



# HUDSON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## HUDSON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT 2021-22 SCHOOL OPERATING PLAN\*

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Superintendent of Schools  
March 23, 2022 (revised)

\*The District's 2021-22 operating plan is subject to revision based on updated guidance and local public health conditions. As new information is released, HCSD may modify the plan accordingly.



# Content Outline

**Please note:** The District's 2021-22 operating plan is subject to revision based on updated guidance and local public health conditions. As new information is released, HCSD may modify the plan accordingly.

- Introduction to In-person School Plan
- Communication/Family and Community Engagement
- Health & Safety
  - Health checks
  - Screenings
  - Healthy hygiene practices
  - Physical distancing
  - Medically vulnerable/high-risk groups
  - Personal Protective Equipment and masks
  - Management of ill persons, contact tracing and monitoring
  - School closures and return to school after illness
  - Cleaning and disinfection
  - School safety drills
- Facilities
- Food Service and School Meals
- Transportation
- Social Emotional Well-Being
- School Schedules
- Budget and Fiscal Matters
- Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism
- Technology and Connectivity
- Teaching and Learning
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) HS only
- Athletics and Extracurricular Activities
  - Athletics
  - Extracurriculars
- Special Education
- Bilingual Education and World Languages
- Staffing
- Teacher and Principal Evaluation System
- Student Teaching
- Visitors on Campus
- Daily Expectations



# 2021-22 School Plan

## Key Updates

- The priority is to provide all students and staff to in-person teaching and learning five days per week.
- Daily temperature and health checks at school are no longer required as outlined by the CDC. Parents/guardians and all employees are responsible for daily temperature and symptom checks conducted at home to ensure that individuals reporting to school are fever and symptom free each day this school year. This important step will provide the initial layer, as outlined in the District's plan, to limit exposure and spread of COVID-19 in the school setting (see page 25 for details).
- Students, faculty, and staff must stay home if symptomatic. Individuals can take an at-home COVID test and/or isolate themselves for 5 days.
- As of March 2, 2022, masks are optional for all students, staff, and visitors (unless an individual tests positive for COVID-19, in which case they must wear a mask at school on Days 6-10 after infection when they return to school).
- At least 3 feet physical distance between students and vaccinated adults to the extent possible.
- At least 6 feet physical distance between students and unvaccinated adults to the extent possible.
- PE, singing and wind instruments are now 6 feet distancing (reduced from 12).
- Full capacity on buses with windows open for ventilation as feasible.

## Introduction

The New York State Education Department and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention instructed districts to prioritize efforts to return all students to in-person instruction this fall. It is possible that we may need to pivot to remote learning at some point during the year due to recommendations and guidance from our partnering agencies. However, our plan includes layers of multiple prevention strategies to help keep our students in school. The level of infection, the spread of the virus and response to the disease in our community will be at the forefront of our decision-making as we move to open and keep our schools open.

The plan outlined here is for the opening of schools in the Hudson City School District for the 2021-22 school year. This plan includes health and safety procedures that will be implemented in the following schools:

- Montgomery C. Smith Elementary School; Principal Mark Brenneman
  - 518-828-4360 Ext. 1112
  - [M.C. Smith Elementary School Webpage](#)
- Hudson Junior High School; Principal Derek Reardon
  - 518-828-4360 Ext. 8100
  - [Hudson Junior High School Webpage](#)
- Hudson Senior High School; Principal Robert LaCasse
  - 518-828-4360 Ext. 3100
  - [Hudson Senior High School Webpage](#)

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 while on our school campuses. We know that effective teaching and learning cannot occur without a safe environment. Our opening plan incorporates the following guidance documents: [CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#) and [American Academy of Pediatrics COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools](#). Additionally, we have included local recommendations from the

Columbia County Department of Health as well as Needham Risk Management. The CDC and AAP guidance recommendations are considered a minimum standard of care. In some cases, the District in collaboration with the local Department of Health may impose additional safeguards as deemed appropriate and necessary.

The Hudson City School District (HCSD) worked with a cross-section of stakeholders including building and district administrators, teachers, healthcare providers, buildings and grounds staff, students, parents/guardians, transportation staff, food service and technology departments, board members and representatives of the local Department of Health and Risk Management team to develop this school opening plan that will provide a safe learning environment for students and staff this year. Stakeholders followed guidance protocols to create a comprehensive plan that centers around the health and safety of our school community to provide equity and access to a quality education while also meeting the social-emotional needs of our students in the best way possible given the current circumstances.

The safety and health of our students, faculty, and staff is paramount and has been at the forefront of our planning. Our school opening plan is designed to bring all students back to in-person education. To allow our school district to safely open, there are a number of features, contingencies, and safety protocols that we must plan for, and we have attempted to outline these throughout our plan.

We understand that the situation around COVID-19 is ever-evolving, and as a result, our plan will be forced to evolve with it. We, as a school district, cannot anticipate the way that the virus will develop, nor can we fully anticipate the way that it will affect our region, but through careful planning, hard work, and resilience, we have put together a plan that allows our schools to have the flexibility to address these concerns.

The District's mission statement, "The Hudson City School District, in partnership with our community, advances the intellectual, social and emotional development of all students to prepare them for college, career and citizenship," was used as a focal point to ensure our plan supported this mission.

## The following principles guided the HCSD school opening plans:

- Students benefit from in-person learning experiences.
- The health, safety, and well-being of our students and adults is our top priority.
- Equity and access for all students within our beautifully diverse school population was a consideration for every part of our plan.

The school district will continue to work with experienced safety consultants to coordinate continuous compliance with all health and safety protocols.

