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BRANFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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July 24, 2020

Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Commissioner of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Cardona:

I appreciate and thank you for your leadership during this extraordinary period in history.

Enclosed please find Branford Public Schools working copy of the CSDE Reopening Template. Since the issuance of Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together, district leaders, faculty, and community members have worked to devise concepts responsive to the requirements delineated in the document.

Our overarching planning consideration when developing the full in-person, hybrid and remote learning concepts was the safety and health of students and staff. With this said, we strongly recommend you consider allowing schools to re-open in a hybrid model. This model best allows the district to adhere to the principles of cohorting, social distancing, structural hygiene, and face coverings, while maximizing instructional time and reducing the likelihood of transmission of the virus.

We look forward to receiving further guidance and direction from your office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hamlet M. Hernandez", is written over a large, stylized, light-colored circular mark or watermark.

Hamlet M. Hernandez
Superintendent of Schools

Connecticut LEA Reopening Template

Connecticut State Department of Education • June 29, 2020



PLEASE NOTE: THE COMPLETED TEMPLATE BELOW WAS SUBMITTED TO THE STATE ON JULY 24, 2020. SINCE THAT TIME, CERTAIN ELEMENTS HAVE EVOLVED IN RESPONSE TO NEW INFORMATION AND FEEDBACK FROM THE STATE. THOSE ELEMENTS ARE **HIGHLIGHTED IN YELLOW** WITH ANY NEEDED UPDATE PROVIDED IN **RED**.

Date of Submission:	July 24, 2020
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The information within addresses the critical “REQUIREMENTS” identified by CSDE for each local educational agency’s (LEA) school reopening plan in accordance with the Connecticut School Reopening Plan — [*Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut’s Plan to Learn and Grow Together*](#). In developing the Branford Public Schools’ response, the District administrative team consulted the Connecticut School Reopening Plan on an ongoing basis.

BPS acknowledges the CSDE statement that “the submitted plans do not require approval by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) . . . and will allow the CSDE to share best practices and provide technical support for those LEAs who require it.”

The information in this document reflects the most recent guidance and requirements provided by the Connecticut State Department of Education, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Connecticut Department of Public Health. The BPS process for developing its reopening plan provides for input by school-based administrators, teachers and school staff, health and nursing staff, nutrition services, transportation services, boards of education, local health officials, municipal leaders, parents and other relevant stakeholders. Such input will continue to inform the work of the District as it moves forward.

Priorities

Fall Reopening Model

In planning for the 2020-21 school year, Branford Public Schools is committed to three priorities:

1. Promoting student and staff physical health and emotional well-being
2. Ensuring equity and access for all students to high quality, rigorous learning
3. Creating sustainability and capacity to respond to change

Among these three priorities, the physical health and safety of students and staff is paramount.

The BPS plan for reopening schools provides three scenarios for the return of students to school, each dependent on current on public local, regional, and statewide health data. Provisions for student and staff safety in the plan are based on the guidance provided by the Connecticut State Department of Education, Center for Disease Control, Connecticut Department of Public Health, and were developed with input from the East Shore Department of Public Health and the district's medical advisor.

In prioritizing the physical health and safety of our students and staff, Branford Public Schools was required to contend with significant challenges to any scenario requiring the in-person education of all students on a daily basis. One of District's elementary schools is a repurposed former high school. Lacking any uniformity of shape or size, its rooms do not necessarily allow for the minimum of three feet of social distancing called by the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), let alone the six feet that truly represents the state's goal of "maximizing social distancing." Under non-COVID conditions, another of the two remaining elementary schools currently utilizes every possible instructional space for student learning. Again, it is not possible to maximize social distancing in this school if all students are present. The District's intermediate school, which is the largest in terms of enrollment, is undergoing a full renovation. As a result, there are limited non-classroom spaces available for "repurposing," none of which provide adequate room to maximize social distancing with all students in the building at the same time. For the District, the costs of renting enough additional space and hiring additional personnel to accommodate all students for a full day of school each day are prohibitive.

