

***DRAFT 8/6/2020***

**SAU 70  
School Reopening Plan  
2020-21**



**Reopening Safely is PRIORITY #1**

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## **Introduction: Superintendent Jay Badams**

Leadership would be a safe undertaking if your organizations and communities only faced problems for which they already knew the solutions. Every day, people have problems for which they do, in fact, have the necessary know-how and procedures. We call these technical problems. But there is a whole host of problems that are not amenable to authoritative expertise or standard operating procedures. They cannot be solved by someone who provides answers from on high.

-Ron Heifetz and Marty Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*

Reopening our schools in the midst of a pandemic is certainly one of those non-technical problems. As a school district leader, I have often turned to Heifetz and Linsky when faced with big problems that defy easy answers. Their advice centers on the notion that adaptive problem-solving requires leaders to engage multiple stakeholders in this difficult work. Our SAU 70 School Task Force includes more than 30 representatives from multiple employee groups as well as medical experts, public health officials, and school board liaisons. My sincere thanks to our Task Force members for their ongoing contributions to this enormous undertaking.

Many of our team members share a personal stake in this important work as parents of students in our schools. In the plan that follows, you will find our attempt to resume public education in a way that considers our local context with regard to the pandemic, establishes protocols for managing health and safety risks for staff and students, and provides flexibility in the event that COVID-19 cases increase in our region.

You will notice that some of our planning is still underway. Our Task Force will continue its work throughout this school year, and in fact, until this pandemic subsides. Our Physician Advisory Group will help us monitor and react to any changes in the local and regional course of the pandemic. The solutions we offer in this plan will undoubtedly change as we monitor their effectiveness and adapt as necessary. As I explained last spring when our states issued school closure and “stay at home” orders, the fact that so many of our school employees are parents of school-age children in other districts, or caregivers for susceptible family members, or are at high risk for infection themselves, adds layers of complexity to our challenge.

Further, the fact that our school system was not designed as a distance learning enterprise means that technological limitations, lack of staff training and experience with remote instruction, and variable community access to reliable internet service ensure that remote instruction will only be our best approximation of our “normal” educational programming. Likewise, pressures on school routines that will accompany the array of health screening,

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physical distancing, cohorting, hand washing, and transportation modifications, will impact instructional time for those of you who opt for an in-person return to school. Nevertheless, our school teams continue to prepare and I know that they will do an outstanding job educating our children in the face of adversity.

The word “unprecedented” has become shopworn in descriptions of our reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially with regard to education. Even as we wrangle with this “unprecedented” challenge, I keep returning to two words Dr. Steven Chapman has repeated like a mantra as he has advised our team during its collaboration: kindness and community. Though we may disagree about specific elements of the plan that follows, I believe we are bound and united by our care for our children and each other. Our community has been strong and consistent in its support for education and its dedication to our children and will continue to rise to meet the challenge of this pandemic.

Sincerely,

Jay Badams  
Superintendent  
SAU 70

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## **SAU 70 Physician Advisory Group**

August 4, 2020

We are pediatricians, infectious disease specialists, and public health epidemiologists who have been reviewing the medical literature, monitoring the COVID-19 public health data, and advising the SAU 70 nurses, and School Start Task Force. We have advocated taking the full measure of health and well-being of children, also considering developmental, behavioral, mental health and educational aspects in addition to the risk of COVID-19. We have seen firsthand the profound harms to children of school closures. That being said, we do not advocate opening schools fully without considering our local COVID-19 epidemiology and the likelihood of being able to mitigate transmission moving forward. With that, we would like to share publicly the following data and recommendations:

### **There is very little COVID-19 currently in our Community**

1. Incident Command at DHMC has been running weekly models on the COVID-19 cases in New Hampshire and Vermont since March 2020 in order to predict hospital and ICU census. Looking at the D-HH data on hospitalized patients, there was a clear flattening of the curve in mid-April, with hospitalized cases beginning a steady decline state-wide on May 13<sup>th</sup>.
2. Unlike the flu and many other respiratory viruses, children have been relatively spared. Looking at the New Hampshire data, only 136 out of 6,613 COVID+ cases have been 9 years of age and younger, with an additional 320 in the 10-19 age group. This is a total of 456 (6.9%). Thankfully, only 9 have required hospitalization (1.3% of 695 hospitalizations), and zero deaths have been reported in those <20 years of age in NH, Vermont, Maine and Massachusetts.
3. Grafton County has had only 1.6% of the total COVID-19 infections in the state. Looking specifically at Norwich, VT, there have been <=5 cases reported from 3/5/20-7/30/20.
4. Current data as of 8/4 show zero COVID-19 cases in Hanover, Norwich, Lyme and Etna.

### **WE BELIEVE THAT OUR LOCAL EPIDEMIOLOGY SUPPORTS A PLAN TO RETURN TO FULL IN-CLASSROOM EDUCATION, WITH APPROPRIATE SAFETY MEASURES.**

**These safety measures should include:**

1. **Masks.** We recommend mandatory cloth or medical masks, with a recommendation that masks with exhalation valves not be allowed, as they do not filter the exhaled air. If a child or teacher tests positive and all have been appropriately wearing a mask, then there is NO EXPOSURE. In this case, at

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DHMC we have NOT required 14 days quarantine. This is a big reason for our mandatory mask policy for all staff, patients, and visitors at DHMC.

