

Updated August 7, 2020

Safe & Smart
RESTART
EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES

**WESTERN
SUFFOLK
BOCES**

*Re-Opening of
Schools Plan*

WILSON
TECH

BOCES
Western Suffolk

A Message from the Chief Operating Officer

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced the closing of all New York State schools in March 2020, Western Suffolk BOCES transitioned quickly to remote learning to ensure our students and their families were supported. We worked collaboratively within our agency and with our external partners and colleagues to continue to provide instruction and related services in the most effective way possible. It was an enormous undertaking, but, thanks to the considerable support and collaboration among students, parents and staff we were able to overcome numerous obstacles.

Our overwhelming goal since the first days of this pandemic through today is protecting the health and safety of our students and staff. As we look forward to the 2020-21 school year, our focus is on a safe and smart restart of school for all.

To that end, we have developed a comprehensive plan that follows the guidance established by the New York State Education Department and the New York State Department of Health. The Western Suffolk BOCES Safe & Smart Restart plan addresses health and safety measures, responds to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 by cooperating with our local health department and supporting their “contact tracing” efforts, implementing a strategic plan to address student emotional and mental health needs resulting from the pandemic, ensuring equal access to instructional technology for all students, implementing enhanced cleaning protocols, ensuring safe transportation, providing extensive staff training related to the pandemic, implementing several new state requirements related to student and staff daily temperature checks, completion of health screening questionnaires by staff, parents and visitor and many other important initiatives related to health and safety.

We are still living in uncertain times and our reopening plan allows for us to be flexible, proactive and reactive. As circumstances change and as new guidance and directives are received from the State, we are prepared to adapt and update our plan accordingly. It is important for staff, students and parents to understand the reopening of in-person instructional programs will be very different from previous programming and it is meant to be. As we will continuously stress in this plan, our priority is to protect the health and safety of all students and staff. In order to accomplish this shared goal, we need the full cooperation and support of all stakeholders to strictly adhere to the stipulations in this plan. By doing so, we will all be protecting one another as we welcome each other and our students back to school.

We are ready and prepared for the challenges ahead and look forward to the eventual reopening of in-person school.

Michael Flynn,

Chief Operating Officer

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Introduction

At Western Suffolk BOCES, our primary commitment is to the students and families we serve. Our priority is keeping them safe. When the 2020-2021 school year begins, on-campus school will look much different than previous years due to COVID-19 and the health and safety measures that continue to evolve. This school reopening plan will define clear guidance for the reopening of our schools and aligns with the regulations developed in collaboration with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

The areas outlined in this plan represent the many considerations that Western Suffolk BOCES will address to reopen schools safely and to sustain their safe operation. This plan includes procedures that will be followed in the following schools and offices:

Brennan Middle School

Brennan High School

James E Allen Alternative High School

James E Allen Elementary School

James E Allen Jr./Sr. High School

Manor Plains High School

Wilson Tech Dix Hills

Wilson Tech Huntington

Wilson Tech Northport

Wilson Tech Republic

Central Administrative Office

Maintenance and Operations Office

Western Suffolk BOCES has developed a plan to ensure that students and employees feel comfortable and safe returning to school campuses. Our reopening plan incorporates requirements, recommendations and guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), the [New York State Department of Health \(NYSDOH\)](#) and the [New York State Education Department \(NYSED\)](#).

Our plan is to provide five-day fulltime in-person instruction to all of our students. We are also prepared to offer a five-day fulltime distance learning program. It is possible that we may need to alternate between in-person and remote learning throughout the school year due to recommendations and guidance from our partnering agencies, and stay-at-home orders from

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the Governor. The level of infection, spread of the virus and response to the disease in our community will be at the forefront of decision making as we move to reopen our schools.

Dr. Hugh Gigante, Executive Director of Personnel, 631-549-4900 ext. 204 is the agency's COVID-19 Coordinator. He will serve as a central contact and will ensure that the agency is in compliance and following the best practices per state, local and federal requirements and guidelines.

This document is fluid and will change as necessary based on guidance from the NYSDOH, CDC, NYSED and other governing agencies and in consideration of our families and our staff. We strongly believe the services described throughout this plan are in the best interests of our students, families, staff, and community.

Guiding Principles

The development of this plan was guided by and grounded in the following principles:

1. Safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff;
2. Providing the opportunity for all students to access education in the fall and throughout the school year;
3. Carefully monitoring schools, students, and staff for signs of infection. When necessary, modifying schedules to appropriately contain COVID-19 spread;
4. Emphasizing equity, access, and support to the students and communities that are emerging from this historic disruption;
5. Fostering strong two-way communication with the local health department and stakeholders, including families, students, staff; and component school districts;
6. Factoring into decision making the challenges to the physical safety, social emotional well-being, and the mental health needs of our students caused by school closure; and
7. Considering and supporting diversity in our schools and school districts as we provide education is essential.

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Communication/Family and Community Engagement

To help inform our reopening plan, Western Suffolk BOCES has sought feedback and input from stakeholders, including administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/guardians of students, the local health department officials and health care providers, employee unions and community groups. Engagement efforts included online surveys, virtual forums/meetings and one-on-one conversations.

The agency remains committed to communicating all elements of this reopening plan to students, parents and guardians, staff and visitors. This plan is available to all stakeholders via the website www.wsbores.org/restart, and will be updated and revised throughout the school year, as necessary, to respond to changing local circumstances.

As part of its planning for the reopening of schools and the new academic school year, Western Suffolk BOCES has developed a plan for communicating necessary information to staff, students, parents/guardians, visitors and education partners and vendors. The agency will use its existing communication modes – including standard mailings, email, phone calls, postings to the web site and text messages– as well as appropriate signage and mandatory 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.

Western Suffolk BOCES Communication Goals:

- To require and encourage all students to wear a face covering throughout the school day except where the student is not able to do so as a result of a medical or mental condition or disability.
- To require all staff, and visitors through verbal and written communication and signage to adhere to the required guidance regarding the wearing of an acceptable face covering the nose and mouth.
- To provide regular updates about health and safety, scheduling, and other information faculty, staff and families should be aware of.
- To provide information to families through a wide array of platforms including mail, email, telephone calls, text messaging, social media and website postings.
- To continue to provide information on how families can access technology and receive technical support to assist with utilization and maintenance of equipment.

Western Suffolk BOCES will develop communication materials accordingly, including the creation of sample messages/letters for COVID-19 cases or potential cases for various school audiences. We will utilize communication methods used by the Agency to inform the school community. Information will be dispersed in a variety of platforms that may include:

- Western Suffolk BOCES website
- Robocall
- Email blast

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- Online training
- Correspondence (letters) to homes
- Agency social media accounts
- Virtual Meetings (Zoom, WebEx, Google Classroom, etc.)

