting the social-emotional and mental health needs of students, faculty and staff.

Keeping in-person learning continuous and equitable.

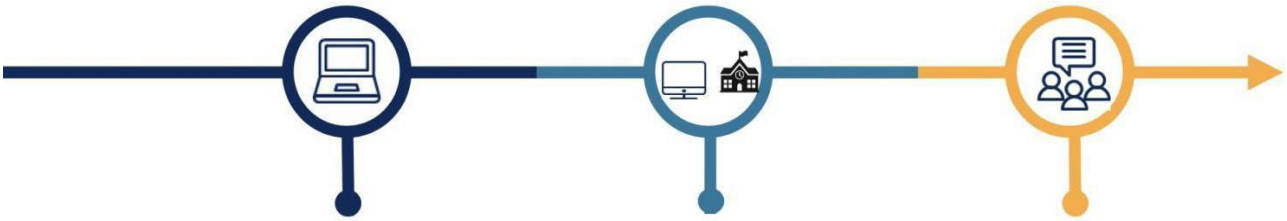
Meeting the needs of all students by engaging families as active partners.

Maintaining flexibility to adapt to the changing public health landscape.

LEARNING MODEL CONTINUUM

Advances around COVID- 19 are allowing SVCS the ability to fully return to in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year.

- In accordance with NYS Guidelines, while in school and on school grounds the student and staff must wear a mask.
- While seated and eating, students & staff may take their mask off.



Remote Learning
For students with an extraordinary medical condition diagnosed by a Certified Health Care Provider

Hybrid Learning
No longer available

In-Person Learning
Students attending learning in school.

COMMUNICATIONS and FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

To help inform our opening plan, the District has sought feedback and input from stakeholders, including administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/guardians of students, local health department officials and health care providers, employee unions and community groups.

The District remains committed to communicating all elements of this opening plan to students, parents and guardians, staff and visitors. The plan is available to all stakeholders via the District website at https://sites.google.com/stockbridgevalley.org/back-to-school-updates, and will be updated throughout the school year, as necessary, to respond to local circumstances and any decisions made by the state or otherwise.

As part of its planning for the opening of schools and the new academic year, the District has developed a plan for communicating all necessary information to District staff, students, parents/guardians, visitors and education partners and vendors. The District will use its existing communication channels including a special page on the District's website, Facebook, Twitter, and Student information System (SIS) (parents and students).

HEALTH and SAFETY

As we plan for the upcoming school year, we have been intentionally focused on ways to preserve healthy school and work environments, limit the spread of COVID-19, and implement systems to keep our communities healthy and safe. The protocols below reflect intensive conversations that our Health and Safety Committee and the various working groups have been engaged in with education professionals, including teachers, principals, superintendent, and the Board of Education. The District has also collaborated with public health experts from the Madison County Department of Public Health (MCDOH). Our process also included a thorough review of guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the New York state Department of Education (NYSED), as well as the New York State Department of Health NYSDOH.

Hand and Respiratory Hygiene

Experts agree that routine healthy hygiene practices are a foundational measure to protect against COVID-19. Everyone in our school buildings will be required to:

Adults and students will be required to wear a face mask that covers the mouth and nose at all times inside the school building.

Exercise hand hygiene (hand washing or sanitizing) upon arrival to school, before eating, when using the restroom or whenever they are soiled.

Use soap and water to wash all surfaces of their hands for at least 20 seconds.

Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. If hand washing is not feasible, hand sanitizer will be provided throughout the building.

Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth.

Practice good respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or elbow.

Adhere to social distancing instructions. Signs will be displayed around the buildings to help students either learn or remember healthy hygiene.

Additionally, students and staff must stay home if they are feeling sick or have any symptoms associated with COVID-19. Those who become sick at school or work will be sent home immediately. More details are outlined in the Health & Safety Protocol.

Social Distancing

The cohort model is the best approach and will be implemented when possible. The students would not mix with other students to the extent possible.

When possible physical distancing will be increased between individuals to reduce the risk of transmission so the following requirements will be in place:

Masks will be mandatory inside the school building.

Layouts for desks, tables, chairs, and other items will be implemented to promote social distancing in classrooms and common areas.

In-person meetings may take place with everyone wearing masks or with everyone practicing social distancing

Employee break rooms and lunchrooms will resume use with social distancing of a minimum of three feet.

The number of people permitted in a restroom will be determined by the size of space and layout of toilet partitions to ensure at least three feet of distance between individuals.

