

UNION FORWARD

Focusing on Opportunities, Real World Application and Resilient Determination



Union School District's Continued Efforts for Safe In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan

August 2021

Union School District Board of Education

Andrea Estell, BOE Chairperson
Amy Blank, BOE Vice Chairperson
Edward Fournier
Robert Fischetti
Jessica Garden
Heidi Bradway

Steven J. Jackopsic, Superintendent/Principal
sjackopsic@unionschool.net, 860-684-3146, ext. 103

COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison
Name and Contact: Steven J. Jackopsic (Primary), Lois Demujian/LeeAnn Brothers (Secondary)

This draft plan was made available for public comment from all relevant stakeholders, including parents, students, community members, Board of Education and Union School staff. The plan is once again being reviewed by the BOE before the start of the 21-22 school year in order to align with current guidance. In addition, the plan will be reviewed at least every six months (December 2021, June 2022, December 2022, June 2023 and December 2023).

Public Comments from June E-Blast

- Concern over impact of lost instructional time with all safety measures and distance learning
- Concern over mask-wearing for all students and staff and mitigation strategies, specifically during lunch and snack

Message from the Superintendent

We are committed to the safety and well-being of our entire Union School Learning Community and look forward to the future as we work towards brighter days in the 21-22 school year. We invite and encourage the involvement of students, parents and community members to work in partnership with us as we continue our efforts for a return to normalcy.

The Union School District is working to develop procedures and protocols to ensure a safe and secure return to in-person instruction this coming fall.

Local health indicators and trends will be monitored through collaboration with the Northeast District Department of Health (NDDH), the Connecticut Department of Health (DPH) and Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), consistent with guidance issued by federal and state agencies.

Priorities	
21-22 School Year Learning Model	Communications Plan & Data Collection
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Guiding Principles</u></p> <p>The Union School Opening Plan for the 2021-2022 school year has been developed with an opportunity for public comment. Our plan is grounded in guiding principles outlined below by the Connecticut State Department of Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff; ❑ Monitoring the school, students, and staff and, when necessary, potentially canceling classes in the future to appropriately contain COVID-19. ❑ Emphasizing equity, access, and support to our students and communities that are emerging from this historic disruption; ❑ Fostering strong two-way communication with our partners including families, educators, and staff; and ❑ Factoring into decisions the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Communication of policies, protocols, and relevant information will be shared utilizing multiple means, as appropriate, which may include the following: the Black Board and Remind App Notification System, district website, email blast and social media. ❑ Ongoing surveys and Coffee Conversations will be used to gather feedback from stakeholders. ❑ Communications will be made available in the preferred language of families. ❑ Any time critical information needs will be made available to the community regarding policies or changes to the health data. This information will be

<p>challenges to the physical safety, social-emotional well-being, and the mental health needs of our students when they are not in school.</p>	<p>disseminated utilizing any/all of the methods detailed above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Should the determination be made to close schools, information will be sent through the Superintendent to the community in a variety of ways which may include most of the following: Black Board and Remind App (voice/email/text), school website, email, social media, hard copy with appropriate notice provided to local and state officials.
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Operations Plan	
Facilities	Daily Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Desks may be spaced apart from one another by at least 3 feet, as feasible. ❑ Signs may be provided by the district to be displayed in specific locations, as follows (Signs will be formatted in languages appropriate for school population.). Handwashing procedures displayed in all restrooms; Pictorial signs depicting the proper application of facial coverings; Upon entry, all buildings will display protocols for use of facial coverings, social distancing compliance, application of hand sanitizers, and hand washing reminders; Signs visible in high traffic areas illustrating the signs/symptoms of COVID-19 and instructions for when to stay home. ❑ Outdoor instruction will occur at the teacher’s discretion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Lunch may be held in the multipurpose room. ❑ School nurses and Superintendent/Principal will provide announcements (verbal and video) on health and safety. ❑ Water fountains are closed. In place of that, water bottle filling stations are now in use. Students and staff are encouraged to bring water/bottles from home. ❑ In the event a full distance learning model is implemented, staff will have the option of working from school (if possible) following all CSDE and CDC guidelines. ❑ Deliveries will be dropped off at the front door. Contractors will follow all applicable school rules and be scheduled, as feasible, outside of school hours. Volunteers will be screened by the school nurse.