Accommodations should be made for those who cannot wear masks due to medical conditions (e.g. autism). The pediatric clinics at DHMC currently make such accommodations successfully. Where appropriate, eye protection/face shields in addition to masks should be used by staff where there is a likelihood of exposure to individuals with incomplete adherence to masking.

2. **Physical Distancing.** We agree with the plan for 3-6 foot separation between students. Most of the demonstrated benefit from physical distancing occurs in the first 3 feet. All of the data on 6 foot separation has been in the absence of masks. The most important time for physical separation will be during times when masks are removed, such as snack time and lunch time. It will be important to discuss how this can be done safely. There have been outbreaks linked to transmission in workrooms when masks are removed to eat/drink.
3. **Stay at home if you are sick.** We recommend at least two checks – at home with a checklist (as well as temperature taking if possible), and then again at first school contact (bus or school entrance) with screening questions and consideration of additional temperature taking when warranted.
4. **Hand washing.** Availability of hand sanitizer in entrances, hallways and classrooms, and focus on frequent hand washing.

There are of course many other risk reduction efforts the schools will be taking, such as reengineering hallways and limiting entrances and gathering spaces, limits on visitors and larger gatherings, and using ventilation and outdoor spaces where possible.

## **Children are less likely to spread COVID-19 than adults**

1. In a recent study from Switzerland, index case analyses showed children (16 and under) were the index case in only 8% of households with COVID. The other 92% were spread from adults.
2. A 9-year-old boy in France with COVID -19 had 80 close school contacts over several days, with no secondary infections.
3. In Australia, 9 students and 9 staff with COVID-19 across 15 schools were studied, and 735 students and 128 with close contact were examined, with only 2 secondary transmissions found.
4. A recent study from Korea, which has been reported in the press to show higher risk of transmission from 10-19-year olds, actually shows a quite different picture

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if you read the whole study and look at the data. The non-household transmission rate (which is the one relevant to schools) from 10-19-year olds is 0.9% (2/226), basically the same as the 1.1% rate for 0-10 year olds. Other data do suggest that within household transmission from 10-19 years olds is higher, but the 'n' is small and needs to be taken in context with the many other studies done. Our group has reviewed this study thoroughly.

Finally, we will continue to share local data from the hospital's experience and monitor local public health data. It should be noted that the vast majority of transmission has occurred outside of the hospital environment, and we suspect that the same will be true for school. Our success in minimizing the local burden of COVID-19 has been built on the entire community adopting state and CDC guidance on proven methods for decreasing transmission (masks, distancing, handwashing) along with adhering to state requirements on gatherings and travel. Our recommendations assume that this shared commitment to one another will continue.

On a personal note, we are grateful for the hard work and dedication of our SAU 70 administrators, teachers, and staff and will continue to work with and advise them throughout the school year. We recognize that it is not just data, but also kindness and community that will bring us together this fall.

We are committed to staying current on the literature, monitoring epidemiology, and most of all to the health and well-being of the children, staff and teachers of SAU 70.

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## **Members of the School Start Task Force**

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## **Introduction**

The SAU 70 School Board would like to thank all of the members of the Task Force for their work over the past couple of months in developing this proposal. We would also like to thank the communities of Hanover and Norwich for all of the feedback they have provided which has served as an input to the process of developing this proposal.

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## **Task Force Recommendation**

Based upon the work of SAU 70's Reopening Task Force, the associated School Districts of Hanover, Norwich and Dresden propose reopening schools based on a **Phase 3 protocol: In-Person with Safety Requirements** in the fall of 2020 (see below). This formal recommendation, with supporting details, will be presented for public comment at Town Hall meetings for staff and community members on August 6th, 2020, with the school board scheduled to vote on the full proposal August 12th. While confident that this recommendation is based on the best data and scientific evidence, the SAU *will offer remote learning opportunities for students who choose not to return to in-person classes.*

In anticipation of changes in the progression of coronavirus infection, the Task Force prepared three distinct learning models, each linked to medical situations within our community. The outlines of the phases, and the corresponding educational plans, are below. Again, the current medical environment calls for a **Phase 3: In-Person with Safety Requirements** return to school.

## **Phase 1: Full Remote Learning**

### **General Conditions**

1. Governors' Stay at Home orders in effect.

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2. Significant local escalation of the pandemic as documented by local health authorities.

## **Learning Environment**

1. All students are at home.
2. Students access learning through remote instruction only.
3. Remote schedules will be standardized and structured across schools to provide an educational experience more closely aligned to a “regular” school experience.

## **Phase 2: Low-Density Partial Remote (Hybrid)**

### **General Conditions**

1. Infections rising with recommendations for limited building capacity.
2. Required limits on the physical capacity of classrooms and buildings.
3. Little to no physical student interaction. Face masks/shields required by all students and staff indoors.
4. Screening, Hygiene, and disinfection protocols.
5. School-based responses in this phase will be customized based on consultation with local and state health experts.

### **Learning Environment**

1. In order to limit the exposure, schools may modify schedules and adjust attendance as necessary. Example: Students may be divided into cohorts to limit the number of students in the buildings.
2. Students may receive instruction in-person a fraction of the time and receive enrichment/support remotely on other days.
3. Time will be allotted as necessary for planning/support/mentorship for students and teachers, with stress placed on remote meetings to increase support/connection throughout the year.