The Superintendent of Schools (or designee) will serve as the primary point of contact upon the identification of a positive COVID-19 case and will be responsible for subsequent communications. This individual shall be responsible for all aspects of the school's opening plan, as well as answering questions from students, faculty, staff, and parents or legal guardians regarding the COVID-19 public health emergency and the plans being implemented in the school. Questions and concerns you may have can be directed to either your school principal or emailed directly to [reopeningquestions@hudsoncsd.org](mailto:reopeningquestions@hudsoncsd.org).

## Communication/Family and Community Engagement

Communication between the District and students, parents and staff as well as fostering family engagement is of utmost importance to the HCSD, especially during a pandemic. The District has developed a communications plan for students, parents or legal guardians of students, staff, and visitors that includes

applicable instructions, training, signage, and a consistent means to provide individuals with information via web pages, text and email groups, and/or social media posts.

All students will be taught or trained how to follow the COVID-19 protocols safely and correctly, including but not limited to hand hygiene, proper use of face masks, physical distancing and respiratory hygiene.

All schools in the HCSD will encourage all students, faculty, staff, and visitors through verbal and written communication (e.g., signage) to adhere to the guidance regarding the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and appropriate physical distancing.

Communications will be provided in the preferred language spoken at home and throughout the school community. Written plans will be accessible to those with visual and/or hearing impairments.

To help inform our opening plan, the District sought feedback and input from stakeholders, including building and district administrators, teachers, healthcare providers, buildings and grounds staff, students, parents/guardians, transportation staff, food service and technology departments, board members and representatives of the local Department of Health and Risk Management team. Engagement efforts included meetings, forums and one-on-one conversations.

The HCSD remains committed to communicating all elements of this opening plan to students, parents and guardians, staff, and visitors. The plan will be available to all stakeholders via the district website at [www.hudsoncsd.org/reopening2021](http://www.hudsoncsd.org/reopening2021) and will be updated throughout the school year, as necessary, to respond to changing local circumstances. The link to the page will appear on the website homepage as well as each school page. Every effort has been made to ensure that the plan is accessible to all individuals in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A/AA. The plan can also be translated into other languages via the Google Translate feature available on the district website. A hard copy of this plan will be made available in the preferred language of families upon request as needed.

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 is committed to establishing and maintaining regular channels of communication and has reviewed and determined which methods have proven to be the most effective in communications with our school community. The District will use its existing communication channels – including the district website, robocalls, texts and emails, the District’s Facebook and Twitter pages, and mailings where applicable – as well as appropriate signage and training opportunities to support the dissemination of consistent messaging regarding new protocols and procedures, expectations, requirements and options related to school operations throughout the pandemic. The District will communicate news, requirements, and updates related to opening and in-person instruction, including physical distancing protocols, proper wearing of masks and proper hand and respiratory hygiene. The information we share will be based on state guidance. Translated communications will be available on the district website using the Google Translate feature and translated materials may also be distributed to families by delivery, mailing, or email.

The District will use existing internal and external communications channels to notify staff, students and families/caregivers about school schedules with as much advance notice as possible. Schools will notify using robocalls, texts, emails, e-newsletters and direct mailings.

The District will follow its existing engagement and communication protocols with parents regarding the provision of special education services for their children.

The District is committed to ensuring that all of its students and their families are taught and re-taught new expectations related to all public health policies and protocols. As part of this continuous training, the District will assess the best approach to communicating the information for each student’s age group and will provide

frequent opportunities for students to review these policies and protocols. This targeted education will help ensure that all students and their families know what is expected of them as they return to the school setting.

These trainings will cover:

- **Hand & respiratory hygiene** - Step-by-step instructional flyers posted near sinks with additional in-person guidance from teachers and staff; hand hygiene video resources on the district website; social stories (or illustrated descriptions of a particular situation, event or activity) that address what school will look like in terms of hygiene expectations will be provided to young children and students with disabilities.
- **Proper face mask procedures** - (when/how to wear and remove) - Step-by-step instructional flyers posted and video resources on the district website with additional in-person guidance from teachers and staff; social stories that address face mask expectations, as needed, for students on the bus and at school will be provided to young children and students with disabilities.
- **Physical distancing protocols** - Video resources on the district website with additional in-person guidance from teachers and staff; social stories that address what school will look like in terms of physical distancing on the bus and at school will be provided to young children and students with disabilities.
- **Identifying symptoms** - CDC signage of the most recognized symptoms.

The District will create and deploy signage to address public health protections surrounding COVID-19.

Signage will address protocols and recommendations in the following areas:

- Proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Acceptable masks and requirements related to their wear on days 6-10 for students returning to school after a 5-day isolation period
- Proper hand washing
- Physical distancing (including student artwork depicting our Bluehawk mascot with a 3-foot wingspan)
- Symptoms/prevention of COVID-19

In addition to signage, the District will require all students, faculty, staff and visitors to adhere to CDC and AAP guidance regarding the use of PPE through verbal and written communication and additional means such as videos.

In the event that a student or staff member is symptomatic, notification to exposed individuals will occur pursuant to the protocols as implemented by the local health department. The District will notify the wider community if specifically directed to do so by local health officials.

In the event one or more school buildings need to close based on regional metrics, an outbreak in the school community, or because of external factors, we shall do so under the guidance of the Columbia County Department of Health. In the event that the school district would be forced to close, the school district's incident management system would be invoked to provide a structure to the school district's response that would involve internal and external parties from around the school community. When determining what buildings should be closed or phased out first, the school district will consult the Columbia County Department of Health to better understand the spread and what the requirements for closing or phasing shall be.

**The District will:**

- Implement consistent communication plans to ensure that members of the school community are kept up-to-date with all developments and changes to our plan.
- Post and maintain all school opening plans on a dedicated page on the district website and have hard copies available at each school in the languages spoken by families.