Western Suffolk BOCES will make every effort to provide and share information to its school community members. This includes:

- Who to contact with questions, concerns or suggestions.
- The importance of social distancing, monitoring symptoms of COVID-19 and when to stay home
- Establish health screening protocols for students, staff, visitors, vendors and contractors prior to entry into the school and the review process for parents of students and staff when calling in sick
- Messaging that encourages and explains the implementation of social distancing in restrooms, hallways, etc. indicated by social distancing markers on the floors, etc.
- Reinforcement of proper hand hygiene, which includes the allowance for staff to use hand sanitizer on clean hands and the message that handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is more effective and preferred
- Reinforcement of proper respiratory etiquette (i.e., coughing or sneezing into the elbow if a tissue is not available)
- Encouragement of personal responsibility for the individual to clean and maintain their respective work area.

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Health and Safety

The health and safety of our students, our staff and their respective families is our top priority. We want students and their parents as well as our employees to feel comfortable and safe returning to school campuses. Our reopening plan incorporates recommendations and guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), the [New York State Department of Health \(NYSDOH\)](#) and the [New York State Education Department \(NYSED\)](#) to fulfill our commitment to this goal.

The following protocols and procedures will be in place in all agency programs for the 2020-21 school year when in-person schooling resumes. Anyone with questions or concerns should contact our COVID-19 Coordinator, Dr. Hugh Gigante at restart@wsboces.org or 631-549-4900, ext. 204. Western Suffolk BOCES will evaluate all requests for a reasonable accommodation and/or alternative provisions for students and staff who are at high risk due to a medical condition. Requesting accommodations will follow our established protocols.

Information about health and safety protocols and trainings will be available at *Western Suffolk BOCES Safe and Smart Restart page at www.wsboces.org/restart.*

To ensure employees and students comply with communication requirements, Western Suffolk BOCES will:

- Post signage throughout the buildings to remind personnel to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning/disinfecting protocols.
- Establish a communication plan for employees, visitors, and parents/guardians with a consistent means to provide updated information. Available methods of communication include:
 - Website
 - Email
 - Social media
 - Print copy mailings
 - Voice and/or video messaging
 - Traditional media outlets
- Maintain a continuous log of every person, including students, staff, visitors, vendors and contractors who may have close contact with other individuals at the school, excluding deliveries that are performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means.
- If we are advised that a student, staff, visitor, vendor or contractor has tested positive for COVID-19, or has had prolonged exposure to an individual with confirmed COVID-19, Western Suffolk BOCES will immediately notify our local health department. We will cooperate with and support the contact tracing efforts initiated by the local county.

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health department, while maintaining confidentiality required by state and federal law and regulations.

Facility Entry

To ensure faculty, staff, students, and visitors comply with physical social distancing requirements, anyone within Western Suffolk BOCES facilities will practice social distancing expectations:

- In order to ensure proper social distancing during arrival and dismissal, entry and egress in and out of school buildings will vary from school to school depending on a number of factors. Schools with large numbers of staff and students will use multiple access locations. Schools with lower enrollment and staff will use a more limited number of access locations
- Face coverings must be worn to gain entry into the school by all students, staff, and visitors in shared and public spaces on Western Suffolk BOCES property, except for those students unable to tolerate a face covering due to a medical or mental condition or disability.
- Proper face covering includes a disposal mask or cloth mask and must completely cover the individual's mouth and nose.
- A plastic face shield alone is not an acceptable face covering. Face shields must be used in conjunction with a facial covering.
- Students and staff may choose to utilize their own personal face covering. For the remaining students and staff, face coverings will be provided by Western Suffolk BOCES.

Daily Health Screening

- **Staff**
 - Prior to arriving at work each day, staff will complete an electronic COVID-19 health screening questionnaire. A staff member who presents with any COVID-19 symptoms after answering the questionnaire, are to remain at home and notify their school building administrator. Such staff will be directed to contact their doctor for further direction.
 - Although completing the COVID-19 health screening questionnaire is required to be performed, paper copies of the COVID-19 health screening questionnaire will be available at school security stations and must be completed by the staff member before entering the school. Copies of the COVID-19 health screening questionnaire can be found at www.wsboces.org/restart.
 - Staff must also complete a temperature check at home prior to arrival at school.
 - The temperature check will be verified at home utilizing an electronic form. As with the health screening questionnaire, staff who do not submit temperature check results will not be permitted to enter the building without having a temperature check performed at the school entrance.
 - Staff will be required to monitor their own health while at work. Anyone staff who presents with COVID-19 symptoms during the day must immediately contact their supervisor.

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- All staff must swipe their identification badge at electronic readers at their buildings *each* time they enter and exit the building.
- **Students**
 - Parents/Guardians are to check their child for temperatures and symptoms prior to sending their student to school. Western Suffolk BOCES will provide directives to parents/guardians with the COVID-19 electronic screening so that they can report their child's temperature on a daily basis to the school.
 - Parents/guardians will be requested to submit the daily COVID-19 health screening form to the school.
 - As a backup for parents who do not submit the electronic temperature check information to the school, students will be screened at arrival at school for temperatures.
 - Students with a temperature at or greater than 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit will be sent directly to a dedicated isolation room where supervised prior to being picked up by their parent.
 - Schools are in the process of securing additional individuals to assist with implementing the backup process of administering temperature checks to students where the parents do not submit results of the at home morning temperature checks to the school.
- **Visitors, Vendors, and Contractors**
 - All visitors will have their temperature taken and be required to complete a COVID-19 Screening prior to being permitted into the school.
 - Any visitor who presents with a temperature of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or greater and/or indicates other symptoms of COVID-19 will not be permitted to enter the building.

Social Distancing – Staff

- All staff and visitors on Western Suffolk BOCES property must maintain appropriate social distancing and wear a face covering in shared and public spaces on Western Suffolk BOCES property.
- Proper social distancing is defined as a six (6) foot separation between individuals unless otherwise directed by State and Federal guidance. The New York State Education Department has further clarified maintaining appropriate social distancing in schools. The State has advised that “schools must ensure that appropriate social distancing (i.e., six feet/barriers) is maintained between individuals while in school facilities and on school grounds (inclusive of students, faculty, and staff), unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance.” In situations involving safety or a core activity, the staff member must wear a facial mask and other protective devices, as warranted.
- Social distance reminders may be indicated by tape or signs.
- In-person gatherings will be limited. Tele- or video-conferencing will be used whenever possible or practicable. Essential in-person gatherings, such as meetings, will be held with appropriate social distancing among participants.

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- Designated areas for pick-ups and deliveries will be established, limiting contact to the extent possible.

Personal Hygiene

Students and staff must practice good hand hygiene to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. There will be time in the school day schedule to allow for hand hygiene.