## **Phase 3: In-Person with Safety Requirements**

### **General Conditions**

1. Infections low but present in the greater Upper Valley area.
2. Physical distancing recommendation of at least 3 feet.
3. Face masks and/or shields required by all students and staff.
4. Screening, hygiene, and disinfection protocols.
5. Masks/face shields may be removed outside with 6+ feet distancing.

### **Learning Environment**

1. Five day student week. (HHS may schedule one day/week of remote instruction)
2. Teachers deliver instruction in person.

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3. Daily class schedules close to normal with some modifications as necessary.
4. Limited student interaction to comply with physical distancing, i.e. students sit individually not in groups.
5. Scheduled use of outdoor or alternative space to allow for a movement break.
6. Remote option available to students on a case by case basis.

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## **Where are we learning?**

### **Definitions:**

***In-person Learning:*** In-person instruction led by the classroom teacher within class cohorts.

***Remote Learning:*** Families can choose to learn exclusively online (in Remote Learning) this school year. Students participating in this option will not be participating in school in person. Students will learn from home in a separate online classroom with other Remote Learning students and a digital classroom teacher. Students will remain in this virtual classroom group for the trimester (MCS/Ray) and quarter (RMS/HHS) regardless of whether in-person learning continues or we transition to state-mandated remote learning.

***State-Mandated Remote Learning:*** Learning from home online resulting from a state-mandated school closure due to the spread of COVID-19.

***Parent/School Learning Agreement:*** Upon committing to Remote Learning, parents will be asked to sign a Learning Agreement, outlining responsibilities involved in the commitment in order to ensure a strong school/family partnership.

***Home Education in NH:*** “Home Education is an alternative to attendance at a public or private school and is an individualized form of instruction in accordance with Chapter 279:2, laws of 1990. Parents must be aware of relevant statutes, rules, and procedures when notifying their local school district of the decision to homeschool, of the responsibilities of home school parents, and how home-schooled students joining a school will be placed.” (Link to NHDOE Rules and Regulations [here.](#))

***Home Study in VT:*** “Home Study Program means an educational program offered through home study which provides a minimum course of study and which is offered to not more than: (a) Children residing in that home, and (b) Children not residing in that home who either are two or fewer in number or who are from one family.” (Link to VT AOE Rules and Regulations [here](#))

### **In-Person Outline**

What is it?

1. In-person instruction is learning led by the classroom teacher within class cohorts.

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## **Attendance**

1. Students are expected to attend 5 days a week for elementary and middle school, and 4 days in person for the high school with remote Wednesday.
2. Assignments from the classroom teacher and other school staff will be provided as necessary if a student needs to be absent from school for an extended period of time.
3. Remote learning may be an option if a student or family is quarantined or self-isolating.

## **Classroom Learning**

1. Increased use of outdoor learning spaces daily
2. Content and curriculum aligned with state standards
3. Use of social emotional learning programs and support within the school day
4. Teacher emphasis on maintaining classroom spaces as welcoming environments for all while still adhering to all health and safety guidelines

## **Virtual Platforms**

1. There will be moderate use of virtual platforms when in person in order to build fluency and comfort with online applications, tools, and platforms

## **Commitment**

1. Commitment to in-person instruction
2. Requests to move from in-person to remote can be submitted to the building principal

## **Remote Learning**

1. Remote Learning may become necessary when recommended by the state or when health concerns within the building arise.
2. Students will use pre-established apps and online routines to shift into Remote Learning as needed.
3. Their in-person classroom teacher will also be their Remote Learning teacher.

## **Remote Learning Outline**

### **What is it?**

1. Families can choose to learn exclusively online for the remote learning option.
2. Students participating in this option will not be participating in school in person.
3. Students will learn from home in a separate online classroom with other Remote Learning students and a digital classroom teacher.

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4. Students will remain in this virtual classroom group for the quarter (RMS and HHS) and for the trimester (MCS and Ray) regardless of whether in-person learning continues or we transition to state-mandated remote learning.
5. Remote Learning teachers will be dedicated to virtual learning only.
6. Number of Remote Learning teachers will depend on the number of students enrolled in remote learning.

## **Attendance**

1. Expectation to attend 5 days a week for synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities.
2. Attendance expectations include daily Zoom meeting with the remote learning class and check-ins on virtual platforms.
3. Opportunities will be provided for small-group social connection with other virtual students.

## **Curriculum and Content**

1. Regular academic assignments with specific expectations and feedback will be given by the remote learning teacher and/or support staff.
2. Students and families will be held accountable for school work and have opportunities for conferencing, academic coaching and support, etc.
3. Coordination and alignment will occur between remote learning teachers and in-person classroom teachers around curriculum, content, and assessment.

## **Virtual Platforms**

1. Use of virtual platforms in alignment with the school platforms and additional online applications to be determined by the remote learning teachers.

## **Commitment**

1. A commitment to either in-person instruction or remote learning through the quarter/trimester will be required.
2. A Parent/School Learning Agreement is required upon enrollment in order to support student learning.

## **State-Mandated Remote Learning**

### **What is state-mandated remote learning?**

1. An opportunity to learn from home online due to the spread of COVID-19 as required by executive order or state education agency mandate.
2. Remote learning teachers will continue with their groups.
3. Classroom teachers will continue their groups while moving to an online platform.