- Communicate regularly with families in the preferred language(s) spoken at home through the use of Google Translate or other professional translation service.
- Ensure that communications are ADA compliant.
- Develop and implement communications for students and families about how to prepare for the upcoming school year.
- Encourage all students, faculty, staff, and visitors, through verbal and written communication (e.g., signage) to adhere to CDC and AAP guidance regarding the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Post signs at every school entrance that cautions against entering school with symptoms related to COVID such as a fever, cough or shortness of breath.
- Provide instruction or training to students on how to properly wash hands, wear a face mask (as needed), follow physical distancing protocols and practice proper respiratory hygiene.
- Immediately notify the local health department via phone about potential COVID-19 cases and work closely with local health department guidelines for notifying possible contacts and coordination as needed.
- Maintain a list of lab-confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 within the school community on the District website.
- Notify faculty/staff through email of any confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 within the school community.

## Health and Safety

Depending on the metrics of our region, county, and schools, we need to plan for a pivot to 100% virtual learning even if it's for a short duration of time. Since this is still an ever-changing situation, the District may need to change protocols at any time to address specific needs and circumstances in order to protect the health and safety of students, employees and the community. Please note, health guidance cannot anticipate every unique situation. As a result, HCSD will continue to consult available guidance through governmental agencies, including but not limited to the State Education Department, the New York State Board of Regents, the local Department of Health, Questar III and Needham Risk Management, as well as any other information deemed relevant to monitor the situation. The District will comply with applicable federal and state employment and disability laws, workplace safety standards, and accessibility standards to address individual needs.

It is important to remember that the virus that causes COVID-19, including the Delta and Omicron variants, can be spread by infected persons who have few or no symptoms. Even if an infected person shows no symptoms or is only mildly ill, the people they spread it to may become seriously or fatally ill. Due to the hidden nature of this threat, HCSD expects all employees, students, families and community members to rigorously follow the practices outlined below.

## Health Checks

All parents and staff members are expected to conduct a daily health screening at home which includes a temperature check to ensure that students and adults are symptom-free prior to reporting to school.

## Screening Protocols

- Parents/guardians are responsible for screening their children for COVID-19 symptoms each day prior to sending them to school. Parents should check their child's temperature daily and keep them home if

they have a temperature of 100°F or greater or if they have any of the COVID-19 symptoms. Additional screening may be conducted during the school day.

- If a student registers a fever at school, they will be isolated and sent home for evaluation by their health care provider. With signed parental consent, all schools have the ability to do rapid testing on site, that could facilitate COVID-19 diagnosis and inform the need for quarantine of close contacts and isolation.
- Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school if the child has COVID-19 symptoms (as listed in this document below) or is confirmed with COVID-19 through a lab test or at home test. Parents should notify the school of such circumstances immediately.
- The CDC recently determined that daily health surveys are no longer required. However, all employees and parents/guardians are expected to understand their obligation to ensure that individuals reporting to school are fever and symptom free each day this school year. This important step will provide the initial layer, as outlined in the District's plan, to limit exposure and spread of COVID-19 in the school setting (see page 25 for details).
- Staff and students should not enter schools or district buildings if any of the following apply, until symptoms start to diminish. The individual is:
  - Sick with COVID-19 symptoms. Symptoms to watch for: fever (100°F or higher), cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell.
  - Has a confirmed case of COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status.
- Teachers and staff will monitor students and refer them to the nurse if symptoms are present.

## Healthy Hygiene Practices

### Hand Washing/Sanitizing Expectations

- Staff and students will be expected to regularly wash their hands or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not immediately available.
- Hand sanitizer will be available at the entry points of each school, in classrooms, in the cafeteria, and in appropriate common areas throughout the school.
- Requirement for hand washing and/or use of HCSD-provided hand sanitizer:
  - Habitual and thorough hand washing including but not limited to upon entry, after recess, before and after meals and following restroom breaks.
  - Use of hand sanitizer upon entry to classroom and periodic teacher/staff reminders.

### Respiratory Hygiene

Students and staff will be instructed and trained to cover their mouths and noses with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and dispose of the tissue appropriately. Students and staff will also be instructed or trained to use the inside of their elbow (or shirtsleeve) to cover the mouth or nose when a tissue is not available. Hand washing/sanitizing after sneezing, coughing and handling tissues or other soiled material will be part of the instruction/training as well.

A supply of tissues and non-touch trash cans (when feasible) will be available in each room.

### Physical Distancing

The District developed the following plan with procedures for maintaining physical distancing of all students, faculty, and staff when on school facilities, grounds, and transportation. Procedures include directional arrows in hallways, distance floor markers, and maximum capacity signage for smaller spaces based on a minimum of 3-foot requirements.

Exceptions where 6 feet must be maintained are:

- Always required for unvaccinated adults, whether that be adult to adult or adult to student.
- PE, singing and wind instruments are now 6 feet distancing (reduced from 12 feet).
- Eating breakfast, lunch, or snack on days 6-10 after returning from the mandatory 5-day isolation period.

For our school district to maintain safe operations, we must attempt to maintain physical distancing to protect against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus while on school grounds and in school facilities. To facilitate this, our school district has redesigned our classroom spaces, common areas, and other rooms throughout the buildings for appropriate physical distancing. Specifically, appropriate physical distancing means at least 3 feet of space in all directions between students and 6 feet of space between adults and students or adults who are not vaccinated.

The only time when physical distancing requirements may be relaxed in the school district is when the safety of an activity or the core activity requires a shorter distance or individuals are of the same household. To promote this type of behavior, the school district has instituted measures such as placing distance markers around the school district; changing traffic flow patterns to reduce bi-directional foot traffic as feasible; staggering the bus schedule to reduce the amount of students in the hallway at any given time. Furthermore, the school district has evaluated smaller spaces in the school building such as elevators, break rooms and offices and will be limiting the use of these spaces. Occupancy should not exceed 50% of the maximum, unless the space is designed for use by a single occupant.