Teachers' desks will be at least six feet from the nearest student desk, and desks will not face each other when transmission rates are moderate or higher.

As much as possible through scheduling, we are reducing the movement of students and staff.

Students will resume using an assigned locker.

There will be space of three feet in all directions in between each person when participating in an activity such as music or physical education.

Non-essential visitors and volunteers will be reviewed by administration prior to admission to school based upon need and current status of COVID-19.

Face Masks and Other Face Coverings

Cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. Since respiratory droplets are the primary way that COVID-19 is transmitted, masks are among the most critical components of risk reduction. All individuals are required to wear a face mask or other approved face covering that covers their mouth and nose while inside the school building. Other requirements and provisions are as follows:

The District will provide masks for staff upon request or staff may choose to wear their own mask. An additional allotment of masks will only be provided to specific employee groups based on their job duties and risk of exposure.

Teachers/staff in grades K - 6 will receive masks to better facilitate interactions between teachers and younger students who rely on visual and facial cues.

Teachers/staff are required to wear masks when inside the school building.

All students will be required to wear masks when inside the school building.

Acceptable masks include disposable surgical masks, cloth masks purchased or made from household items. Clothing and household items (like scarfs, t-shirts, sweatshirts, or towels) are not acceptable in original form for use as masks on District grounds.

Exceptions to mask requirements will be made if wearing a mask is not possible due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other health or safety factors.

Wearing masks is required for everyone on school buses.

Students, faculty, and staff will be instructed on the proper way to wear face coverings.

Our student and employee mask protocols can be found at https://sites.google.com/stockbridgevalley.org/back-to-school-updates.

Health Checks, Temperature Check, Use of Personal Protective Equipment

Parents/guardians and staff will no longer be required to submit the paper screening forms to the school each morning. Parents/guardians and staff members will be provided resources to educate them regarding the careful observations of symptoms of COVID-19 and health screening that must be conducted each morning before coming to school. Parents/guardians and staff be instructed that any student or staff member with a fever of 100 degrees F or greater, and/or symptoms of possible COVID-19 virus infection, should not be present in school. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) keep an up to date list of symptoms of Coronavirus on its website. The following are listed as the most common symptoms of COVID-19:

Fever or chills

Cough

Fatigue

Muscle or body aches

Headaches

New loss of taste or smell

Sore throat

Congestion or runny rose

Nausea or vomiting; and/ or

Diarrhea

Staff will be trained to observe students or other staff members for signs of any type of illness such as:

Flush cheeks;

Rapid or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity);

Fatigue, and/or irritability; and

Frequent use of the bathroom

Students and staff exhibiting these signs with no other explanation for them will be sent to the school health office for an assessment by the school nurse.

Students and staff are required to notify the school when they develop symptoms.

Screenings

Employees are required to report if they test positive for COVID-19, if they develop symptoms consistent therewith, or if they are self-isolating due to suspected or known exposure to COVID-19.

We will continue to monitor guidance from the NYSDOH around travel restrictions and quarantine requirements, and revise our health screening practices accordingly.

Response to a Symptomatic Student or Employee

If a person becomes symptomatic while in a District building, the protocol for medical evaluation, potential isolation, follow-up and return to the District can be found at https://sites.google.com/stockbridgevalley.org/back-to-school-updates.

COVID-19 Testing

Current guidance from the CDC and NYSDOH does not recommend testing of all students and staff prior to their initial return to school or work. Therefore, the District is not currently planning to offer or require COVID-19 testing of its students and employees prior to school opening. NYSDOH recommends testing in the presence of symptoms, and/or when an individual has been exposed to someone with COVID-19. The District will not conduct any on-site COVID-19 testing for those with symptoms or exposure to COVID-19. Staff and students' families should consult with health care providers concerning further details on testing.

Contact Tracing

MCDOH has implemented a contact tracing program to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. When notified of a staff member or student with a confirmed case of COVID-19, the District will coordinate with MCDOH on COVID-19 reporting and response efforts.

Response to Positive COVID-19 Test

Consistent with NYS regulations for communicable diseases, if an individual in a school or office is confirmed, suspects, or has been in contact with someone confirmed to have COVID-19, the District's point of contact (Corey Graves Superintendent) will notify MCDOH and receive direction on next steps that could include, and are not limited to, whether to quarantine the class, school, or District; providing necessary information for MCDOH to conduct contact tracing; and when individuals can resume school or work. Additionally, consistent with both notification requirements for other communicable diseases and legal confidentiality, the school District will follow NYSDOH regulations for exposure to a communicable disease.