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## **Attendance**

1. Class Zoom meetings
2. Small-group Zoom meetings
3. Virtual platform check-ins and assignment completion as designed by the teacher
4. Synchronous and Asynchronous learning opportunities

## **Curriculum, Content, and Grading**

1. Regular academic assignments with specific expectations and feedback will be given by the teacher or support staff.
2. Students and families will be held accountable for school work and have opportunities for conferencing, academic coaching and support, etc.
3. Content and curriculum will be aligned with state standards.

## **Technology**

1. Students will have access to a device as needed.

## **Commitment**

1. Participate daily in remote learning until reentry to in-person learning.

## **Planning Principles and Priorities**

In the initial stages of the “back-to-school” planning process, we identified the principles that would drive our decision-making and the key features we planned to incorporate in the SAU-70 District’s Return to School Plan. At the top of the list of priorities that informed our planning and thinking was health, safety, and our school community’s well-being.

### **Reopening Task Force: Planning Principles - Guided by Data, Kindness, and Community.**

#### **We endeavored to:**

1. Value the health, safety, and well-being of our school community above all else.
2. Use local, regional and state health data in the decision-making process.
3. Address matters of equity intentionally by first addressing the needs of our most vulnerable or marginalized student populations.
4. Build on our strengths (high percentage of students and staff have devices and reliable access to the internet).
5. Incorporate “lessons learned” during the spring through emergency remote learning.
6. Allow for flexibility and fluidity in delivering instruction and strive for a

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continuum of services (e.g., all learning is done remotely → all learning done in school buildings).

7. Acknowledge the varying needs of students across the PK-12 range and respond to differences in age-appropriate ways.
8. Take into account the needs of ALL stakeholders (students, families, and staff) and build a flexible plan to address these needs as situations change.
9. Uplift student, staff, and parent/caregiver voices by establishing a regular school and SAU-wide communication.
10. Ensure that plans are sustainable and consider the mental, physical, social, and emotional needs of the entire school community.

The reopening task force studied a wealth of relevant data and the school reopening plans of like communities, paying particular attention to the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), NH and VT state guidance documents, and local health officials. From the beginning, the Task Force has worked diligently to balance the district's commitment to providing an excellent and equitable education to all our students. We must do so with student, employee, and community health and safety as an overarching priority. This plan is based on our region's current health situation concerning the low prevalence of COVID-19 cases and will change based on the local progression of the pandemic. We will continue to keep the health, safety, and education of our students, staff, and community at the forefront of all decisions.

While currently recommending an in-person return to school in September, the Task Force has brought together planning committees to prepare for each of the three possible educational plans for the 2020-2021 school year. In concert with Task Force workgroups, individual school committees will address specific logistics of School Operations, Health Management, Whole Child Supports, School Personnel, Teaching and Learning, Transportation, and Technology.

## **District-Wide Expectations**

Students and adults will wear face masks at all times in school buildings (exceptions will be made for eating - TBD at each school). Those in the schools will remain a minimum of 3 feet from each other at all times, 6 feet wherever possible. Those who are unable to wear masks, due to medically documented reasons, will need to wear face shields. Schools will attempt to build in times for "mask breaks," to be taken only outside and with strict physical distancing.

While recent research has revealed that masking and handwashing are the most potent weapons against viral transfer, physical distancing of three to six feet will still be required. We understand that keeping everyone distanced at all times will be challenging, but adherence to mask protocol will limit viral transmission. Schools will also use larger rooms and the outdoors, when available/appropriate, to provide students and staff more options to maintain physical distancing. Schools will not hold large gatherings such as school-wide assemblies, or other activities that do not support physical distancing. Furthermore, specific guidelines regarding music, singing, and PE are currently being developed.

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Students and adults should follow their home state mandates relating to travel restrictions and required quarantine regulations. The latest information can be found using the following links: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/coronavirus-covid-19/traveling-vermont> <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/employee-travel-guidance.pdf> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html> [PENDING FURTHER REVIEW]

A protocol will be established for health screenings (temperature taking) for all students and staff members prior to leaving home **and** again upon entering school buildings. Visitors **will not** be allowed in the district buildings except in emergency situations (fire/medical personnel). If the individual does not pass the screening, they should not enter the bus and/or building. Parents are asked to keep their child(ren) home whenever the student does not feel well or displays symptoms of COVID-19 or when it is known that the student has been in close contact with a known COVID-19 infected individual. Nurses will evaluate students who report to their offices.

Each school will designate an area for students who show or communicate any symptoms of a COVID-19 infection. This area will keep symptomatic students isolated and away from the rest of the school population. The school nurse will communicate with families regarding the student's dismissal from school. Teachers will be vigilant and report to the nurse any students who demonstrate COVID-19 symptoms.

Each school will designate a contact person for COVID-19 matters. If a student has tested positive for COVID-19, the school's designee must be contacted by the parent. The student cannot return to school until they have met the CDC's criteria for return, which are: 1. Three days of no fever; and, 2. Respiratory symptoms have improved (e.g. cough, shortness of breath); and, 3. It has been ten days since the student first expressed symptoms.

The SAU-70 Districts will follow CDC recommended protocols for someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, and for students and staff who have been in close contact with a known COVID-19 infected individual.

Schools will offer and promote frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizers, especially in instances where students share objects and equipment with others, after using the bathroom, upon returning to a classroom, and prior to eating.

Sharing of objects will be discouraged, but when necessary, objects will be disinfected between uses. When objects are shared, hand washing or sanitizer use will be required. Schools will support the use of individual supplies such as texts, scissors, and writing utensils as best they can.