Student drop off and pick up will be staggered as feasible to limit contact. Parents/guardians will not be permitted entry into school buildings unless a predetermined meeting has been scheduled. Details will follow from each school prior to the school year.

## Medically Vulnerable/High-Risk Groups

A virtual option will be available on a limited basis through Questar III for students who have a medical exemption that has been approved by the District's physician.

When a parent contends that their child requires remote instruction this year due to heightened COVID vulnerability, the District will proceed as follows:

1. Parents must provide supporting documentation from the child's treating physician to confirm the medical basis for the request.
2. Upon receipt, if the child is classified as a special education student, the matter will be referred to the Committee on Special Education (CSE). For all other students, the matter will be referred to a 504 team.
3. The parent will be asked to arrange for the child's physician to participate in the CSE or 504 meeting.
4. The District will ask its school physician to also participate in the meeting whenever feasible.
5. The CSE or 504 team, including the parents and the doctors, will collectively determine whether the child has a disabling condition that renders the child particularly vulnerable to COVID per CDC guidelines, and if so, whether the child requires remote instruction. Each case will be fact specific. For example, the result may be different if a student has received the COVID vaccine.
6. The 504 plan process and forms will memorialize and communicate the decision.
7. Exception: In the case of a special education student, the CSE will not amend the IEP to reflect a homebound placement. Instead, the CSE will create a remote implementation plan for the current IEP, and send a Prior Written Notice (PWN) following the meeting.

This accommodation process, including the potential for a decision that remote instruction should be offered, is available only to a student who has a disabling medical condition.

There is no obligation to extend remote instruction to that child's siblings in the same home. Similarly, there is no obligation to provide remote instruction to a child who resides with someone else who reportedly has a heightened vulnerability to COVID.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Masks

Schools are expected to comply with current guidance regarding the wearing of appropriate masks. As of March 2, 2022, masks are optional in all classroom and non-classroom settings, including school buses.

However, masks are required for individuals who test positive for COVID-19 and return to school after their isolation period. Individuals who test positive must wear a mask upon returning to school from isolation during Days 6-10 after COVID-19 infection. Considerations for these circumstances include:

- Masks include non-medical grade disposable face masks, two-ply cloth masks.
- Masks must be worn over the nose and mouth.
- Masks must be worn in all indoor classroom and non-classroom settings except: those who are medically exempt with documentation, during meals, snacks, drinking, or during a supervised mask break.
- Additional protective equipment will be provided to school nurses.
- Students and staff will be given a district face mask and may also utilize their own face mask.
- Students and staff and be responsible for daily mask cleaning.
- Students/staff who do not have appropriate masks will be provided with one by the District.
- Individual needs regarding masks will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

These requirements are subject to change based on updated guidance received throughout the school year.

## Management of Persons Who Are Ill, Contact Notification & Monitoring

### Isolation Protocols

- Students displaying symptoms of COVID-19 must be immediately separated from other individuals and supervised until their parent/legal guardian or emergency contact can pick them up from school.
- Communication will be provided to families of those who came in contact with a student or staff member who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Staff members displaying COVID-19 symptoms will follow district protocols including isolation from students and other staff members until they can safely leave school premises.

### Returning to School After Illness

At minimum, students and staff must be fever free for 24 hours, with reducing symptoms.

### School Closures

A closure refers to contingency plans, protocols, and procedures for decreasing the scale or scope of in-person education and/or closing the school. The District will collaborate with the local health department to determine the parameters, conditions or metrics (e.g., increased absenteeism or increased illness in the school community) that will serve as early warning signs that positive COVID-19 cases may be increasing beyond an acceptable level.

## Cleaning and Disinfection

Frequent cleaning and disinfection will support a healthy learning and work environment for students and staff.

### Daily School Cleaning

The school district has instituted, trained on, and follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidelines on the hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection of school buildings and materials. The District has developed extensive procedures and protocols for school-wide cleaning and the disinfection of classrooms, restrooms, cafeterias, libraries, playgrounds, school buses, and all other school facilities based on the CDC guidance. The District also identified the areas of buildings that will require additional cleaning and disinfection, such as bathrooms. The District also developed and maintains a list of commonly touched surfaces throughout the school district, with a cleaning and disinfection schedule assigned to individuals and positions for these surfaces.

The school district also understands that to maintain a safe and healthful school environment, it needs to promote and encourage proper hand hygiene throughout the day. In order to achieve this goal, the District installed hand hygiene stations throughout common areas of the building so that students may sanitize their hands while they are in transition and at times when they may not be able to clean their hands with soap and water throughout the school day. The District has trained students, faculty, and staff on proper hand hygiene throughout the school year and provides continued education for individuals through proper signage at all levels of the school district. Throughout the course of the school day to the extent practicable, the District expects students, staff, and faculty to wash or sanitize their hands including but not limited to upon arrival to school, upon arriving to a new classroom, before and after eating.

Each classroom and restroom will be cleaned and disinfected.

- All high-touch areas will be disinfected throughout the day.
- Staff will have access to disinfectant solutions to sanitize high-touch and working surfaces and shared objects frequently. Staff will limit the use of shared supplies when possible.

The District will also be increasing ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible based on the outdoor air temperature and the capabilities of our HVAC system.

### Weekly School Cleaning

Schools will be disinfected multiple times a week depending on the schedule for in-school instruction.

## School Safety Drills

Schools will continue to conduct mandatory fire and lockdown drills. These drills will be conducted in a manner that maintains physical distancing at exits and gathering points outside the building, while still preparing students to respond in emergencies.

Education Law § 807 requires that schools conduct eight (8) evacuation and four (4) lockdown drills each school year. When planning drills, consideration will be given to how our schools may modify drill procedures to minimize risk of spreading infection. Conducting drills is an important part of keeping students and staff safe in an emergency, however, steps will be taken to minimize the risk of spreading infection while conducting drills. As such, it may be necessary for our schools to conduct drills in the 2021-22 school year using protocols that are different than we are used to.