- Promotion of good hand hygiene will include:
 - Signage encouraging handwashing and correct techniques;
 - Encouraging traditional handwashing, which is the preferred method, with soap and warm water, lathering for a minimum of 20 seconds, generally the time it takes to sing or hum the happy birthday song twice;
 - Adequate facilities and supplies for handwashing including soap and water;
 - Extra time in the schedule to encourage frequent handwashing.
- It is expected that students and staff will wash hands or use hand sanitizer as follows:
 - Upon entering the building and classrooms;
 - After sharing objects or surfaces;
 - Before and after snacks and lunch;
 - After using the restroom;
 - After helping a student with toileting;
 - After sneezing, wiping, or blowing nose or coughing into hands;
 - Anytime hands are visibly soiled;
- Placement of sanitizer dispensers will be near entrances and throughout common areas.

The agency will provide and maintain hand hygiene stations around the school, as follows:

- For handwashing: soap and running warm water.
- For hand sanitizing: an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical.
- Accommodations for students who cannot use hand sanitizer will be made.

Visitor Practices

Western Suffolk BOCES will limit and monitor visitors. Visitors include, but are not limited to, non-registered students, parents/guardians, advocates, vendors, consultants and component district personnel.

- Visitors must wear proper face covering prior to entering any Western Suffolk BOCES building and face covering must be worn at all times.
- Visitors must check in with Security and will undergo a COVID-19 health screening and temperature check.
- Visitors must sign in and follow standard security protocols.
- Visitors must sign in and out at the main entrance of each building stating their destination at that building for contact tracing.

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- To limit visitors in buildings, meetings should be held off-campus or virtually when possible or practicable.
- Should a visitor become ill while on campus, they must alert a staff member.
- The building security will submit the daily visitor sign-in log to the Principal in the event that contact tracing must take place. The Principal will maintain all visitor sign-in logs.

COVID-19 Training

Western Suffolk BOCES will train all personnel on new protocols and frequently communicate safety guidelines. COVID-19 Training on the precautions listed below will be conducted either remotely or in person. Social distancing and face coverings will be required for all participants when COVID-19 training is conducted in person. COVID-19 training material is designed to be easy to understand and available in the appropriate language and literacy level for all workers.

Students

Western Suffolk BOCES will ensure all students are encouraged and taught how to follow COVID-19 protocols safely and correctly, including but not limited to hand hygiene, proper face covering wearing, social distancing, and respiratory hygiene. Additional training will be provided in:

- Students will be encouraged, reinforced, taught and required to wear facial coverings while in school to the extent the student can tolerate wearing a mask based on a medical or mental health condition or disability. Students will be permitted to wear personal face coverings. If students do not have a mask, they will be provided with a facemask by the school. Students will be permitted to take frequent facemask breaks as long as they maintain six (6) feet of social distancing.
- Preventing the spread of disease by staying home when they are sick.
- Proper respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
- Avoiding the use of communal objects. If communal objects must be used, provide information on proper disinfection procedures between use. Examples of communal objects include, but are not limited to, other student personal belongings, desks, computers or other devices, other work tools and equipment.
- Provide students with up-to-date education and training on COVID-19.

Staff

- Staff will be required to wear facial coverings while on school property. Staff will be permitted to wear personal facial coverings. For all other staff, the school will provide a facial mask. Staff will be permitted to take frequent facemask breaks provided they are maintaining six (6) feet of social distancing.
- All instructional staff must maintain a daily log of all staff, students and visitors who have entered their room. This daily log is to be submitted to the Principal at the end of the school day. The Principal is to maintain all daily logs for any future contact tracing.
- Proper handwashing/proper hand hygiene. Promote frequent and thorough handwashing by providing employees, the school community, and visitors with a place to wash their hands. If soap and running water are not immediately available, provide

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alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropyl alcohol.

Provide training on proper handwashing and hand sanitizer

use <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

- [Handwashing video](#)
- Proper cough and sneeze etiquette
- Social distancing
 - Provide training for faculty/staff on how to address close contact interactions with students as part of every day job tasks.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

- Operating procedures (varies by building)
 - Entrance into the building
 - Cleaning procedures
 - Sick child pick up
 - Staff who are sick or suspected to be sick

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>
- Proper cleaning techniques
 - Cleaning and disinfecting

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html>
- Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/Reopening_America_Guidance.pdf
- Hazard Communication – Right-To-Know
 - Proper use of chemicals and Safety Data sheets
 - <https://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/>
 - No chemicals from home
 - Transfer of hand sanitizer in smaller containers
 - List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)
 - <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>

- Personal Protective Equipment - PPE
 - Proper type, use, and size
 - Cleaning and sanitizing of the face covering (if applicable)
 - Provide training for staff and students on wearing, putting on, removing and discarding PPE, including in the context of their current and potential duties

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
- Use of face coverings (donning/doffing) (cloth vs. surgical)
 - [Face coverings don/doff video](#)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQxOc13DxvQ>
- Respirator Protection (N95 - required for identified employees per NYS)

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<https://oshareview.com/2020/04/osha-requirements-for-occupational-use-of-n95-respirators-in-healthcare/>.

Screeners

Western Suffolk BOCES will train individuals to be familiar with CDC and NYSDOH guidelines in each building who will conduct temperature checks. Screeners will wear appropriate employer-provided PPE, including at a minimum a face covering, face shield and gloves. If social distancing or barrier/partition controls cannot be implemented during screening, PPE will be used when within six (6) feet of another person.

Space Design, Capacities, & Controls

General Office Area

- Workstations will be reconfigured so that employees do not face each other, or provide six (6) feet of social distancing or partitions if facing each other cannot be avoided.
- Face coverings will be worn in these multiple use office settings if less than six (6) feet of social distancing.
- Tasks requiring large amounts of people to be in one area will be reduced and/or distributed to a virtual work space if feasible.
- Employees will be encouraged to use virtual meeting tools, including phone and virtual teleconference, in lieu of in-person meetings whenever possible.
- If in-person meetings are essential, limiting meetings to 12 people or less will be considered and all participants will wear masks and practice social distancing.

Conference Rooms

- In-person meetings (refer to NYS guidance) will be limited if virtual meetings are not feasible
- Social distancing among participants will be required
- Lingering and socializing before and after meetings will be discouraged.

Staff Break and Lunch Rooms

- A minimum of six (6) feet separation must be maintained when consuming food or drink.
- When feasible staff will be advised to take their lunch and breaks in their private offices or classrooms; in their vehicles or at designated outdoor locations throughout the campus.
- Shared meals will not be permitted.

Copier Rooms/Areas

- Appropriate social distancing must be maintained in copier rooms/areas.
- Cleaning supplies will be provided at copier stations.
- Staff are to wipe down touch surfaces between uses.