In the event that a student needs to quarantine and is asymptomatic, the student will be required to continue to attend school remotely and their attendance will be marked as though they were attending face-to-face each day.

Work and School Day

The guidelines for return to work and school can be found at https://sites.google.com/stockbridgevalley.org/back-to-school-updates

Aerosol Generating Procedures

Respiratory treatments administered by nurses generally result in aerosolization of respiratory secretions. These aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) potentially put healthcare personnel and others at an increased risk for pathogen exposure and infection. The CDC recommends PPE use when administering AGPs. PPE consists of:

Gloves;

N95 or surgical facemask;

In lieu of N95 - a surgical mask with face shield;

Eye protection; and

A gown (if necessary).

PPE should be used when:

Suctioning;

Administering nebulizer treatments; or

Using peak flow meters with students who have respiratory conditions.

Treatments such as nebulized medication treatments and oral or tracheostomy suctioning should be conducted in a room separate from others with nursing personnel wearing appropriate PPE. For nebulizer treatments, if developmentally appropriate, the nurse could leave the room and return when the nebulizer treatment is finished. Cleaning of the room should occur between each use and cleaning of the equipment should be done following manufacturer's instructions after each use. The CDC recommends[6] during the COVID-19 pandemic that respiratory medications utilizing metered dose inhalers (MDI) with a spacer or valved holding chamber be used over nebulizer treatments whenever possible. Nebulizer treatments at school should be reserved for children who cannot use an MDI (with or without spacer or valved holding chamber). Use of peak flow meters, including in the school setting, includes forceful exhalation. Based on limited available data, forceful exhalation is not considered an aerosol-generating procedure associated with increased risk of transmitting the virus that causes COVID-19. However, for some people with asthma, using a peak flow meter can trigger coughing.

Classroom, School or Building Closure

Guidance regarding the closure or dismissal of a classroom, school and/or other District facility due to COVID-19 will be provided by MCDOH. The decision to close or dismiss students and/or staff from any District facility does not rest with the District. MCDOH will work closely with the District's appointed designee(s) to make the determination that best addresses the specific circumstances. Decisions about closures will be made carefully, and with the health, safety and needs of our students and families in mind. As a situation evolves and decisions are made, communications will be sent out to all necessary stakeholders.

CLEANING and DISINFECTION

Custodial staff will be trained in daily cleaning practices, specialized/responsive cleaning, enhanced disinfecting techniques and how to respond to emergency situations as they arise.

The District has purchased electrostatic backpack sprayers to support custodial staff in increased disinfection.

Hand Sanitizer Stations with at least a 60% alcohol-based sanitizer are mounted and maintained outside of entrances/exits, entryways of cafeterias and bathrooms, at the ends of hallways and inside of Health Suites.

Classrooms will also be provided with hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies.

Custodial staff will ensure that all handwashing sinks are operational and have clean running water, soap and paper towels. If a sink becomes inoperable, immediate steps will be taken to repair it or a hand sanitizer will be provided in its place until the repair occurs.

Students will not be present when disinfectants are in use and should not participate in cleaning and/or disinfection activities.

School Health Office Cleaning

School health office cleaning must occur after each use of:

Cots;

Bathroom; and

Health office equipment (e.g. blood pressure cuffs, otoscopes, stethoscopes, etc.) should be cleaned following manufacturer's directions.

Disposable items should be used as much as possible including:

Disposable pillow protectors; or

Disposable thermometers, or disposable thermometer sheaths or probes, and disposable otoscope specula.

Cafeteria Cleaning

The cafeteria will be cleaned and disinfected in between each lunch period.

FACILITIES and VENTILATION

The District has clear protocols for the enhancement and maintenance of filtration and ventilation. The protocols are as follows: filtration and ventilation meet or exceed minimum requirements. The protocols serve to ensure adequate, code-required ventilation (natural or mechanical), with the goal of increasing ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible (e.g., opening windows and doors) while maintaining health and safety protocols, particularly for younger students. Working with engineers, the District has established proper filtration requirements, both type and frequency of replacement.

Safety Drills

We will be conducting lockdown and fire drills according to Standard Operating procedures.

Restroom Protocol

The number of people permitted in a restroom will be determined by the size of space and layout of restroom partitions to ensure at least three feet of distance between individuals.

Water: Students should bring their own water bottles that are clearly labeled with their name. Touchless hydration stations will be used for replenishing water.