Regardless of the modification used when conducting a drill, students will be instructed that if it was an actual emergency that required evacuation or lockdown, the most imminent concern is to get to safety; maintaining

physical distancing in an actual emergency that requires evacuation or lockdown may not be possible and should not be the first priority.

Modifications to lockdown drills may include, but are not limited to:

- Conduct lockdown drill in classroom setting while maintaining physical distancing;
- Conduct lockdown drills in the classroom without “hiding”/“sheltering” but provide an overview of how to shelter or hide in the classroom.

## Facilities

All schools in the HCSD will promote physical distancing while maintaining existing safety requirements designed to protect students. To accomplish this, our schools will change the way they utilize space.

The school district will continue to support the HVAC systems in each building through proper upkeep, maintenance, and updated filtration as required by the manufacturer's recommendation and to the HVAC system's capabilities. The HVAC system in each of our buildings is designed to control and regulate the airflow of that particular building and will be used within its requirements. When the HVAC system of a building supports it, each building shall increase the outside airflow of their HVAC system in order to better dilute the air of classrooms and provide additional outdoor air to students, staff and faculty.

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection in the District, facilities operations will be geared toward meeting physical distancing requirements and cleaning frequently touched spaces regularly. In carrying out projects or tasks supporting infection control, requirements will be met for changes associated with building spaces. Plans for changes or additions to facilities that require review by the Office of Facilities Planning (OFP), will be submitted to comply with the requirements of the 2020 New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (BC) and the State Energy Conservation Code.

The District plans to meet the deadline for submission of Building Condition Survey or Visual Inspections on time. In addition, lead in water sampling will be carried out upon the opening of school under conditions consistent with when the building is “normally occupied.”

Upon opening, the District plans to increase ventilation to the greatest extent possible. Water systems will be flushed in all buildings before the start of the school year.

The District will consider applications for public use of facilities on a case-by-case basis.

## Fire Code Compliance

The District will conduct fire (evacuation) drills as required by education law and regulation and the fire code without exceptions. Schools will continue to conduct mandatory fire drills according to the existing statutory schedule. Drills will be conducted in a manner that maintains physical distancing at exits and gathering points outside the building, while still preparing students to respond in emergencies.

## Doorways

The function, position and operation of stairs and corridor doors, which have closers with automatic hold opens (and are automatically released by the fire alarm system), will remain unchanged.

# Food Service and School Meals

The District shall continue to provide school breakfast and lunch to all students. The District will address all applicable health and safety guidelines to ensure compliance with Child Nutrition Program requirements. The District will communicate the plan for meals with families through multiple means, in the preferred language spoken at home.

The District will maximize physical distance as much as possible during meal times.

- Hand hygiene will be promoted before and after meals.
- Breakfast will be served grab and go style.
- Lunch periods will be staggered to ensure physical distancing and proper cleaning and disinfection between students.
- Lunch will be served in the cafeteria and physical distancing will be maximized as much as possible.
- Alternate locations will be provided for students with severe food allergies, as needed.
- Students will be supervised during meal times and prohibited from sharing food and beverages unless members of the same household.
- Adequate space will be reserved for faculty and staff to observe physical distance while eating meals.
- Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned regularly. Surfaces that come in contact with food will be washed, rinsed, and sanitized before and after meals.

# Transportation

Parents/guardians are encouraged to transport their children to and from school to reduce crowding. The HCSD will provide transportation services to all students who require it with consistency and equity. School buses will ensure regular disinfection measures are implemented.

The provisions put in place to provide transportation service will include adherence to CDC regulations and local DOH guidelines set forth for cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing all school buses. Additionally, we will be providing guidance and instruction to all transportation staff on the proper use of PPE (personal protective equipment), and training and educating students on PPE requirements and use

New transportation procedures for the 2021-22 school year are outlined below:

- Parents/guardians will screen their child(ren) for signs of COVID, particularly a fever, **before** getting on the bus each day.
  - Students who have a temperature of 100°F or higher **must be kept home** to ensure the safety of all students and staff. Students will be **sent home** if they display a fever during the school day.
  - If a child is kept home due to a fever or other COVID symptoms, the parent/guardian should notify the District immediately and speak with the school nurse. The child should also be tested.
- Students will be seated to allow for sufficient physical distancing (i.e., two riders per seat with belongings between them). In the example diagram below, O represents a student seat and X represents the space between the students:

O X O	Driver										
O X O	Aide	--									

- Students will be assigned seats according to the seating schematic above to assist with contact notification whenever necessary. Siblings or children who reside in the same household may be seated together. This will alter the above schematic somewhat to provide appropriate physical distancing, however, it will not necessarily affect the number of riders.
- The bus will be loaded from the back to the front and unloaded from the front to the back. This means that the first students on the bus will sit in the back, and the students sitting in the front will be the first to get off the bus.
- Necessary changes to transportation needs will be accommodated as soon as possible (e.g., if a family moves or as part of a court appointed custody agreement).
- In the event there is a last minute change to student transportation arrangements, the parent/guardian will be required to pick up and/or drop off their child(ren) at school that day.
- Until further notice, transportation will not be provided for any field trips or off-campus activities unless expressly authorized by the Superintendent of Schools.
- The District will develop school arrival and dismissal times and procedures for school buses and parent drop off and pick up. This will be communicated to families prior to the start of school.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to drive their child(ren) to and from school each day to prevent crowding. The District will reach out to families either by mail or survey to determine whether or not their child(ren) will be riding the bus. If they choose to drive their student(s) to and from school, a waiver of transportation will be provided. Alternative transportation arrangements will be put in place for the duration of a semester. If due to circumstances a parent needs to change those arrangements, we will make every attempt to accommodate their needs at the end of the semester.