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Restrooms

- Restrooms regardless of size will be limited to one person at a time unless size permit social distancing.
- In special circumstances where a student must be assisted by a staff member in the use of the lavatory, the adult present must be wearing all applicable personal protective equipment including a face covering and when medically applicable, the student will be wearing a proper face covering as well.
- Signage will be posted on entry indicating capacity.

Hallways/Stairwells

- Hallway traffic may be limited to single flow direction where appropriate.
- When single flow is not appropriate, bi-direction traffic will be permitted.
- Where appropriate, adequate distancing will be achieved between all individuals by taped off lanes on the corridor floors/stair treads.
- All individuals must also allow for appropriate social distancing between when traveling in the same direction.

Classrooms

- Occupancy in each classroom will be specific and determined by the overall square footage of the space.
- Each student will receive not less than six (6) feet of separation from other students.
- Where possible, special subject teachers and related service staff will travel to the classroom to provide instruction.
- Cleaning and disinfection of classrooms and equipment will be frequent: all shared high touch surfaces will be cleaned after each use.
- Students and staff will be instructed to wash hands or use hand sanitizer prior to and after touching any frequently touched surfaces.
- Unnecessary furniture and soft furnishings/surfaces that are difficult to clean (i.e. area rugs, soft fabric chairs) will be removed.

Nurse Stations

- All students and staff are required to wear appropriate face coverings at all times in shared and public spaces, except for those students unable to tolerate a face covering due to a medical or mental condition or disability.
 - N95 Respirator will be provided for nurses.
 - Nurses will receive proper training and fitment of N95 Respirators prior to use.
- Where applicable, nurse stations have been reconfigured to:
 - Maintain social distancing of no less than six (6) feet.
 - Students who receive daily medication should be treated separately from students presenting with symptoms of illness.
 - Nebulizer treatments should not be conducted in school. Parents should request to contact their child's physician to request an appropriate substitute medical treatment such as the use of inhalers.

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Isolation Rooms

- Where applicable, a separate room will be utilized for quarantining individuals who present with symptoms representative of COVID-19.
- Isolation rooms will be equipped with dividing curtains allowing for physical divide.

Computer Labs/Equipment

- The use of shared space and equipment use will be limited where feasible.
- Blocks of computers will be sectioned off to ensure social distancing is maintained.
- Tables of computers will be reconfigured so as to not face each other.
- Cleaning and disinfection of computer labs and equipment will be frequent: all will be wiped and cleaned between uses.
- Students and staff will be instructed to wash hands or use hand sanitizer prior to and after touching any frequently touched surfaces.

Water Fountains

- These appliances will be routinely cleaned and disinfected as described in the Cleaning and Disinfection Section.

Floor Demarcations

- Where appropriate, floor signage will be installed allotting for a minimum of six (6) feet of separation between individuals
- Where appropriate there will be indicators for corridor floors and stairway treading to indicate directional traffic flow and social distancing.

Ventilation

Western Suffolk BOCES will ensure sufficient ventilation and fresh air to all spaces of occupancy by means of:

- Modifications to the Building Management Systems to allow fresh air dampers to introduce more outside air.
- Air handling systems have been inspected for function with higher MERV rated filters.
 - Where applicable filters will be exchanged for MERV rating ranging from 11-13.
- In addition to mechanical systems fresh air can be introduced through open windows.
 - Options for replacement and modification to existing systems will be explored.
- More frequent maintenance and inspection of the systems will occur to maintain systems.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Western Suffolk BOCES will ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the NYSDOH, including “Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19,” document. Cleaning and disinfection logs will be maintained that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection.

Areas that will be frequently cleaned and disinfected include (but are not limited to):

- Restrooms

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- Health offices
- Administrative offices (main office, reception area)
- Frequently touched surfaces in common areas (door handles, elevator buttons, copy machine keypads, etc.)
- Cafeterias/Kitchens
- Labs
- Classrooms
- Large meeting areas (auditoriums, gymnasiums, music rooms)
- Playgrounds (cleaning only)
- Outdoor seating areas (plastic or metal).

Regular cleaning and disinfection of the facilities will occur, including more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk and frequently touched surfaces. Cleaning and disinfection will be rigorous and ongoing and will occur at least daily, or more frequently as needed. Disinfectants must be [products that meet EPA criteria for use against SARS-Cov-2](#), the virus that causes COVID-19, and be appropriate for the surface.

Management of Suspected and/or Confirmed COVID Cases

- *Emergency Response* - Students and staff with symptoms of illness will be sent to the nurses' office or designated location for immediate assessment. If a school nurse is not available students or staff will be sent home for follow-up with a healthcare provider. Proper PPE will be worn by the nurse any time there is contact with an individual displaying potential COVID-19 symptoms.
- *Isolation* - Students suspected of displaying potential COVID-19 symptoms awaiting transport home by the parent/guardian will be isolated in a room or area separate from others, with a supervising adult present utilizing appropriate PPE. Multiple students suspected of COVID-19 may also be in this isolation room separated by at least six (6) feet. Students will be escorted from the isolation area to the parent/guardian. The parent or guardian will be instructed to call a health care provider.
- *Cleaning and Disinfecting* - Western Suffolk BOCES will adhere to the current NYSDOH recommendations including but not limited to:
 - Closing off areas used by a sick person and not using these areas until after cleaning and disinfection has occurred
 - Opening outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
 - Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, such as offices, classrooms, restrooms, etc., adhering to current CDC cleaning and disinfecting protocols
 - Individuals without close or proximate contact with the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 can return to the area and resume school activities immediately after cleaning and disinfection.

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In the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19, CDC protocols will be followed regarding cleaning and disinfecting the building or facility if someone is sick.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

- *Notification* - the local county health department and the NYS Health Department will be notified immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 diagnostic test result for a student, staff or visitor.

Contact Tracing

To ensure Western Suffolk BOCES and its employees comply with contact tracing and disinfection requirements, Western Suffolk BOCES will notify the local and State Departments of Health in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case.

We will assist the local county public health department in providing information as who may have had contact in a Western Suffolk BOCES building with a confirmed case of COVID-19 by:

- Keeping accurate attendance records of students and staff
- Ensuring student schedules are up to date
- Keeping a log of any visitors
- Maintaining a log of students, staff and visitors for all instructional areas.

Return to School after COVID-19 Illness

Western Suffolk BOCES will follow current NYSDOH guidance for allowing students or staff to return to school following a confirmed case of COVID-19 or a case of prolonged exposure to an individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Western Suffolk BOCES has established protocols and procedures, in consultation with the local health department, about the requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screened positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment at school. This protocol includes:

1. Documentation from a health care provider following evaluation.
2. Negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result.
3. Symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation.