CHILD NUTRITION

Continuing to provide students with access to healthy meals remains a high priority for the District.

Free Breakfast: Students will be offered breakfast in the cafeteria.

Free Lunch: Students will maintain three feet of social distancing while traveling through serving

lines and sit at assigned seats in the cafeteria and/or return to the classroom to enjoy their meal.

Students will be required to clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer prior to and immediately after eating. In the cafeteria students will have assigned seats distanced three feet apart.

TRANSPORTATION

We know that students arrive at school in multiple ways: using District-provided transportation or arriving in a personal vehicle. Regardless of how anyone gets to and from school, students, staff, and family members are required to adhere to the District's health and safety measures to do their part in protecting our community.

Students who are provided District Transportation will be following specific rules as follows:

Masks are required to be worn while riding the school bus/vehicle

There will be assigned seats and social distancing will be implemented when possible.

Revised procedures for loading and unloading will be implemented

Enhanced cleaning protocols will be followed

Prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year, families of students riding District transportation services will receive notification through the district newsletter that includes route information and additional supplemental procedures. Parents will also receive their class schedule with arrival and dismissal times in advance of the start of the school year.

SOCIAL and EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Since March 2020, our students and staff have experienced isolation; separation from friends, teachers, and colleagues; and disruption of the familiar routines that made them feel cared for and safe.

We will focus on Social Emotional Well-Being that is designed to address the needs of our students, staff, and families. The four focus areas are:

1) mental health and trauma; 2) social-emotional learning; 3) relationships and community; and 4) adult wellness.

Mental Health and Trauma:

In addition to mental health providers, the District will provide:

In-person counseling for students and families.

A needs assessment to be conducted for teachers, staff, students, and parents to assess the mental health needs of all in order to implement appropriate emotional supports and services along with referrals to community supports as needed.

An advisory council will be established to inform the comprehensive developmental school counseling plan.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports in place to address SEL, mental health, and well-being supports offered at all levels

Address professional development opportunities for faculty and staff on how to talk with and support students as well as provide support for developing coping skills for students, faculty, and staff.

Social-emotional learning:

Starting school after a pandemic, the District recognizes that support for social-emotional well-being and resiliency of students and staff is necessary. There will be substantial time spent on developing a cohesive support system before completing delving into academic content. The District will also provide:

Professional development on integrating social-emotional learning with academic learning.

Learning activities that can be implemented live or virtually based on results of the needs assessment.

Continue to implement our Social Emotional Programs:

- Capturing Kids Hearts (K-12)
- SVCS Character Education Program (K-6)

Relationships and Community:

The District will provide:

Grade-specific relationships and community-building activities that can be implemented in-person such as student orientations.

Ongoing communication and involvement of the community via surveys, reopening websites, and school messages.

Information regarding how to seek support for those with specific concerns.

Adult Wellness:

The District will provide:

Information on addressing trauma, including a mental health survey and grief counseling.

Self-care as part of school culture.

Identify community resources available to support school staff.

Stockbridge Valley School Counseling Program Multiple Tier Support System

SVCS will be following a multi-tiered support system for students and staff.

TEACHING and LEARNING MODELS

Stockbridge Valley CSD will resume in-person learning for all students with the 2021-2022 school year. Remote learning will no longer be an instructional option for students unless the child is facing any extraordinary medical conditions diagnosed by a Certified Health Care Provider.

TECHNOLOGY and CONNECTIVITY

We are a 1-to-1 school District. Students in kindergarten through second grade will receive iPads and students in third through twelfth grades will receive Chromebooks for use in the event of a school closure. Devices will be sent home with students on a daily basis to ensure continuous learning and must be returned every day.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The district will make all reasonable efforts to address the provision of free appropriate public education, while protecting the health and safety of students with disabilities and those providing special education services.

A comprehensive Special Education framework was developed to ensure there is an understanding of the provision of services consistent with the recommendations on individualized education programs, plans for monitoring and communicating student progress and commitment to sharing resources.

The plan also addresses access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability-related needs of students.

In the event of a school closure information about the provision of services to a child to meet the requirements of the IDEA shall be communicated via the district's website at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ijmPQiHTQShmCbO-nu7DzdrPSUeDErtqo/view?usp=sharing

BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND WORLD LANGUAGES

In the event of a school closure the need to complete the ELL identification process within 30 school days of the start of the school year for all students, as well as all students who enroll during summer and during the first 20 school days of the 2021-22 school year will be completed to the greatest extent possible.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extracurricular Activities, including interscholastic athletics, will follow guidance from the NYS Department of Health and the New York State Public High School Athletic Association.