Schools will display signs and floor tape that direct, educate, and remind individuals of healthy practices, physical distancing, and traffic patterns. Schools will create traffic patterns in our buildings that limit individuals from passing others while maintaining physical distancing.

Each school will create a schedule for cleaning and disinfecting, employing guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and state guidelines. All cleaning and disinfecting supplies will meet the approved EPA List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2. Teachers will have

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access to safe and appropriate supplies for use in their classrooms to clean surfaces as necessary. Playgrounds and athletic fields will be handled accordingly.

School lunches will continue to be provided and schools will develop procedures that allow students to maintain appropriate physical distancing.

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## **SCHOOL OPERATIONS**

### **Public Health Accommodations**

#### **Health Management/Safety protocols**

##### **[Draft Health/Safety Protocols](#)**

##### **Restricted Accessibility**

Access to the school buildings is limited to designated students, essential employees, and other approved visitors/vendors with essential business by appointment only. Everyone is required to follow proper PPE guidelines. Parent volunteers will not be allowed in the building until further notice. Whenever possible, meetings and training should be held virtually. Initially, school buildings will not be used by outside groups. Whole-school assemblies and other large events will not take place until further notice. All buildings will be vacated by 6 pm, other than essential maintenance and custodial staff.

##### **Movement within the Schools**

Hand sanitizing stations will be available at all entrances and throughout all school locations. Staff will enter the buildings, check their temperature, sign attestation, and report directly to assigned worksite.

Separate entrances and exits will be assigned to different groups of students. Staggered arrival and dismissal times will be utilized to control traffic flow. Traffic patterns will be modified in order to accommodate physical distancing guidelines and avoid loitering or large group gatherings.

New traffic patterns will be clearly defined indicating the direction of travel with well-marked lines on the floor, signage, and other types of barriers; one-way hallways will be created when possible. All onsite attendees will be required to follow the most current recommended guidance from health officials regarding temperature checks, daily health checklists, and PPE.

##### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

PPE expectations will be based on the NH Dept of Ed, NH DHHS, and CDC recommendations for students/staff within the building(s). Any families or employees who may be experiencing hardship in trying to purchase reusable, cloth masks should notify their Principal's office for appropriate help.

Nurses will be provided with all medically necessary PPE equipment to mitigate any potential risk when dealing with any and all scenarios.

Face masks (without exhalation valves) will be required to be worn by all employees and students while onsite in the buildings. In an effort to practice sustainability, students and staff are expected to provide their own face masks, however, each school location will have

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disposable face masks available for emergency purposes. Employees needing medical accommodations should speak with the school nurse and/or Human Resources Dept. Face shields for district staff requesting them will be provided by the Districts. Pump hand sanitizer bottles will be provided for every room in the district. Temperature screenings and a symptom attestation checklist will be required to enter all buildings. Plexiglass barriers will be installed for identified high traffic locations and for requested teaching areas within the building(s). Plexiglass dividers will also be installed where students may be utilizing any shared spaces such as libraries and/or cafeteria areas.

Parent, student, and staff training sessions will be offered regarding the proper and expected use of PPE as well as cleaning and handwashing.

## **School Meals & Food Service**

Food Service provides food for home delivery to our meal program qualifying students and for students at school.

### **For students attending school in person -**

**Elementary & Middle Schools:** Meals will be pre-ordered on a weekly basis from a set menu. In order to comply with physical distancing protocols and deliver meals in a timely manner, students will receive deliveries and consume meals in their predetermined cohorts. Meals will be packed in single-serve containers; we will make every attempt possible to use environmentally friendly products.

**High School:** HHS students may have limited access to the cafeteria. A set menu will be utilized. Meals will be encouraged to be pre-ordered by early morning and remote kiosk pick up locations may be utilized. Food will be served and meals will be packed in single-serve containers; we will make every attempt possible to use environmentally friendly products.

Students are discouraged from sharing food, beverages, and utensils with others. Communication with at-risk families for community resources will be provided by the school.

## **Transportation**

Busing will be used for student transportation, following CDC/Public Health guidelines.

Due to physical distancing recommendations, the capacity on our buses will be limited. Therefore, pre-registration is required by August 18th. A pre-registration form for parents to share their needs will be made available on August 13th. Parents will be asked to transport children when possible. Open ridership will be suspended until further notice. Route and seat assignment, location, and pick-up times will be determined and communicated to parents by August 26th. Based upon the volume of requests, routes and drop off times may be affected.

Students will be assigned seats utilizing a left and right position alternating pattern. There will only be 1 student per seat unless they are in the same family and then students may be seated together. All riders will be required to wear masks. In order to practice recommended health guidelines, hand sanitizer will be available on each bus. Seating arrangements will be created

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by order of route pickup with the first students on the bus sitting in the back, then filling each seat towards the front of the bus. Students in the front unload first, preventing students from passing one another while loading/unloading. Loading at campus will be managed by school personnel. All windows on the bus will be opened to maximize airflow when possible.

Buses will have enhanced cleaning and sanitization by the transportation vendor - Student Transportation of America. Bus monitors will be screening students upon entry. Parents should remain with their elementary-aged students in case their screening makes them unable to board. Middle and High School aged students should have a predetermined return-to-home protocol established with their parents.

Special education transportation will be managed in a manner similar to and consistent with regular education. Exceptions and other arrangements will be made for students who, for medical reasons, may not be able to wear a mask.