This year as we examine bus routes, part of our focus will be centered on “time” in terms of the number and locations of bus stops. The HCSD Transportation Department will continue to work with surrounding districts to find ways to safely and effectively combine the transportation needs of multiple districts, especially for our students that have been placed in out-of-district programs.

Parents will be notified (either by mail and/or a secure link to the district website) what their child’s transportation arrangements will be, as well as the protocols and safety measures/expectations put in place for student transportation during the 2021-22 school year.

## Social-Emotional Well Being

Along with physical health and well-being, schools in the HCSD will prioritize social emotional well-being, not at the expense of academics, but in order to create the mental, social, and emotional space for academic learning to occur.

The District recognizes that the social emotional well-being of our students and staff during these challenging times is critically important. The District has made available resources and referrals to address mental health, behavioral, and emotional needs of students, faculty, and staff when school reopens under any model of instruction.

The District has established an advisory council that involves shared decision-making and is composed of parents/guardians, students, members of the Board of Education, school building and/or district leaders, community-based service providers, teachers, certified school counselors, and other pupil personnel service providers. The advisory council will inform the comprehensive developmental school counseling program plan. This program plan is being reviewed and updated to meet the current health and safety situation and will reflect interventions that can address student needs.

For students, this includes:

- Providing a brief universal screening UPK through 12 to establish a student's current baseline and identify those students who are most at risk based on pre- and post-school closure social, emotional, and behavioral presentation. Feedback may be obtained from staff, students, and/or parents, dependent on their developmental level.
- Categorizing students as low-risk, moderate-risk or high-risk for interventions to address social emotional needs once student needs are broadly and individually identified.
- Implementing Tier 1, 2 and 3 activities and interventions based on the data from the screener, referrals throughout the year and as it relates to the comprehensive school counseling program plan.
- Identifying and supporting students, throughout the course of the school year who are having difficulty transitioning back into the school setting by reassessing students who were identified as Moderate- or High-risk to determine whether additional or different interventions will be needed.
- Partnering counseling staff with groups of teachers to assist in the implementation of Tier 1 strategies that will address the pandemic and self-care for students.
- Providing periodic resources for parents on addressing student social emotional health in various formats and languages. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring our staff has adequate access to interpreters and/or a translation service to meet the needs of our English Language Learners.
- Providing social stories for our youngest students and students with special needs in their preferred language that address what school will look like when they return. Social stories will address wearing masks, screening and physical distancing on the bus and/or at school.

The HCSD shall make every effort to provide and address the mental health, behavioral, and emotional needs of students, faculty, and staff when school reopens under any model of instruction. Additionally, throughout the course of the school year, the District will identify and support students who are having difficulty transitioning back into the school setting.

The District addresses professional development opportunities for faculty and staff on how to talk with and support students during and after the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency, as well as provide support for developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty, and staff.

For staff, this includes:

- Continuing to provide lists of resources summarizing social-emotional health that will include emphasis on the objective of prioritizing physical and social-emotional well-being upon school opening and provide students ample time to re-acclimate. Resources should provide descriptions and tools to differentiate between likely or expected behavior presentations of students. A general trauma-responsive approach should be incorporated.
- Assigning counseling staff to groups of teachers to solve any concerns regarding Tier 1, 2 and 3 supports.
- Preparing for a possible school closure by ensuring the availability of a list of tools for teachers to support student engagement, steps for how to manage minimal or no engagement and strategies for incorporating social-emotional well-being check-ins and learning. This should include a plan for when and how to incorporate related service providers to support student engagement.
- Providing access to professional development opportunities and resources that will address staff members' own health and wellness.

## School Schedules

Each school in the District will run a regular school schedule Monday through Friday following the Board approved 2021-2022 school calendar.

Elementary students will start the school day at 8:00 a.m. and dismissal will occur at 2:40 p.m. Pre-K pick up will occur at 2:30 p.m. and K-5 pick-up will occur at 3 p.m.

Junior High and High School students will start the school day at 8:00 a.m. and dismissal will occur at 2:37 p.m.

## Budget and Fiscal Matters

The HCSD will continue to meet existing state aid reporting requirements. Additionally, the content of data submissions, such as attendance data, will remain consistent with past practice except where modified by law, regulation or executive order. The District will leverage available federal funding to support the safe return to school.

Budget & Fiscal Goal:

Maintain financial integrity of the District during the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Objectives:

- Provide financial support and technical guidance to departments for additional expenses incurred due to COVID-19
- Monitor potential and actual reductions in state aid
- Evaluate reserves and ensure reserve withdrawals are in accordance with the adopted Board of Education plan and Education and General Municipal Law
- Secure available federal funding to support district expenses
- Ensure a long-term approach to fiscal planning in 2021-22
- Adhere to existing state aid reporting requirements and deadlines except where modified by law, regulation or executive order

Procedures:

- Review department budgets as needed when questions arise regarding additional expenses
- Consistently provide budget status reports on a monthly basis to identify shortages
- Review financial status of the District with Superintendent and Board on periodic basis
- Complete reserve plan for Board of Education
- Review carryover funds from the 2020-2021 fiscal year to offset potential state aid reductions during the 2021-2022 fiscal year
- Apply for Federal CRRSA Act an ARP funding
- Prepare long-range financial plan for the Board of Education

## Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism

All schools in the HCSD continue to follow the [Board's Attendance Policy 5100](#) and collect and report daily teacher-student engagement or attendance.

School policies and procedures focus on the academic consequences of missed instructional time and all efforts are made to address absences before students fall behind in school.

## Attendance/Chronic Absenteeism

- Develop mechanisms for intervention when an individual student's attendance record demonstrates a pattern requiring a need for improvement, including instances of chronic absenteeism.
- Develop a district-wide program to encourage regular attendance, including the use of the appropriate incentives.
- Ensure that all district schools accurately report information on students considered to be chronically absent and implement effective strategies and interventions to prevent and reduce the incidences of chronic absenteeism among students.
- Continue to develop district-wide attendance initiatives to engage families in promoting their child's attendance at school.

