



2021-2022



Stamford Public Schools

EXCELLENCE IS THE POINT.

SPS

Safe Return to In-Person
Instruction and Continuity of
Services Plan

State-Level Priorities Revisited: *Reimagining Schools to Transform Students' Lives*

While all of the existing State-Level Priorities shaping the school community's work over the past year remain important, some have evolved. For American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER), the Connecticut Department of Education (CSDE) revisited the State-Level Priorities to reflect the collective call to think boldly and create transformative programs for the students of Connecticut.

Learning Acceleration, Academic Renewal and Student Enrichment: Advancing equity and access in education for students in Connecticut remain top priorities. Resources must focus on academic support and recovery to accelerate learning for our students, particularly those disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

Family and Community Connections: The complex issues brought about by the pandemic have made it clear that the success of schools, families and communities are interdependent and all have a stake in students' well-being. Investing in mutually beneficial school-family-community partnerships will not only support students to achieve their full potential, but also will strengthen families and stabilize communities.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health of the Students and of our School Staff: The school community experience during the pandemic has been one of collective challenge and trauma. We must be prepared to use strategic wraparound social, emotional and mental health supports to restore and successfully re-engage our school communities.

Strategic Use of Technology, Staff Development and the Digital Divide: Applying what we have learned during the pandemic requires careful consideration of the importance of student access to in-person learning and enrichment, balanced with the strategic use of technology to engage and expand learning opportunities. Resources should be allocated to maintain or upgrade access to technology and connectivity for the long term and to ensure that technology training and support is provided to students, school staff and families to maximize student outcomes.

Building Safe and Healthy Schools: Ensuring our school buildings are safe and healthy environments that enable all of our students to excel remains an important aspect of recovering from COVID-19. Resources may be used consistent with federal relief funding allowable uses as a means to continue facility repairs and improvements, such as improving ventilation and providing more space for distancing. Resources should continue to be allocated to support the physical health and safety of our students and staff (e.g., to ensure adequate personal protective equipment).

Commitment to Equity:

It is our collective responsibility to fulfill the priorities outlined on the following pages through an equity-focused lens. Access must be focused on our K-12 populations most disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, including students of color, students with disabilities, English learners, students experiencing homelessness, disengaged youth, youth in foster care, students from low-income families, students involved in the justice system, and/or who experienced barriers to remote learning or whose progress was disrupted.

Stamford Public Schools (SPS) Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan



Health and Safety Strategies:

Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks – Mask guidance

All students, staff and visitors are required to use a mask that completely covers the nose and mouth, when they are inside the school building or on school grounds, even when social distancing is maintained. Specific to outdoor settings, masks are not required, but students and staff will continue to wear masks in situations where students and/or staff are outdoors and in close contact while stationary (e.g., sitting/standing together in a group). Where students are actively moving around during recess or physical education activities, masks can be removed. Masks should also be worn when students are traveling to and from outdoor physical education classes and recess. Good hand hygiene will be emphasized before and after outdoor activities.

The Superintendent will continue to work with the Stamford Department of Health to determine whether to suspend or modify the requirements contained in the District's mask policy.

Physical Distancing

Under the guidance of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Department of Public Health (DPH), and the Stamford Department of Health, SPS will re-open for full in-person instruction with physical distancing of 3 feet.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

Proper hand hygiene continues to be one of the most effective mitigating strategies to combat COVID-19. This includes handwashing and hand sanitizing.

Contact Tracing – Quarantine Recommendations

We acknowledge that the gold standard for the duration of the quarantine period after close contact with a person who is confirmed to be infected with the SARS CoV-2 virus remains 14 days, and that this timeframe is optimal to lower the risk of transmission (as recommended by the CDC). Based on local circumstances and resources, the CDC has offered alternate options to shorten the length of quarantine. After reviewing these options and local considerations, the Stamford Department of Health recommends the following:

- Non-sports-related quarantine – students may return to school after 10 days without the need for a negative test, providing there are no COVID-19-associated symptoms throughout the 10 days. All students must be monitored for COVID-19-associated symptoms for a 14-day period.
- Quarantine related to sports – students may return to school after 10 days, provided a negative PCR test, which was not administered prior to day 8, and there are no COVID-19-associated symptoms throughout the 10 days. All students must be monitored for COVID-19 associated symptoms for a 14-day period. This quarantine

requirement will be applicable to all athletes, coaches, officials and other participants after a known exposure.