The Superintendent/Principal reserves the right to adjust/revise these protocols at any time due to changing guidance from various organizations including but not limited to: State of CT, local health department, CDC, etc. The Superintendent/Principal will update the Board of Education regarding any changes at the next scheduled BOE meeting.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Systems</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Comply w/ DPH for building water systems ❖ The ventilation system will be consistently monitored and maintained. Guiding Document: <i>Guidance for School Systems for the Operation of Central and non-Central Ventilation Systems during the COVID-19 Pandemic</i> The ventilation system will be operated at full capacity one week prior to the reopening of school. 	
<p>Child Nutrition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Union School will continue to determine eligibility for and make available free milk to all eligible students. ❑ US Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) regulations and policies for milk will be followed. ❑ Milk pick-up will continue to be available during any school closure. An order list will be collected at the beginning of the school closure. Parents may wish to be added at any time. 	
<p>Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ High school students riding the bus may have assigned seats. ❑ Signage indicating appropriate social distancing, mask-wearing, seating will be posted. ❑ Students will exit the vehicle beginning in the front and moving toward the rear. Passengers in the same family may be seated together. 	<p>Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ All students, drivers, monitors (as needed) will be required to wear a facial covering at all times. There will be additional face masks available on the bus. ❑ Students may be assigned seats. Students may be seated one to a seat unless seated with a family member. ❑ Students in the front of the bus will exit first. ❑ The district will ensure that a supply of disposable masks is provided to each school bus

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	<p>for students in need of a mask. Masks must be applied to the nose and mouth region prior to entering the bus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Students will not be permitted to change seats during the route.
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Health Practices and Protocols	
Cleaning, Disinfecting and Preventative Measures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> At least 1x/day, cleaning and disinfection of restrooms and high-touch areas will occur, except on early dismissal days. <input type="checkbox"/> All students and staff will follow all state/local quarantine protocols as appropriate. <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning staff will complete a checklist to document regular daily cleanings of high touch surfaces in restrooms and other areas in building. <input type="checkbox"/> All cleaning products utilized on surfaces should follow Connecticut School Green Cleaning Law. <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning products should be utilized in well ventilated areas and should follow the manufacturers stated instructions for use (contact time, surface application). <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/guardians should send in an extra set of clothes for their child. This will be stored in classroom and/or nurses' office. <input type="checkbox"/> The Union School District will provide soap, hand sanitizer (at least 60% ethyl alcohol or 70% isopropyl alcohol), paper towels, disinfectant wipes and face coverings as needed. <input type="checkbox"/> Touch-free paper towel dispensers will be provided in all restrooms throughout the school <input type="checkbox"/> Touchless hand sanitizers will be located throughout the building for ease of access for students and staff. <input type="checkbox"/> Student attendance will follow CSDE guidelines. <input type="checkbox"/> Staff will be provided with reasonable accommodations and leave time as specified in accordance with any collective bargaining agreement, BOE policies and federal and state laws. 	
Reporting Illnesses and Addressing Vulnerable Populations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Students and staff will be advised to remain home from school or work if they present symptoms (fever of 100.4, chills, uncontrolled new cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing or new loss of taste/smell) pertinent to COVID-19, consistent with applicable state and federal guidance. <input type="checkbox"/> The school nurse in each building will be the contact person for reporting staff and student illness. 	

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- Appropriate immunizations and health assessment documentation should be in place prior to school year.

Use of Facial Coverings, Masks, Shields and Social Distancing

- All students and staff are required to wear masks at all times in the building. There will be mask breaks throughout the day where teachers may take classes outside or to the gym. Students and staff with medical conditions may be exempt from the mask requirement, along with students with disabilities who cannot wear a mask safely and /or continuously. A mask break may also occur in the classroom. This will be done at the teacher's discretion.
- Any contractors will be required to wear a mask and follow all school rules. Contractors will be scheduled outside of the school day when possible.
- For anyone that has a medical reason making it unsafe to wear a face mask or face covering, has trouble breathing, or has become incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance, masks and face coverings will not be required, [per CDC guidance and other applicable state or federal guidance](#).
- Masks will be provided to any student or staff member who does not have one.
- Students will not be required to wear masks when outside if social distancing can be performed.
- Desk shields may be used during snack and lunch times when inside.

Health Monitoring Plan

Planning and Distribution of Information

- The district will work with the CSDE and NDDH to provide vaccination opportunities as available.
- Parents and staff should notify school if they are sick with Covid-19 related symptoms or have been exposed to someone diagnosed with Covid-19. School staff will work with the local health department in contact-tracing efforts depending on exposure. The school nurses will maintain this information.
- School will maintain a template document to report and track cases at each school site for staff and students.
- The school will maintain all information about the employee or student illness as part of medical records. The teacher may consult with nurse first via phone before sending student to the nurse.
- Staff will be provided with a "health kit" for minor situations so students may avoid nurses' office.