## **Facilities Ventilation, Cleaning and Preparation**

All HVAC system filters have been removed and replaced per the manufacturer's specifications and preventative maintenance schedule. The District is in the process of contracting with independent mechanical and engineering contractors to analyze the air handling and filtration systems capacity to ensure adequate, safe, and appropriate ventilation in teaching and other confined spaces. Upgrades and/or any other changes as suggested from the analysis will be scheduled accordingly. In order to improve air filtration and overall air quality, air filters will be routinely monitored and upgraded where possible, to a higher MERV rating or HEPA rating to capture smaller particles. In areas where filters may not be able to be upgraded due to building/system constraints, we are evaluating other solutions (window fans to exhaust/maximize airflow/independent filtering systems, etc) to enhance air filtration. Additionally, systems will be adjusted to maximize outdoor air intake which will increase the amount of fresh air circulating throughout the rooms. Filters will be checked, cleaned, and/or changed more frequently. ASHRAE and CDC standards are being consulted.

Each school's custodial team will implement a cleaning and sanitizing plan for day and night crews accordingly based on educational models being followed (cohorting vs. increased student movement). We are planning to adjust custodial staff time to include more "disinfectant crews" that can be made available during the day. These crews will prioritize cleaning and disinfecting (where appropriate) centrally located, high traffic flat surfaces and touch points (doorknobs, handrails). Bathrooms will also receive frequently scheduled disinfecting cleanings throughout the day. Additional cleaning supplies will be made available in the classrooms so desk areas may be cleaned before and after any food consumption. Night crews will prioritize cleaning and disinfecting of classrooms, offices, halls and floors. Second shift custodians will use electrostatic sprayers to disinfect classrooms and other large areas.

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## **WHOLE CHILD SUPPORTS**

The Whole Child work group has and continues to review guidance documents/resources, share information about current social-emotional learning (SEL) and mental health programs and supports at each school. Targeted areas for increased focus this year have been identified. Each school's information will be consolidated into a comprehensive planning/resource document to address the following questions:

1. What Social-emotional learning (SEL) opportunities and mental health supports will be provided to all students?
2. How will we identify students who need additional SEL and/or mental health supports?
3. What additional supports will be available for those identified students?
4. How will we monitor the effectiveness of these supports?

Additional areas being addressed are: students with disabilities (Special Education and Section 504), parent/guardian communication, and staff training around SEL and mental health. A comprehensive planning/resource document detailing these areas will also be developed.

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## **SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

### **Employee Considerations**

Remote working opportunities: As remote work opportunities are identified, the District will work to match employees with identified & qualified [FMLA, FFCRA, or ADA] needs to the remote needs of the District/building.

Reasonable accommodations: The district will evaluate and respond to any accommodation requests that are received. We will do our best to comply with any accommodation requests that are deemed reasonable.

Available Leave plans: Employees will be able to access their available leave plans as defined by the union agreements that govern their position.

Emergency Paid Sick Leave: will be made available to all eligible employees as governed by the federal acts including FMLA, FFCRA, or ADA.

Discretionary Leaves: Discretionary leaves of absence may be considered once the qualified leaves have been identified. To be considered for a discretionary leave of absence (minimum duration of 1 semester/trimester) please email your principal, superintendent, and HR no later than August 17, 2020.

### **Professional Development/Teacher Preparation**

Both the SAU and individual school teams will provide relevant professional development for all employees on all aspects of this reopening plan.

District teachers will build upon the professional development time already provided between June 8-22, 2020. Five pre-service days, August 25-31, will be structured to balance the training necessary to support the safe return of students with time to plan for curricular adjustments.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

### **Platform for Instruction**

The Bernice A. Ray Elementary School will use Seesaw in grades K-2 and Google Classroom for grades 3-5 as primary platforms for remote instruction.

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Marion Cross Elementary will utilize Google Classroom as a means to manage instruction in a remote setting.

Both Richmond Middle School and Hanover High School, will continue to utilize the learning management system Schoology to share class content and assignments.

## **Current Status of School Based Planning**

Below is a summary of our four schools' current planning for the coming school year. As each school finalizes school-based guidelines and protocols, building administrators will offer opportunities to families to attend virtual meeting sessions and orientations. Additionally, principals will provide updates through their weekly newsletters.

**MCS** - The school level task force is composed of teachers, support staff, administration, and a representative from the Norwich Rec Department. The group is working on a reentry plan specific to the needs of the Marion Cross School. We are consulting CDC guidelines, Vermont State recommendations, and the direction set out by the larger SAU 70 Task Force. To date the task force has divided into three groups - classroom structures and Pods, drop off and dismissal, and outdoor learning opportunities. As plans for these topics are completed members will move forward to address other topics within our plan. The goal is to provide families with a COVID-19 handbook prior to the September 8 start date. In doing this work we are working to meet the education needs of all students while keeping in mind the varying degrees of comfort families have about in person instruction. For this reason, we are working to provide a virtual format that will allow children to receive the MCS curriculum virtually. To date, our plan is for teachers to focus on in person instruction or virtual instruction. With this model virtual students will have their own virtual classmates. Please look for communication in the Cross Words about the progress of the MCS Task Force.