Western Suffolk BOCES will refer to current NYSDOH guidance regarding protocols and policies for faculty and staff seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after the faculty or staff member had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19.

School Closure Considerations

When a student, staff or visitor has been identified (confirmed) or suspected to be COVID-19 positive, the decision to close an area of school or the entire school for Western Suffolk BOCES will include:

- Consultation, collaboration and coordination between school district administrators and local health department officials

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- A plan for continuity of education, medical and social services, meal programs and alternate mechanisms for these services to continue
- Short-term closure procedures to mitigate community spread if an infected person has been in a school building, in accordance with guidance and directives from the NYSDOH and Suffolk County Department of Health
- Closing of schools by the County Executive or Governor according to metrics established by NYS and/or regional agencies/government.

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Facilities

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection in Western Suffolk BOCES, facilities operations will be geared toward meeting social 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.

Western Suffolk BOCES plans to meet the due date for submission of the Building Condition Survey or Visual Inspections. In addition, lead in water sampling will be carried out upon the reopening of school under conditions consistent with when the building is “normally occupied.”

Upon reopening, Western Suffolk BOCES plans to increase ventilation, to the greatest extent possible. Water systems will be flushed in buildings that have been unoccupied.

Emergency Response Protocols & Drills

All required emergency response drills, including evacuation and lockdown drills, will be held this year and include appropriate social distancing.

Emergency Response Protocols

- Shelter-In-Place
- Hold-In-Place
- Evacuation
- Lockout
- Lockdown

Shelter-In-Place

Areas will be identified in each school that will be used for the Shelter-in-Place along with areas that cannot be used for certain types of environmental hazards (i.e.: high winds, tornado, etc.).

Shelter-In-Place protocols will be the same with the following considerations:

- Provide 6 feet of space between students and staff during the Shelter-In-Place.
- Use of face coverings.

Hold-In-Place

Hold-In-Place protocols will be the same with the following considerations:

- Provide 6 feet of space between students and staff during the Hold-In-Place if appropriate.
- Use of face coverings.

Evacuation

Evacuation protocols will be routinely the same with some minor adjustments:

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- Identify areas outside of the building in advance that will allow 6 feet of separation of students and staff. Verify that students and staff will not impede emergency responders
- In an effort to ensure all staff and students can evacuate the building as quickly and efficiently as possible, face coverings should be worn at all times
- Identify, in advance, who will be holding the door to get out of the building, therefore reducing the amount of people touching the door hardware when leaving the building. Personnel who will be conducting this task may be assigned to holding the door for one or more classrooms or until confirmation that everyone has vacated the building
- As written in the established protocols, bring all necessary items needed and consider adding the following items: extra face coverings, in the event a face covering becomes unusable, and hand sanitizer.

Lockout

Lockout protocols will be the same, with the modification of maintaining six (6) feet of space between students and staff in the area.

Lockdown

During a Lockdown, the six (6) foot recommendation between people may not be feasible.

Lockdown protocols will be the same process as they have been conducted in the past.

- Evaluate, in advance, if there is room to social distance without being in the line of sight
- Face coverings should be worn during the event at all times.

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Child Nutrition

Western Suffolk BOCES will follow School Food Authority directives when communicating about school meal services, eligibility, options and changes in operations. Communications will be provided through a variety of communication methods including website, social media, emails, robocalls, newsletters, and regular mail and translated into the languages spoken by families.

Western Suffolk BOCES has identified LouAnn Criscuolo, School Lunch Manager as the contact person to receive and respond to communications from families and to school staff. Ms. Criscuolo can be contacted at: lciscuo@wsboces.org / 631-549-4900 ext. 240. Families will be reminded during the summer and school year that they can submit a new application for free and reduced-price meals any time during the school year. Applications are available in each school building, on our website and through email or regular mail as needed. Phone in and in-person support to complete the application are available from our food services department.

School meals will continue to be available to all students, including those attending school in-person and those learning remotely.

When Students Eat in Classrooms

- Teachers will be trained on food allergies, including symptoms of allergic reactions to food.
- Train all non-food service staff on any meal service-related activities they will be responsible for at:
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/foodallergies/pdf/13_243135_A_Food_Allergy_Web_508.pdf

Meals Onsite

For students onsite, meals will be provided while maintaining appropriate social distancing between students. Students do not need to wear face coverings when seated and eating so long as they are appropriately socially distanced by six (6) feet.

In order to minimize co-mingling of students and staff, Western Suffolk BOCES will serve school meals in alternate areas (e.g., classrooms). The sharing of food and beverages (e.g., buffet style meals, snacks) is prohibited.

All staff involved in preparation, set up, clean up and delivery of meals must follow procedure to ensure all meals served are safe to eat and appropriate food safety measures are followed.

Food service procedures include, but are not limited to:

- All food service employees will be trained in required procedures

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- All staff will practice proper handwashing with soap and water; In addition to current hand washing procedures, kitchen staff will wash hands or change gloves after each classroom aide comes in to pick up meals
- All food service staff will wear face coverings and gloves at all times when preparing food/delivering meals; gloves will be removed and discarded after each meal delivery
- All food service staff will practice social distancing – six feet of distance between individuals
- Clear barriers, which provide access for money to be passed, will be provided on staff serving lines at point of service.
- No disposable items (forks, knives, spoons, napkins, straws) will be left on the service line; kitchen staff will use individually wrapped utensil packages for students and staff
- No condiments (ketchup, mayo, mustard, etc.) will be left on the counters; kitchen staff will hand out those items upon request
- No coffee cups, lids, or milk products will be left on counters; kitchen staff will hand out those items upon request
- All food will be served in a container, bag or covered to avoid exposure
- Meals should be served immediately upon delivery to classroom
- No food sharing is allowed.

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Transportation

Western Suffolk BOCES does not own or operate school buses. Students are transported to Western Suffolk BOCES schools on buses contracted by their home school districts. Western Suffolk BOCES contracts with a transportation carrier to provide mid-day shuttles between school campuses, work-based learning activities and school field trips. It is the transportation carrier's responsibility to ensure that all required training, safety (including PPE), and disinfecting protocols are adhered to.

Western Suffolk BOCES will contract for the above referenced transportation services that are consistent with state-issued public transit guidance and NYSED School Reopening guidelines. In our specifications for contracted bus services, we have required the cleaning of buses between each route as well as a cleaning each night. In keeping with that guidance, students and school staff must wear acceptable face coverings to the extent practicable at all times on school buses (e.g., entering, exiting, and seated) and should maintain appropriate social distancing to the extent practicable. We are also very sensitive to the needs of our non-ambulatory students and will work with school districts and our bus carrier to ensure their needs are being appropriately met with respect to transportation.