Containment Plan (see Appendix IV for specific scenarios)

- If a student or staff member is experiencing Covid-19 related symptoms, they should immediately go to the school nurse. Student/staff member will then be isolated and monitored in “Waiting Room/Isolation Room.” Students and staff will be required to go home as soon as possible, as may be done safely. The school district will work with the local health department to determine next steps (Who is quarantined? For what period of time? Contact tracing? Other? Action steps prior to returning?)
- The response team will consist of the school nurse(s) and Superintendent/Principal.
- There will be handwashing breaks throughout the day. Nurses will also provide mini-lessons on thorough hand washing.
- If a child has a temperature above 100.4 degrees, the parent/care givers will be required to pick up in a timely manner.
- Prior to returning to school, any students or staff must go through a thorough screening. This determination will be made in consultation with the local health department. Screenings may include: parent questionnaire, fever-free for an extended period of time without medication, Covid-19 testing, etc. (see Appendix I)

Cancellation of Classes

- If the need for a local shutdown arises, the Union School District will consult with the CSDE and local health department immediately.

Academics

Special Education & English Learners

- Administration and staff will work with families to individualize instruction/supports to service students based on current IEP or EL needs.
- The district will comply with all federal and state mandates and statutes.
- The Superintendent/Principal will collaborate with the special education case managers to determine if students with disabilities are unable to access the plan.
- Special education programs may be allowed some flexibility consistent with applicable state and federal guidelines as long as the programs follow standards and public health strategies (hygiene, social distancing, and cleaning/sanitizing.)
- Communication will occur with families of students with a high level of need to develop transition plans to assist them in their return to the school building. The use of social stories, visual cues, and other developmentally appropriate strategies can be used to reinforce these new concepts and protocols.
- For students who need physical assistance with feeding, toileting or

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activities of daily living, protocols will be established and staff training will occur around safety.

- For students who exhibit significant behaviors that require de-escalation strategies and emergency safety procedures, protocols will be established and staff training will occur around safety.

Assessment
<p>The school will need to prioritize strategies for assessing the learning, gaps, and areas of emphasis for student instruction. Assessments should minimize testing times, increase instruction time, empower teachers, prompt vertical communication among teachers, use available information and implement differentiated instruction, personalized learning and formative assessment practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Prior to the start of school, teachers, interventionists, and related service providers will have the opportunity to participate in vertical teams with their colleagues from the prior grade. During the school year, focused regular formative assessments or district-developed assessments/activities will be used for a quick, short, diagnostic procedure to inform teachers about the strengths and weaknesses of each student in their class.

Family and Student Engagement
<p>Family Support/Communication & Social Emotional Learning and Mental Health</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Family engagement programs will continue to be implemented to support families with resources and supports. <input type="checkbox"/> Union School’s plan will be made available to the community via the Union School website as well as hard copy upon request. <input type="checkbox"/> A counselor will be available upon request by parents. <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing Coffee Conversations will also be held throughout the year. <input type="checkbox"/> Events may be held during the school year within CSDE and CDC guidelines.

Staffing and Personnel	
Certification and Personnel Planning	Professional Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff will be provided with reasonable accommodations and leave time as specified in accordance with any collective bargaining agreement, BOE policies and federal and state laws. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Trainings will be ongoing through the year.

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Appendix I

Student Return to School Parent Questionnaire/Screening After Covid-19 Symptoms (Please refer to Addendum #5 (Appendix #3) from the Connecticut State Department of Education for specific guidelines for return to school. For more information, please visit www.cdc.gov)

Question	Write "Y" for Yes and "N" for No
1. What time did your child last have a fever? What time was the last Tylenol or ibuprofen dose?	
2. Does your child have chills?	
3. Does your child have a sore throat?	
4. Does your child have a cough?	
5. Does your child have nasal congestion?	
6. Does your child have shortness of breath?	
7. Did you visit or call your doctor?	
8. Did your child have a Covid-19 test?	
9. Are any siblings or family members sick?	
10. Have they been in contact with anyone who is known to have Covid-19?	

Other Notes

The parent will call the nurse prior to return to school for clearance.	
The parent will be reassured that there will be no penalty for absences this year.	
The nurse will consult with the Superintendent/Principal if any of the answers do not clearly indicate he or she is able to return to school.	

Appendix II

Waiting Room (Isolation Room) Procedures

1. A student will use this room if he or she has a fever above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit and/or if the nurse suspects symptoms of Covid-19.
2. A parent will be called for pick up from school.
3. Students must not be left unattended in an isolation room.
4. The nurse will notify the Superintendent/Principal so that he may find a backup if another student has health needs.
5. The room will be cleaned after 24 hours as feasible.

Appendix III-See CSDE Addendum #5 (Quarantining and isolation shall be done consistent with applicable guidance (and which may be dependent on vaccination status).

Appendix IV

If/Then Scenarios if Confirmed Cases(s)

The Union School District will follow appropriate state and local quarantine protocols. Through the contact-tracing process, students or staff who are vaccinated and not displaying symptoms will not be required to quarantine.