**Ray** - The school level task force is a group of representatives from various Ray School teams: teachers, support staff, custodians, office staff, nursing staff, and administration. We have Ray representatives who are parents of students in our district, as well as Ray representatives who are parents of students in other districts or with children in childcare/preschool. The task force is now in the process of creating operational guidelines and protocols for our school re-entry. We will share each portion of the school plan, in a "finalized draft" version, with the whole staff for additional feedback and questions. These draft documents will also be shared with the SAU. Undoubtedly these plans will be living, evolving documents. The goal of this task force is to create a handbook that includes protocols specifically related to COVID-19, which will be shared with you. Please look for communication in the Rays of Sunshine about the progress of the Ray School Task Force.

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**RMS** - The school level task force has begun its planning process, addressing the logistical and curricular needs of each learning model. In its first course of action the task force decided to arrange our 2020-2021 school schedule into student cohorts, limiting interaction throughout the day to mitigate risk. While a significant departure from our educational philosophy of creating multiple learning groups within our school, the task force felt the cohort model safest while offering the smoothest transition between models should a change become necessary. This baseline change will require significant work in regards to schedules, elective choices, and integration of world language - work we are happy to undertake. Particulars of the specific school plan will be discussed in (remote) parent forums to be arranged during the week of August 17th. We are excited by the opportunities the plan will offer for the year ahead, and look forward to working together on a great plan for RMS.

**HHS** - Hanover High School (HHS) administrators, coordinators, and various staff members are in the planning stages to accommodate for the three phases outlined in this document, along with a remote option. The high school course offerings and curricula present challenges that make it difficult to arrange students into cohorts throughout the day. The high school plan will mitigate risk by adhering to strict protocols and, where possible, assigning students to certain areas of the building throughout the day to limit movement around the school.

HHS students are very fortunate to have a flexible schedule. This flexibility creates a certain number of challenges in planning for a return to school. Some of these challenges are free periods, open campus, lunch, x period, Advisory/Common Ground, Council, extracurricular, co-curricular activities, and athletics (see FAQ's). As a school community these activities are valued and add to a student's educational experience. Every effort is being made to offer these opportunities in a safe format.

The current in-school *draft* schedule(s) limits a student's "free" time each day. Phase 3 requires students to be physically present at HHS Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Wednesday will be a scheduled remote learning day where students will have the opportunity to participate in Advisory, Council, and other school related activities without the complications of social distancing. Teachers will be available during scheduled class periods to help students.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Home Connectivity**

We recognize that there are some homes with no options for Internet access. This has been an ongoing challenge for schools as we work to deliver engaging and interactive content. It has also been a major concern related to equity for many years. This disparity across the country was exacerbated by remote learning that relied heavily on Internet access. We have attempted to advocate and assist families struggling to obtain service but there is little we can do if

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providers are unwilling to extend service to these areas. We plan to provide a location specifically for our families that cannot access the Internet at home if we are unable to sustain Phase 3.

We are working to expand external coverage and Internet connectivity at our schools to adjust to various needs under all of the phases. We would like to partner with the local communities, businesses and anyone able to provide options for our families that are unable to connect at home.

## **Staff & Student access to devices**

We are working to expand our device program to provide devices to staff & students. We want to ensure that consistent learning opportunities are available to all students and confidential data entrusted to staff remains on SAU 70 assets.

## **Summary**

There is new and emerging technology that could assist with some of our challenges and we are working on a plan to improve our technology infrastructure and related instructional opportunities. In the meantime, we are working to solve problems on a case by case basis with the resources and options currently available to us.

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## **Current FAQ**

### **When does school start?**

The week of August 31st-September 4th will be used for a variety of transition activities, including student/family orientation at schools, finalization of transportation plans, learning/refining of new traffic flow patterns, and checking of technology. Full, in-person instruction will begin in SAU 70 on Tuesday, September 8th.

### **What will remote learning look like?**

Remote learning will be a separate program, available for a set amount of time, under the guidance of specific faculty at every school. Offering a set schedule throughout the day (varied by school), our remote learning options will allow students to interact remotely with teachers and work on completing grade-level appropriate assignments for each grade. The program will be separate, though parallel, to the offerings in an in-person class. Students who miss prolonged periods of in-person school due to quarantine or isolation will be able to take advantage of remote learning at that time. Students who are out with illness will follow existing absence guidelines.

### **Will remote learning be synchronous and/or a broadcast of in person lessons?**

Using our available learning management systems we will do our best to approximate in-person instruction while maintaining privacy and legal requirements. We are working to maintain our school to home connections but synchronous classroom broadcasts are not currently possible. We will keep track of any changes to VT and NH privacy laws and legal guidance to ensure our students and staff are protected while maintaining the best academic and social/emotional connections possible through remote learning.

### **Can my student take some classes remotely and some in person?**

At this time, due to health and planning concerns, we will need students to commit fully to one model or the other. Students who choose the remote option at the start of the fall will remain enrolled remotely for the duration of the first quarter/trimester.

### **Will the curriculum for remote learning be the same as that for in-person learning?**

As mentioned above the curricula of remote learning will be parallel and cover the same standards as the in person instruction. The specific lessons and assignments may vary, just as the assignments and classes of different teachers vary.

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Will remote learning have traditional grading?

Yes.

Will in-school learning have traditional grading?

Yes.

What about the possibility of outdoor learning?