Students are required to wear facial coverings on the school bus to the extent they can tolerate wearing a mask based on a medical or mental health condition or disability. In such situations, students must be appropriately socially distanced. Members of the same household may be seated within six (6) feet of each other. Parents and legal guardians are encouraged to drop off or walk students to school to reduce density on buses.

Students on Transportation

- As was outlined in the Health and Safety section of this guidance, all parents/guardians will be required to ensure their child/children are not experiencing any signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and do not have a fever of 100 degrees or greater prior to boarding their school bus;
- Students who do not have a mask CANNOT be denied transportation;
- Students who do not have masks must be provided one by the transportation provider;
- Students with a disability which would prevent them from wearing a mask will not be compelled to do so and will not be denied transportation.

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Social Emotional Well-Being

In planning for the possible reopening of in-person instruction in September 2020, Western Suffolk BOCES has formed teams to examine the guidance provided by the New York State Education Department and the New York State Department of Health related to the social, emotional and mental health needs of students. We believe that the most equitable opportunities for educational success rely on comprehensive support for students and families provided in our schools with our professionals and the systems of support we have developed. These supports focus on academics as well as the social, emotional and mental health needs of our students.

As we prepare for the new school year, we are committed to prioritizing social emotional well-being. In support of this belief, our Social-Emotional Learning team consists of certified teachers, certified school counselors, licensed mental health professionals, psychiatrists and school administrators. This team will be charged with developing and maintaining a cohesive and strategic plan, regardless of the re-entry phase, that supports students and staff. Included in this plan is a means to identify and actively support student and staff well-being and mental health concerns through a range of pre-determined tactics to be employed by those dealing with challenging mental health situations.

This plan will focus specifically on:

- Identifying, assessing and supporting students who are at risk for mental health issues related to the pandemic upon reentry into school. This strategic plan will provide tiered levels of mental health interventions and services.
- Considerations for mental health teams to rapidly transition between face-to-face and continuous remote learning, which may be required based on the pandemic.
- How to best meet the mental health needs of our students' families during this pandemic.

The COVID 19 pandemic and the extended school closing has had a significant impact on the Western Suffolk BOCES community as well as many students and their families who may require social-emotional supports to help them re-engage and re-enter school. Western Suffolk BOCES is committed to creating and ensuring conditions in which students practice empathy, create social bonds across distance and adapt to new learning experiences. Counselors, school-based health programs, and wrap around supports will play an extremely important role in the adjustment period when buildings reopen and access to school counselors and school-based health programs will be invaluable supports to our students.

Mental Health Supports will include:

- Provide training for professional staff at the onset of school to recognize signs of mental health distress.

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- Establish a rapid response process in schools to ensure such students are quickly identified and assessed.
- Provide timely interventions and supports for students and their families working through the school district and committees on Special Education.
- Utilize our unique relationships with state and local providers of mental health services to support our interventions.
- Responsive social-emotional supports, including mental health check-ins, planning and goal setting, opportunities for self-reflection, and social interactions as applicable.
- Reminders to employees that they have access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which offers many free services including face-to-face and virtual counseling.
- Information about social-emotional supports will be made widely available within Western Suffolk BOCES and the community at large.

Transitions are important every year, and they will be even more important this fall returning from continuous remote learning to in-person instruction in buildings. Western Suffolk BOCES will support transitions in a culturally responsive manner and engage students, families, and communities in the process of identifying needs and supports.

The Social-Emotional Learning team considered the following:

- Mixed emotions, including relief after quarantine.
- Fear and worry about personal health and the health of loved ones.
- Stress from the experience of self-monitoring or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Sadness, anger, or frustration because friends or loved ones have unfounded fears of contracting the disease from contact with you, even though you have been determined not to be contagious.
- Guilt about not being able to perform normal work or parenting duties during quarantine.
- Other emotional or mental health changes.

Addressing Social-Emotional Health

- Establish/sustain a culture that supports and emphasizes mental health services available for faculty, staff, students and families.
- Explore the use of Restorative Practices (use of healing/restorative circles for both staff and students).
- Assist in adequate training for staff/faculty as requested to assist them in understanding:
 - Social Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.
 - The warning signs for quarantine related mental health needs.
 - How to access crisis support and other mental health services.

The role of in-school professionals:

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- Educate staff, parents, and students on symptoms of mental health needs and how to obtain assistance.
- Promote social emotional learning competency and build resilience.
- Help ensure a positive, safe school environment.
- Teach and reinforce positive behaviors and decision making.
- Encourage good physical health.
- Help ensure access to school-based mental health supports; facilitate the expansion of school-based mental health supports.

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School Schedules

Western Suffolk BOCES will offer five-day fulltime in-person instruction for our Special Education and Career and Technical Education programs. However, mindful of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic and as required by the recent State guidance, Western Suffolk BOCES will be prepared to offer three instructional models: five-day fulltime in-person, five-day fulltime remote teaching and a hybrid program. All models will provide instruction that is New York State Learning Standards-based.

For in-person instruction, Western Suffolk BOCES will maintain regular schedules in all programs, but will also be prepared to accommodate component school district schedule changes.

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Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism

Attendance and Attendance Reporting

Western Suffolk BOCES will record daily attendance whether school opens in September in-person, hybrid, or remote. Attendance policies and procedures will be communicated with families and students. Daily attendance will be recorded in the student management system. Daily reports will be generated to identify students who are absent and/or chronically absent. Contact with the families and component school districts will be made.

Chronic Absenteeism

While there is no one-size-fits all approach to addressing chronic absenteeism, Western Suffolk BOCES is committed to providing interventions to prevent and address health-related and mental health chronic absenteeism. We recognize that many factors will influence student attendance, and may be greatly impacted by the instructional models provided; in-person, hybrid, and remote.

Our strategies to prevent and address chronic student absenteeism include the following:

- Implement a continuum of academic and behavioral supports which includes Response to Intervention (RtI) instructional approaches, Universal Design for Learning Strategies, Understanding by Design (UbD), Differentiating Instruction, Progress Monitoring and Positive Behavioral Interventions to ensure interventions are matched to student needs.
- Providing support to staff in order to improve students' personal health, social, family, work, recreational lifestyle changes through positive behavioral interventions strategies that encourage on-task behaviors while targeting incompatible behaviors.
- Adolescents spend more time in school than in any other context and substantial research suggests that feeling connected to one's school promotes long-term positive youth development and increases school attendance. School connectedness consists of two primary and interdependent components; attachment, characterized by close affective relationship with those at school and commitment, characterized by investment in one's academic growth (learning for a self-determined purpose) and doing well in school.