STAFF

Teacher and Principal Evaluation

All teachers and principals will continue to be evaluated pursuant to the district's approved APPR plan, until further notice.

Certification, Incidental Teaching and Substitute Teaching

All teachers will hold valid and appropriate certificates for teaching assignment, except where otherwise allowable under the Commissioner's regulations (e.g., incidental teaching) or education law.

NYSED REGULATIONS AND LAW

All provisions described are subject to change based upon revisions to NYSED regulations, NY State Department of Health Guidance and/or changes to NY State law.

COVID 19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS

*****The CDC believes that in person learning for all students, must occur every day even in the absence of being able to implement all prevention strategies.

Criteria being considered before changing safety plans

- Number of building and District wide positive COVID cases and quarantines
- County data related to the number of local positive COVID cases
- NYS and Madison County DOH guidance
- CDC data related to COVID risk by County
- CDC recommendations based on ongoing studies of COVID

Level of Community Transmission: *(L) Low (M) Moderate (S) Substantial (H) High*

Safety Protocols	L	M	S	H
All staff and students will wear masks when on buses or being transported by the District	✔	✔	✔	✔
Universal masking will be encouraged for staff and students to wear masks in all setting	✔	✔	✔	✔
All staff and students will wear masks whenever they are indoors in a school			✔	✔
Implement social distancing when possible	✔	✔	✔	✔
Staff and students with significant medical needs are to report their concerns to their Medical Provider and share them with the District. Accommodations will be determined on an individual basis	✔	✔	✔	✔
Schools will limit non-essential visitors, volunteers and activities involving external groups or organizations			✔	✔
Classrooms will be arranged with all desks facing the same direction.		✔	✔	✔

Ongoing Safety Measures Taken	L	M	S	H
Vaccinations information is provided on the SVCS website	✔	✔	✔	✔
Consistent and correct facial covering Use – When required students and staff wear facial coverings and we also teach everyone the proper way to wear and care for the facial coverings	✔	✔	✔	✔
Physical Distancing				
When possible the district will emphasize physical distancing of 3 feet for students and 6 feet for teachers	✔	✔	✔	✔
Handwashing & Respiratory Etiquette				
Staff and students need reminders to sanitize and wash hands regularly especially before eating	✔	✔	✔	✔
Safety posters through-out all buildings with reminders	✔	✔	✔	✔
Hand sanitizers provided in all classrooms	✔	✔	✔	✔
Air ventilation				
Systems have highly rated Merck filters in place which continually bring in fresh air throughout the day	✔	✔	✔	✔
Buses will have two windows (brings air in) and the hatch open (vents air out) at all times (weather permitting)	✔	✔	✔	✔
Cleaning and Disinfecting				
All buildings will be sanitized on a daily basis by custodial and cleaning staff with targeted checklists	✔	✔	✔	✔
Provide teachers and staff with disinfectant and cleaning supplies to address their areas when needed	✔	✔	✔	✔
Staying at Home When Sick and Getting Tested				
Attendance, nurses contact homes daily	✔	✔	✔	✔
Stay at home when sick, reminders will be sent home	✔	✔	✔	✔
Promote testing sites throughout the region on school website and School Messenger	✔	✔	✔	✔
Contract Tracing in Combination w/ Isolation and Quarantine				
Seating charts in classrooms and on buses will be kept for contact tracing purposes	✔	✔	✔	✔
Follow Madison County contact tracing forms and procedures, including quarantine and isolation criteria	✔	✔	✔	✔
Health Care Needs				
Students and staff are provided with accommodations based on individual plans	✔	✔	✔	✔

ATHLETICS

CDC Screening Testing Recommendations for K-12 Schools by Level of Community Transmission.

	Low Transmission[1] Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
High risk sports and activities	Recommend screening testing for high-risk sports[2] and extracurricular activities at least once per week for participants who are not fully vaccinated.		Recommend screening testing for high-risk sports and extracurricular activities twice per week for participants who are not fully vaccinated.	Cancel or hold high-risk sports and extracurricular activities virtually to protect in-person learning, unless all participants are fully vaccinated.
Low- and intermediate-risk sports	Do not need to screen students participating in low- and intermediate-risk sports.[2]	Recommend screening testing for low- and intermediate-risk sports at least once per week for participants who are not fully vaccinated.		