While many of us embrace the possibility of teaching individual classes outdoors, the logistics of moving large portions of the instructional day outdoors pose many challenges. Our current wifi works best in the buildings and outdoor access would be difficult. Some schools (RMS) lack land in which to put outdoor classrooms, and most schools lack tents and chairs that would be necessary. As we prepare for all possible learning scenarios this year, we will continue to build technological/computer skills - making a nimble shift to more remote learning plans possible. In addition to our wifi issues, the use of computers outside raises questions of visibility, exposure to weather, and other environmental factors. We believe this is something that individual schools will certainly examine, but resources necessary for a large scale outdoor learning program may be better deployed in other areas.

What about Band, Choir, and PE?

SAU 70 values art and physical education as a critical part of all students' education. We will continue to monitor the newest and best information available regarding these specific offerings. [The New Hampshire Music Education Coalition guidelines.](#)  
[NHAHPERD Considerations for Physical/Health Education: Return to School 2020](#)

What is the policy about checking out books from the library?

District librarians will provide uninterrupted access to print and digital resources as CDC guidelines establish procedures for safe circulation.

It is the position of the SAU 70 librarians that all library programming can and will be the point of success in serving our students and families during the COVID crisis. We are experts in technology and in curating top-notch educational resources to help support instruction, and we are champions of equity, diversity, and digital citizenship. Using this expertise, we play an integral role in supporting our colleagues, students, and families during this unprecedented time. The data on [student success in relation to school librarians](#) tells us that library programs should continue, and the following plan outlines how to do this safely. The plan details the funding, space, and health concerns for school library services and provides solutions to these critical issues. The plan is meant to be flexible and should change fluidly as new data is provided.

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[Full Plan Available Here](#)

## **Will there be a chance to tour schools?**

There will not be in person tours of school facilities. Individual school task forces are developing plans to welcome families to the new school year.

## **What about parent conferences or open houses?**

We will hold open houses and parent conferences remotely this year so that we can maintain our cohorts. We hope this will allow for more flexibility and ability to communicate.

## **Will I be able to enter the school buildings?**

At this time, due to safety concerns, we are not allowing any outside adults to enter the building. We will have check in/waiting areas outside the entrances of schools, but we are unable to allow you in the building at this time.

## **How are meals being handled?**

School breakfasts and lunches will continue to be provided while following appropriate physical distancing practices, as students are not able to eat with a face mask on. Menus will be posted ahead of time and we will be encouraging a pre-order process in all locations. All meals will be prepackaged and served; every attempt will be made to use earth friendly products. Students are discouraged from sharing food, beverages, and utensils with others. Communication with at-risk families for community resources will be provided by the school.

## **What is being done about ventilation in the schools?**

All HVAC system filters have been removed and replaced per the manufacturers specifications and preventative maintenance schedule. The District is in the process of contracting with independent mechanical and engineering contractors to analyze the air handling and filtration systems capacity to ensure adequate, safe and appropriate ventilation in teaching and other confined spaces. Upgrades and/or any other changes as suggested from the analysis will be scheduled accordingly. In order to improve air filtration and overall air quality, air filters will be routinely monitored and upgraded where possible, to a higher MERV rating or HEPA rating to capture smaller particles. In areas where filters may not be able to be upgraded due to building/system constraints, we are evaluating other solutions (window fans to exhaust/maximize air flow/independent filtering systems, etc) to enhance air filtration. Additionally, systems will be adjusted to maximize outdoor air intake which will increase the amount of fresh air circulating throughout the rooms. Filters will be checked, cleaned and/or changed more frequently. ASHRAE and CDC standards are being consulted.

## **When will my student arrive/be dismissed from school?**

Currently, because of physical distancing, we are anticipating more students arriving via carpool than in regular years. Each school will develop a schedule for school drop off so that students do not arrive all at once, in order to make physical distancing, as well as smooth traffic flow

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possible. Please expect to work with your individual schools as they create schedules that will allow for the highest level of safety for all our schools.

## **Can we carpool with neighbors?**

Students may ride, and probably should ride, with students within their cohort. If families are carpooling together, all people in the vehicle should wear masks.

## **What happens if my child gets sick at school?**

If your child is not feeling well, please keep them home. If they become sick at school, your student will be seen by the nurse, assessed, and isolated until they are transported home. It is very important that you provide reliable contact information to ensure that your child leaves the school within 30 minutes.

## **What risk reduction measures have been put in place?**

Universal masking, hand washing/hand hygiene, indoor traffic patterns/distancing measures, and signage will all be implemented in order to mitigate any potential risk. As a community, we ask that parents review health documents and speak with your student(s) about the importance of masking and hand hygiene. We ask that parents educate their children about the importance of, and practice, helping their children to keep their hands away from their faces.

## **What are the guidelines for Dartmouth students?**

[QUARANTINE GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS, JULY 27, 2020](#)

## **What about after school clubs/opportunities (non-sport related)?**

At this time, we are not sure we have the staff available to clean our facilities for after school use. Allowed after school activities will be determined by the administration at each location on a case by case basis.

## **What about athletics? [UNDER REVIEW]**

Athletics are an integral part of the high school experience for many students and we are committed to keeping our students active and connected in the safest way possible. At this point some teams are engaged in physical training but a final decision on athletics has not yet been determined.

Sources of Information:

[NHIAA Return to Play Guidance Document](#)

[National Association of State High School Associations Guidelines for Opening Up High School Athletics](#)

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[NH Governor Sununu Reopening Guidelines and Status - Amateur & Youth Sports](#)