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Technology Equity and Connectivity

Access to technology for all students is essential to provide appropriate instruction. At Western Suffolk BOCES, we continue to ensure all of our students, particularly homeless and students from impoverished families, have internet connectivity and necessary electronic devices to use at home. We work through many community agencies as well as using our own resources, to ensure all students have the necessary access to technology to support their success in school. Western Suffolk BOCES has been committed to ongoing planning and implementation of technologies to ensure equitable access for staff and students. Western Suffolk BOCES has initiated plans that are mindful of student home access to reliable internet and computers.

- Western Suffolk BOCES has hired an additional Instructional Technology Consultant to work with our staff, students and families to support technology education, especially during periods of distance learning.
- Western Suffolk BOCES recently gathered data and asked teachers and families to identify their level of access to devices and high-speed broadband from their residence. The agency will continue to assess the ongoing needs of families for technology and connectivity (survey, interviews, school outreach, etc.) In the event students and/or teachers do not have access, Western Suffolk BOCES will take the necessary steps to meet their needs where plausible.
- Conduct and/or maintain an inventory of equipment and other assets.
 - Identify which students, families, and staff have assets in their possession.
- Procure, manage and/or maintain hardware, software, licenses, learning management systems, etc. to support and improve virtual instruction and student engagement.
- Identify professional learning needs for teachers and continue to support their development of skills and pedagogy in a virtual learning environment.

Western Suffolk BOCES, like many other school districts, has substantially increased its inventory of electronic instructional devices to support our students anticipating distance learning may continue in schools this Fall 2020. Western Suffolk BOCES will provide students with access to learning materials and resources in multiple formats, wherever possible. Further, the agency will continue to support teachers through professional development and coaching on pedagogical methods that enable students to participate in multiple ways, so that they can demonstrate mastery of Learning Standards in remote or blended models through the use of both synchronous (i.e. Google Meet or other web conferencing tool) and asynchronous technologies (i.e. Google Classroom or other LMS).

This past Spring 2020, when schools were closed, Western Suffolk BOCES provided free access to our teaching staff, as well as to teachers on Long Island, to extensive virtual professional development webinars. These webinars were always well attended by teachers from Western Suffolk BOCES schools as well as other school districts. These webinars focused on providing training to teachers using electronic platforms such as Google, Zoom, etc. to provide more

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effective distance learning instruction to students. These webinars also provided training to teachers in specific software applications with respect to distance learning, which were related to standard based instruction as well as individual student targets in their IEP, as appropriate. We expect to continue to provide this training to teachers to support both distance learning and in-person instructional activities this Fall 2020. Western Suffolk BOCES will also continue to connect with families to educate them on how to use the technologies and connect to the instructional activities.

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Teaching and Learning

In an effort to assure high-quality teaching and learning, a continuity of learning plan has been developed for the 2020-21 school year. If permitted, Western Suffolk BOCES will be providing in-person instruction. This plan considers and plans for teaching and learning in-person, remotely, and through hybrid models of instruction. Our plan assures that instruction is aligned with the New York State Learning Standards and assures equity as well as quality for all learners.

Western Suffolk BOCES provides instruction to students from 18 component districts and it is likely that several of those districts will be operating different schedules and methods of instruction delivery. Instruction in Western Suffolk BOCES will be designed so that whether it is delivered in-person, remotely, or through a hybrid model due to a local or state school closure, there are clear, comprehensive, and accessible learning opportunities for all students. Such opportunities will be aligned with New York State Learning Standards.

Our teaching and instructional plan outlines routine, scheduled times for students to interact and seek feedback and support from their teachers. Our plan is centered on instruction and academic programming that includes regular and substantive interaction with an appropriately certified teacher regardless of the delivery method (e.g., in person, remote or hybrid). Clear communication for how students and their families/caregivers can contact the school and teachers with questions about their instruction and/or technology will be provided. This information will be accessible to all, available in multiple languages, widely disseminated, and include clear and multiple ways for students and families to contact schools and teachers (e.g., email, online platform, and/or by phone) in an effort to assure learning for all.

The school calendar typically includes one or more staff-only days before students arrive at school. Acknowledging the challenges that our teachers and staff have faced this spring delivering remote instruction under stressful circumstances, Western Suffolk BOCES will focus these in-service days on providing support to staff in the areas of social-emotional health and technology integration.

As we enter the new school year, teachers will be encouraged to spend time building relationships, supporting students with the transition back to school, and teaching social distancing etiquette at developmentally appropriate levels.

When a remote or hybrid learning model is necessary, certain groups of students will be prioritized for in-person learning to the greatest extent possible. This includes, but is not limited to, special education students, English language learners, students who did not engage in remote learning during the spring of 2020, and students with technology or connectivity needs.

Assessing student learning gaps or areas of need will be critical. Formative assessment before a unit of instruction to assess student understanding of pre-requisite skills will be common

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practice. Acknowledging that the typical content in a given grade level or course may need to be adjusted, content will be prioritized to ensure that students receive instruction for the prioritized learning standards, key understandings, and skills necessary for students' success in future study.

Grading practices will follow a standards-based framework designed to provide direct feedback regarding students' mastery of course content.

In-person Instruction

For in-person instruction, Western Suffolk BOCES will maintain regular schedules in all programs, but will also be prepared to accommodate component school district schedule changes.

Upon reopening, the number of students in each of our classrooms may be reduced to adhere to NYSDOH and CDC guidance regarding proper social distancing. Class size will reflect the need to ensure that students' desks/seats are positioned no less than six feet apart.

Accommodating a six-foot radius around students may necessitate the identification of additional rooms for specific programs and services. Face coverings must be worn by all students and staff in shared and public spaces, except those unable to medically tolerate a face covering.

Western Suffolk BOCES will minimize the movement of students. This potentially means having students eat lunch in their classroom instead of the cafeteria and eliminating assemblies, field trips and other large-group activities. Special-area subjects (e.g., art, music, physical education) may be pushed into the classroom. Whenever possible students will utilize outside space for physical education instruction. We will adhere to 12 feet distancing guidance between students when engaging in physical activity.

To the extent possible, students will remain in small cohorts if/when leaving the classroom, such as for recess or any necessary transition, so as to reduce their exposure to additional students.

For information regarding cleaning and disinfecting in regard to in-person instruction, please see the Health and Safety section of this document.

Remote Instruction

Given the possibility that communities may experience spikes in COVID-19 cases at any point during the school year, which may prompt short- or long-term school closures, Western Suffolk BOCES has developed a remote learning model. Instruction will not only focus on "core" subject areas to the exclusion of elective courses. Instruction will continue to be aligned to the New York State Learning Standards.

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Remote learning opportunities for students will include a combination of synchronized and asynchronous learning opportunities to maintain community and teacher access. Teachers will ensure that their students are directly engaged with them and their class peers in experiential learning on a regular basis. Digital and non-digital options will be made available to students.