- Quarantines related to sports after out-of-state travel – athletes who travel out-of-state for more than 24 hours may return to play after 10 full days of quarantine without the need for a negative test providing there are no COVID-19-associated symptoms throughout the 10-day period. All athletes must be monitored for COVID-19-associated symptoms for a 14-day period.

Returning to play after being infected with the COVID-19 virus and after completing all appropriate isolation requirements, the Stamford Department of Health strongly recommends that parents have their child evaluated and cleared by their medical provider prior to returning to sports/physical activity. The decision to have a child seen by his or her medical provider is solely the parent /guardian’s decision.

Diagnostic COVID-19 Screening and Testing

Federal funding was provided to the state of Connecticut to implement a plan to use COVID-19 testing to identify students and staff for positive cases for COVID-19 in order to isolate or quarantine individuals and effectively limit transmission and possible outbreaks.

Efforts to provide Vaccinations

Continue to encourage teachers, staff, and age-eligible students (12 years and older) to consider being vaccinated as soon as possible.



Facilities

SPS will continue to create a safe and healthy learning environment for students and staff.

- Implement a cleaning and sanitizing protocol for during the day and evening.
- Post Health and Safety signage and provide training.
- Comply with State COVID-19 Guidelines for Ventilation.



Teaching and Learning

The goal of PreK-12: Phase VI SPS Return to 100% in-person 5-days-a-week model is to provide academic and social emotional support to students and families. Phase VI shows growth and expansion protocols for staff, students and families from earlier phases based on the changes from the CDC, the State of Connecticut and our Stamford Department of Health. This document highlights the protocols and procedures related to the elementary learning experience; some of these are updated while others are here as a reminder of protocols already in place. [SPS Phase V: Distance Teaching & Learning Plan](#) should continue to be referenced for all guidelines for Administrators, Teachers, Staff, Students and Families regarding goals, responsibilities and instructional practices.

In the event that SPS receives new updated guidelines, we will highlight these new changes and communicate with administrators to update their school communities.

Attendance:

Fully remote learning through the Distance Teaching and Learning Academy (DTLA) may remain an option for vaccine **age-ineligible (11 years old and under)** students.

The PowerSchool Power Teacher and the Parent Portal will be updated to reflect the return to full in-person instruction for 100% in-person learning, 5-days-a-week.

Teachers will have the option of marking students **Present** or **Absent** based on their physical presence in the classroom. Students that have received prior approval from an administrator for full remote instruction can be marked **Remote Present** or **Remote Absent** (vaccine **age-ineligible** students only).

Students under quarantine who meet the requirements for remote attendance will be marked **Remote Present Quarantine**. As always, parents/guardians should notify the school of any type of absence. The “Notes” section for attendance in PowerSchool can be used for documenting additional information regarding daily attendance. If a student does not meet the requirements for remote attendance will be marked **Remote Absent**.

Before- and After-School Clubs and Interventions In-Person: All safety protocols should be followed with students maintaining 6 feet of distance to the greatest extent possible. Attendance in these programs must be taken in the event that contact tracing is necessary. Each program must be submitted by the building principal and approved by the Associate Superintendent prior to the first day of the program.

English Learner (EL) Instruction: Whenever possible, all efforts will be made to keep students with the same EL teacher. The schedule may be adjusted to provide the appropriate level of support.

- EL teachers place students in small groups to offer differentiated instruction based on language development information
- Students will use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including masks, hand sanitizing, and plastic barriers where applicable

***Families/Visitors:** No family members or visitors are allowed in the buildings at this time.

***Field Trips/Field Days:** Field Trips/Field Days will continue to be suspended at this time.

Instructional Expectations: Staff will continue to use Google Classroom and the entire G-Suite platform to support instruction and communication.