## Excused and Unexcused Absence/Tardiness

The student and parent/guardian are responsible for contacting school personnel on the date of the student's absence as well as providing written notification of the reason for any absence upon the student's return to school. A note from a medical professional is required should a student be absent for five (5) consecutive school days.

For incidents of a student illness beyond a total of ten (10) days over the course of the school year, medical documentation will be provided to the building principal so as to determine that extenuating circumstances exist.

Attendance shall be taken daily at the beginning of instruction. Each classroom teacher shall record the presence or absence of students in a classroom and shall report all absences or tardies to the building office electronically.

In the event that a student is absent from school without notification to school personnel, school personnel will contact the student's parent/guardian to confirm the student's absence. If, in either situation, no contact is made, a message will be left requesting that the parent/guardian contact the school. If no contact is made, other means will be made to contact the student's parent or guardian.

Each school building will have a team that reviews attendance data on a weekly basis. The team will utilize various strategies to improve attendance such as phone calls and letters home, home visits and parent education resources. We also partner with outside organizations who can collaborate with families and help with potential school attendance barriers.

## Technology and Connectivity

During the 2020-21 school year, the District gathered information on students who have reliable high speed internet access. In the event the District is instructed to pivot to remote learning during the 2021-22 school year, we are prepared to provide or pay for students who do not have reliable high speed internet access.

The District will continue to provide adequate and equitable instructional technologies and tools for all students and staff as follows:

- A suite of instructional technology software will be accessible to students and staff to support teaching and learning.
- Chromebooks will be provided to all students for use during the school year.
- Mobile devices (laptops) will be provided to all teachers and administrators.
- Mobile devices (laptops, Chromebooks) will be provided to other support staff as needed.

- Hotspots will be available for students and staff in need of internet access for school-related activities.
- Adaptive technologies will be provided to students as per IEP mandates.
- A technology Helpdesk will be available for onsite and remote (where applicable) technology assistance. The Hudson Helpdesk form is posted at [www.hudsoncsd.org/technology](http://www.hudsoncsd.org/technology) or you can call the Helpdesk at 518-479-6835 (for dialing when you are outside the district) or Extension 2118 (for dialing when you are in the district).
- In collaboration with Teaching and Learning, instructional technology professional development will be provided to all staff.
- Technology workshops in collaboration with building and district staff will be offered to parents and guardians throughout the school year.

## Teaching and Learning

All students PK-12 will attend school in person five (5) days per week beginning on September 9, 2021.

A virtual option is available only on a limited basis through Questar III BOCES (or another provider of online platforms) for students who have a medical exemption that has been approved by the District's physician. Please note that a commitment to remain in remote instruction must be made for the entire 2021-2022 school year.

## Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Students enrolled in CTE programs will attend CTE classes daily according to their schedule.

## Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

### Athletics

The [New York State Public High School Athletic Association](http://www.nyphsa.org) (NYSPHSAA) announced on August 13th that districts should consult with their local health departments as they plan for the 2021-22 fall interscholastic athletic season scheduled to begin on August 23rd. The District met with representatives from the Columbia County Department of Health on a weekly basis to determine appropriate steps to ensure the safety of athletes.

Both the CDC and NYSED recognize that school-sponsored sports and extracurricular activities provide students with enrichment opportunities that can help them learn and achieve and support their social, emotional, and mental health. To ensure the health and safety of students during these activities, the CDC recommends the following:

- Due to increased exhalation that occurs during physical activity, some sports can put players, coaches, trainers, and others at increased risk for getting and spreading COVID-19. Close contact sports and indoor sports are particularly risky. Similar risks might exist for other extracurricular activities, such as band, choir, theater, and school clubs that meet indoors.
- Prevention strategies during these activities remain important. At a minimum, students and adults should follow the same school-day policies and procedures during athletic and extracurricular activities
- Students should refrain from these activities when they have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and should be tested.

- Schools are strongly encouraged to use COVID-19 screening testing for student athletes (parental consent required) and adults (e.g., coaches) who are not fully vaccinated and participate in or support these activities to facilitate safe participation and reduce the risk of transmission – and avoid jeopardizing in-person education due to outbreaks. See Table 1: Screening Testing Recommendations for K-12 Schools by Level of Community Transmission in the CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools (below).
- High-risk sports should be virtual or canceled in areas of high community transmission unless all participants are fully vaccinated. The local health department will advise the District on appropriate measures that would allow the continuation of athletics under these circumstances as feasible.
- People who are fully vaccinated can refrain from quarantine following a known exposure if they are asymptomatic, facilitating continued participation in in-person learning, sports, and extracurricular activities.

Coaches and school sports administrators should also consider specific sport-related risk factors. Based on the CDC, the following factors affect COVID-19 transmission risk:

- **Setting of the sporting event or activity.** In general, the risk of COVID-19 transmission is lower when playing outdoors than in indoor settings. Consider the ability to keep physical distance in various settings at the sporting event (e.g., fields, benches/team areas, locker rooms, spectator viewing areas, spectator facilities/restrooms, etc.).
- **Physical closeness.** Spread of COVID-19 is more likely to occur in sports that require sustained close contact (such as volleyball and football).
- **Number of people.** Risk of spread of COVID-19 increases with increasing numbers of athletes, spectators, teachers, and staff.
- **Level of intensity of activity.** The risk of COVID-19 spread increases with the intensity of the sport.
- **Duration of time.** The risk of COVID-19 spread increases the more time athletes, coaches, teachers, staff, and spectators spend in close proximity or in indoor group settings. This includes time spent traveling to/from sporting events, meetings, meals, and other settings related to the event.