Access to technology is essential. Western Suffolk BOCES has been committed to ongoing planning and implementation of technologies to ensure equitable access to staff and students. Western Suffolk BOCES has initiated plans that are mindful of student home access to reliable internet and computers. We will be working in conjunction with our component school districts.

To ensure high-quality digital-remote learning experiences, Western Suffolk BOCES will standardize the use of a single online learning platform, with the exception of those who required specialized platforms for related services, to the extent possible, and develop a common, coordinated set of guidelines for teachers to follow when using the platform with students.

Grading practices will follow a standards-based framework designed to provide direct feedback regarding students' mastery of course content.

Hybrid

The hybrid model will combine the aforementioned in-person and remote models, with a flexible and fluid schedule.

When a hybrid learning model is necessary, certain groups of students will be prioritized for in-person learning to the greatest extent possible. This includes, but is not limited to, special education students, English language learners, students who did not engage in remote learning during the spring of 2020, and students with technology or connectivity needs.

Lessons will be organized according to those which must be completed in person and those which can be completed remotely. Consideration will be given to prioritizing hands-on and lab-based activities while students are onsite in school buildings.

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Special Education

The Western Suffolk BOCES reopening plan provides a framework to ensure that all students with disabilities continue to have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to the greatest extent possible in light of the current health crisis and for which supports the health and safety of the students. The special education programs and related services have been designed to meet the unique needs of our students as well as to prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living in the least restrictive environment (LRE). In consideration of the health, safety, and well-being of students, families, and staff, our plan is designed to enable transitioning between in-person, remote, and hybrid learning environments to ensure the provision of FAPE consistent with the changing health and safety conditions that exist.

Special education programs and services of Western Suffolk BOCES provide equity and access for students with disabilities to be involved in and to participate and progress in the general education curriculum with access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability related needs of students. While in-person instruction is the preferred method for educating our students, the Western Suffolk BOCES plan include carefully crafted programs and services that will be provided in formats that include in-person, remote/distance learning or hybrid when required.

The Special Education programs in Western Suffolk BOCES serve students with enormously diverse educational, physical, medical, emotional, sensory, language and many other types of significant needs. Western Suffolk BOCES will document the programs and services offered and provided to students with disabilities as well as the communications with parents in their preferred language and mode of communication (via related service logs, contact logs, etc.). Western Suffolk BOCES will ensure access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability related needs of students to the greatest extent possible and as determined appropriate by the team with meaningful parent participation.

The important requirements to safeguard the health and safety of students and staff remain the same from program to program. However, the manner in which we implement these safeguards will vary from program to program due to significant developmental differences in our students. We are fully committed to thoughtfully and carefully implementing practices that will protect all students and staff. Full compliance by all involved is necessary and will provide for the safety we are all seeking so we can successfully reopen our schools and keep everyone healthy and safe.

Western Suffolk BOCES is committed to providing meaningful parent engagement in the parent's preferred language or mode of communication regarding the provision of services to his/her child to meet the requirements of the IDEA and NYS Part 200 Regulations. Further, we will maintain regular communication with the parents/guardians to ensure that they are engaged in their children's education during the reopening process.

Please note: Western Suffolk BOCES has developed this plan with the intention that it is flexible. Updates and amendments will be made in accordance with changes in guidance from the NYSDOH, CDC, and NYSED and in response to agency needs.

Western Suffolk BOCES will plan and support collaboration between the student's home district, committees on special education (CSE) and program providers representing the variety of settings where students are served. This is done to ensure there is an understanding of the provision of services consistent with the recommendations on individualized education programs (IEPs), as well as for monitoring and communicating student progress.

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Bilingual Education and World Languages

Support of English language learners (ELLs) will be comprehensive, high-quality, and culturally responsive. Western Suffolk BOCES will provide the required instructional units of study to all ELLs based on their most recently measured English language proficiency level during in-person or remote instruction. Further, we will maintain regular communication with the parents/guardians and other family members of ELLs to ensure that they are engaged in their children's education during the reopening process which includes telephone contact, text messages, social media, emails and regular mail in their preferred language. We will provide all communications for parents/guardians of ELLs in their preferred language and mode of communication. We utilize multiple resources and platforms to assist with the translation service to effectively communicate and partner with all families. These services can translate live conversations as well as documents.

Western Suffolk BOCES will provide professional learning opportunities for our staff to support best practices and equitable instruction for ELLs to help address learning gaps caused by the COVID-19 school closures. Western Suffolk BOCES will offer opportunities for staff to keep themselves aware and able to address the specific needs of ELLs and students with disabilities. Some of these professional development opportunities include webinars and workshops provided by the Long Island Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (L.I. RBERN).

Western Suffolk BOCES will ensure that ELLs are receiving the appropriate level of instruction through the exploration of alternative and/or additional progress monitoring tools to track language skills progress towards English Language Proficiency.

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Teacher and Principal Evaluation System

All teachers and principals will continue to be evaluated pursuant to the Western Suffolk BOCES approved APPR plan. Western Suffolk BOCES will consider whether the currently approved APPR plans may need to be revised in order to be consistent with the plans for re-opening under an in-person, remote or hybrid instructional model. School leaders will continue to attend annually required Lead Evaluator training.

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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. Western Suffolk BOCES will employ substitute teachers to address staffing needs for the allowable amount of days given their qualifications and teaching assignment. Western Suffolk BOCES will work with approved educator preparation programs to identify appropriate ways in which student teachers can support classroom instruction.

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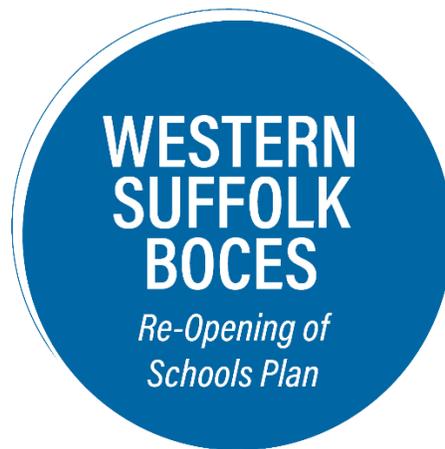
Key References Glossary

- [State Education Department Issues Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools \(July 16, 2020\)](#)
- [State Education Department Presents Framework of Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools \(July 13, 2020\)](#)
- [Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, NYS Department of Health \(July 13, 2020\)](#)

Additional References

- [Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)
- (June 26, 2020)
- [Interim Guidance for Food Services during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.](#)
- (June 26, 2020)
- [Interim Guidance for Office-Based Work during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.](#)
- (June 26, 2020)
- [Interim Guidance for Public Transportation Activities during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. \(June 26, 2020\)](#)
- [New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [New York State Education Department Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration COVID-19 Website](#)

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