Instrumental Music, Band, Sports: The State Music guidance should continue for Instrumental music and band. Any changes will be reassessed as updated guidance is released. High School Athletics will follow the guidance from the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic

Conference (CIAC), the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), and the City of Stamford Department of Health (DOH) for fall, winter and spring athletics.

***Parent Meetings:** Parent meetings and conferences, including PPT and 504 meetings, will continue to be held virtually. When health guidelines allow parents and visitors to return to schools, parent meetings and conferences will continue to be held virtually with the option for in-person meetings at the parent's or school's request.

Physical Classroom Setup:

- Desks will be separated as much as possible, with a minimum distance of 3 feet apart, measured from the middle of one chair to the middle of the next.
- Teachers may use collaborative grouping strategies to utilize this important instructional strategy, including mitigation techniques such as maintaining 3-foot distances, proper wearing of masks, use of dividers, hand sanitation, and frequent cleaning of high touch areas.
- Teachers will maintain a seating chart for contact tracing purposes.
- Barriers continue to be available for student use.

Recess:

- Administrators will share schedules for recess.
- Students and staff should wash hands or use hand sanitizer when leaving or entering the building.

Small Group Instruction for Literacy and Math:

- Teachers place students in small groups to offer differentiated instruction based on Middle of Year (MOY) data and teacher quantitative and qualitative data.
- Students will use PPE including masks, hand sanitizing and plastic barriers while in their small groups.
- Small-group work will be shorter than 15 minutes.
- Technology can be utilized for small group instruction.

Social Distancing: Students will continue to use social distancing practices in the classroom, hallways and building. These include:

- Arranging desks/tables as far away from each other as possible (minimum 3 feet) and students facing the same direction.
- Using appropriate PPE materials (masks, hand sanitizer, and plastic barriers).
- Mask breaks and lunch will be behind plastic barriers if students are less than 6 feet apart.

Intervention and Scientifically Research Based Intervention (SRBI): Whenever possible, all efforts will be made to keep to the Reading and Math Interventionist schedule to support our students. SRBI practices should continue while adhering to health and safety protocols (e.g., PPEs).

Special Education: Special education and related services will be based on the students Individualized Education Plan (IEP) as written. Adjustments to some student's IEPs may need to be made to accommodate health and safety guidelines (e.g., classroom social distancing) and other mitigation strategies (e.g., student cohorts). When such adjustments must be made to adhere to health and safety protocols, it must be documented in the Learning Model IEP

Implementation Plan. Special education and related services staff should work with school administrators to identify alternate sites for services when possible in order to ensure social distancing requirements.

- Least restrictive environment (LRE) will be considered within the context of public health requirements. Schools should examine how social distancing requirements and cohorting might impact a student's LRE and how to best balance the implementation of these mitigating measures while preserving the principles of LRE. There may be cases when it is not possible to maintain an individual student's LRE while also implementing social distancing requirements. In these cases, the school must justify the change in location of the service in The Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan.
- Communication: Communication should occur between school staff and DTLA families during the transition to in-person learning, 5-days-a-week to assist students with disabilities in transitioning back to the school building.
- Safety Protocols when Working Closely with Students: Special Education and related services staff, including special education paraeducators, will continue to implement health and safety protocols when working closely with students. Please see guidance developed in consultation with the Stamford Department of Health [Providing Support to Students amid COVID-19](#).
- Shared Equipment: Staff that service students in environments that require the sharing of equipment and materials (e.g., OT, PT, Resource) will continue to clean and sanitize equipment and areas as per health and safety guidelines.
- PPT meetings: Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings will continue in a virtual format. Staff that must use a conference room or other shared space must socially distance at a minimum of 6-feet apart. When health guidelines allow parents and visitors to return to schools, PPT meetings will continue to be held virtually with the option for in-person PPTs at the parent's or school's request.

***This decision will be reassessed at a later date dependent on guidance from Stamford Department of Health, DPH or CDC**



Family Engagement and Community

SPS will engage with our families and communities and foster opportunities for regular two-way communication.

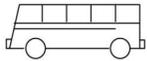
- Host Parent Pop-Up Webinars on reopening procedures and other important topics.
- Encourage all to abide by mitigating risk practices at home and in the community.
- Make information available to parents and families in multiple languages when possible.
- Utilize communication tools that provide opportunities for two-way communication between staff and families.