## Extracurricular Activities

- Field trips are considered on a case by case basis with preference given to nearby, outdoor field trips.
- Clubs are permitted to meet in person as long as they follow the guidelines contained in this document.
- Service providers (e.g., guest speakers, vendors, organization representatives, etc.) must follow the guidelines contained in this document and may be asked to provide proof of vaccination before being permitted into schools.
- Schools are strongly encouraged to use COVID-19 screening testing for students (parental consent required) participating in extracurricular activities or other activities with elevated risk (such as activities that involve singing, shouting, band, and exercise that could lead to increased exhalation), and adults (e.g., coaches, teachers, advisors) who are not fully vaccinated and participate in or support these activities to facilitate safe participation and reduce risk of transmission – and avoid jeopardizing in-person education due to outbreaks. See Table 1: Screening Testing Recommendations for K-12 Schools by Level of Community Transmission in the CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools (below).
- Extracurricular activities should be virtual or canceled in areas of high community transmission unless all participants are fully vaccinated.

Table 1

	Low Transmission <sup>1</sup> Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
<b>Students</b>	Do not need to screen students.	Offer screening testing for students who are not fully vaccinated at least once per week.		
<b>Teachers and staff</b>	Offer screening testing for teachers and staff who are not fully vaccinated at least once per week.			
<b>High-risk sports and activities</b>	Recommend screening testing for high-risk sports <sup>2</sup> and extracurricular activities <sup>3</sup> 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.	
<b>Low- and intermediate-risk sports</b>	Do not need to screen students participating in low- and intermediate-risk sports. <sup>2</sup>	Recommend screening testing for low- and intermediate-risk sports at least once per week for participants who are not fully vaccinated.		

<sup>1</sup> [Levels of community transmission](#) defined as total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days (low, 0-9; moderate 10-49; substantial, 50-99, high, ≥100) and percentage of positive tests in the past 7 days (low, <5%; moderate, 5-7.9%; substantial, 8-9.9%; high, ≥10%.)

<sup>2</sup> Examples of low-risk sports are diving and golf; intermediate-risk sport examples are baseball and cross country; high-risk sport examples are football and wrestling.

<sup>3</sup> High-risk extracurricular activities are those in which increased exhalation occurs, such as activities that involve singing, shouting, band, or exercise, especially when conducted indoors.

## Special Education

The HCSD considers in-person services a priority for high-needs students and preschool students with disabilities.

Students with disabilities were particularly impacted by the closing of schools in spring 2020. We fully recognize that programs and services are best delivered in person with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those providing special education services.

The District will meet the needs of students with disabilities by providing specialized instruction and related services as recommended by the Committee on Special Education to the extent practicable depending on the current health and safety trends. For students who may require virtual instruction, a Special Education Contingency Plan for Remote/Virtual Instruction will be developed through the CSE meeting process.

# Bilingual Education and World Languages

The HCSD will provide communications to parents/guardians of English Language Learners (ELLs) in their preferred language and mode of communication to ensure that they have equitable access to critical information about their children's education.

All ELLs will be provided with the required instructional Units of Study in their English as a New Language program based on their most recently measured English language proficiency level.

Professional learning opportunities related to the instruction and support of ELLs will be provided to all educators, as required by Part 154 of the Commissioner's regulations.

To the extent practicable, schools within the HCSD will continue to:

- align policies to the Blueprint for English Language Learner/Multilingual Learner Success
- adopt progress monitoring tools to measure ELL proficiency
- provide social-emotional learning supports to ELLs in their home language
- continue using technology in ELL instruction

## Staffing

The District is committed to ensuring that all teachers, school and district leaders, and pupil personnel service providers hold valid and appropriate New York State certification for their designated assignments except where otherwise allowable under the Commissioner's Regulations or Education Law.

The District will employ substitute teachers to address staffing needs. We will make a good faith recruitment effort to find available certified teachers to act as substitutes in teaching assignments for which they are appropriately certified. We may use non-certified substitutes in circumstances where a good faith recruitment search was made and there were no available certified substitute teachers to perform the duties.

A virtual learning option will be available on a limited basis through Questar III for students who have a medical exemption that has been approved by the District's physician. This instruction will not be delivered by HCSD teachers.

## Teacher and Principal Evaluation System

The District plan ensures that all teachers and principals will be evaluated pursuant to our currently approved APPR plan, including any variance applications approved by the Department.

## Student Teaching

- The District will require student teachers to be fully vaccinated and provide proof of vaccination.
- The District will work closely with local colleges and universities to help identify opportunities for student teachers and interns.
- Student teachers will be responsible for adhering to the safety protocols described in this plan.
- Student teachers will help support classroom instruction and will be under direct supervision of the certified classroom teacher.

## Visitors on Campus

- Schools in the HCSD will monitor the number of visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations, particularly during times when there is a moderate to high COVID-19 transmission rate.
- All approved visitors must follow the guidelines contained in this document.
- Approved visitors must stay home when symptomatic and seek testing and care, regardless of vaccination status.

## Daily Expectations

The CDC has recently determined that daily health surveys are no longer required. However, all employees and parents/guardians are expected to understand their obligation to ensure that individuals reporting to school are fever and symptom free each day this school year. This important step will provide the initial layer, as outlined in the District's plan, to limit exposure and spread of COVID-19 in the school setting.

Each employee and family is responsible for daily temperature checks at home. Employees will not report to work and parents/guardians will not send a student to school with any of the following symptoms that are atypical from the individual's normal health and wellness: **cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell, fever above 100 degrees F, fatigue, chills, nausea or vomiting, muscle or body aches, diarrhea, headache, congestion or runny nose.**

Employees and students with any COVID-19 symptoms, as described above, will follow the District's procedures as it relates to their ability to report to school. This includes being tested for COVID-19 in accordance with DOH and CDC guidance or submitting medical documentation that provides an alternate medical diagnosis.