Social Emotional Learning and Mental Health Supports

Social Emotional Learning Supports: Teachers should plan activities that support opportunities for students to connect with staff and each other socially as we reopen schools in August. Some examples include:

- Bridge Programs prior to the official first day of the 2021-2022 school year.
- Getting to Know You Activities.
- Implementing structures such as greeting students at the door, check-ins, morning meetings, restorative practices, connection time, student advisory, etc.
- Opportunities for students to share their voice.
- Teaching skills and strategies on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship building and skills, and responsible decision-making.
- Support staff (i.e., psychologists and social workers) should introduce themselves, explain their roles to all students and should also be available as much as possible to support these activities.



Transportation

***Bus and Student Drop Off:**

- Students will be spaced at least 3-feet apart to the greatest extent possible, and signage will be used to reinforce social distancing and mask wearing. Students living in the same household will sit together on the bus without social-distancing requirements.
- Windows will be cracked on the buses to allow circulation, when possible.
- Families will be encouraged to use their own transportation to and from school, when possible.
- Schools will assign seats to assist with social distancing and contact tracing where applicable.

***This decision will be reassessed at a later date dependent on guidance from Stamford Department of Health, DPH or CDC.**



Nutrition

***Meal Service and Lunch:** The USDA Free meals for all students program has been extended through the 2021-2022 school year.

Students must follow appropriate social distancing protocols when eating breakfast/lunch in the cafeteria and/or classrooms. This includes two primary options:

1. Students seated 6 feet apart facing the same direction.
2. Students seated 3 feet apart must have a physical barrier.

- Students must be taught to eat behind the barrier while eating as their masks will be off at this time.
- Students must be assigned a consistent seat in the cafeteria and/or classroom.
- Students may either go through a meal serving line or may have meals that are delivered to the classroom.
- All meals will be available at no cost for all students and will continue to be served pre-packaged as Grab and Go Meals.
- All students will have access to Take Home Grab and Go Meals. These will be available to take home on Fridays to cover weekend meals.

***This decision will be reassessed at a later date dependent on guidance from Stamford Department of Health, DPH or CDC.**

Public Comment and Feedback Opportunities

Meeting	Date	Stakeholders
Listening Sessions	May 17, 2021	Teachers and Staff
Listening Sessions	May 17, 2021	Parents/ Community
Spanish Speaking Listening Sessions	May 27, 2021	Parents/ Community
District Leadership Team	June 17, 2021	Administrators and Administrative Interns
Principal Meeting	June 17, 2021	Principals
Farmer's Market Tables	June-October 2021	Community
Operations BOE meeting	June 22, 2021	BOE members
Long-Term Facilities	Saturday, June 12, 2021 Monday, June 14, 2021 Monday, June 21, 2021 Thursday, June 24, 2021 Saturday, June 26, 2021 Monday, June 28, 2021	Representatives BOF, BOR, Planning Board, and Operations BOE
Email Submissions	Recurring	All-
CORE Committee Meeting	May 24, 2021 June 7 and 21, 2021	
Survey	June 28- August 6	Families
Student Voice	TBD	

ARP ESSER III Funding

Description	\$	FTE	Notes
Academic Impact of Learning Loss	\$6,891,707	68	
Parent Facilitators	\$1,150,000	23	To help families as we return from COVID
TISS	\$2,750,749	21	Technology Integration Support Specialists
Restorative Support Facilitators	\$598,710	7	Restorative Support to help keep students in school
Elementary Class Size	\$425,000	5	To manage class sizes, particularly in K-2
Tech Coordinator	\$196,478	1	District-wide technology strategy and management
SRBI TOSA	\$92,162	1	
BCBA	\$95,000	1	Based on student needs
EL/PD TOSA	\$92,162	1	
Humanities TOSA	\$92,162	1	
STEM TOSA	\$92,162	1	
HS Teachers	\$510,000	6	
Partial Summer School	\$447,122		
Partial Building Subs	\$350,000		
Air Quality Projects	\$21,000,000		
3-year Support recommended by staff, students, families and community members	\$4,780,157		
Total	\$32,671,864	68	