Finally, the District uses a transportation provider that operates at maximum capacity for the three tiers of schools, particularly at the intermediate level, which is not only the district's highest enrolled school but has the school population that makes greatest use of school transportation. Even if some parents opt to drive their students to/from school, the maintenance of any social distancing will be a challenge on transportation buses and vans if they run at full capacity. In addition, the District is responsible for transporting Branford students who attend Branford private and parochial schools. This

obligation both increases the provider's "lift" and the health and safety risks involved with mixing cohorts of students.

The plan that follows reflects the District's refusal to compromise its efforts to ensure that, whenever possible, all mitigation efforts are taken to protect the health and safety of its students and staff.

Branford Public Schools plans for all students to resume their education in the fall in a manner that is consistent with public health data at the time and that prioritizes student and staff health and safety first. Should data support a full return to schoolhouses, Branford schools will provide daily instruction to all students who choose to attend, recognizing that some families may wish keep their children home as the safer option. According to preliminary survey results, between 18% and 38% of parents currently intend to exercise that option depending on the model with which BPS re-opens. As required by the State of Connecticut, the Branford Public Schools will provide remote learning for those students whose families choose to keep them home.

While individual schools will provide their students and families with the specific schedules associated with each model, Branford Public Schools will be prepared to educate its students in one of three models for learning, with the ability to transition smoothly from one model to another as necessary.

In a full in-person model of learning, students will attend school **in either an AM or PM session.** **This model for full in-person is no longer being considered.** This will allow all schools to maximize social distancing and for the separation of half of each school's student population from the other half. For the elementary and middle schools, this separation will be enhanced by the creation of student cohorts within the AM and PM sessions. Because it is not feasible to cohort students by bus route, it will be important to continue the other mitigation measures that are possible during transport. Holding split sessions will enable the District to reduce ridership on each transportation run, thus allowing students to maintain social distancing.

Should public health data require it, BPS is prepared to implement a hybrid model for learning. In this model, **elementary students will continue with split session schooling by cohort.** **This model has been revised.** However, one full day of remote learning will be incorporated into the weekly schedule to support local mitigation efforts. Students in grades 5 through 12 will attend school on alternating days by cohort, again with one full day of remote learning per week. Depending on individual needs and prevailing public health conditions, high priority students such as those receiving special education or English Learner services may be able to attend school for four days a week. Similar provisions will be made for other students who may need

additional support, such as disengaged learners and others identified through an analysis of school data.

When operating in a full in-school or hybrid model, Branford schools will follow current social distancing guidelines to the greatest extent possible, as well as those for health, safety & hygiene, facilities, and PPE. BPS will have in place monitoring, containment, and class cancellation plans designed to support school and district responses to changing health data at the local, regional, and state levels.

Should public health conditions require it, all Branford schools will provide fully remote learning. In this model, all Branford students will receive a combination of synchronous and asynchronous online learning scheduled in a way that aligns to the hybrid and in-person models. District and school-based teams will review data from the implementation of BPS Flex Learning in Spring 2020 in order to identify students who faced obstacles to accessing remote learning. These disengaged learners as well as students receiving special education and/or English learning services and those in the youngest grades will be a priority for support and continued in-person education in a hybrid model. The District will continue its successful practice from Spring 2020 of providing all students with a device that allows them to access online learning and with personal hotspots to families lacking internet service.

Temporarily Choosing Not to Participate

In July 2020, Branford Public Schools surveyed to determine the approximate percentage of families who may temporarily choose not to participate in in-school instruction. Recent data for approximately 75% of BPS students indicates that, depending on whether BPS opens as full in-person or hybrid schooling, as many as 38% of BPS students may choose not to participate in in-school instruction. However, the District is aware that as health conditions evolve, our families may choose to have their students not participate in the return to school at greater or lesser rates than self-reported.

Parents or guardians of students intending not to participate in the return to school will be required to follow a formal process to request access to remote learning and to rescind that request if later desired. BPS will use existing technology including Google Meet and the district's Livestream capability to provide for the continued education of these students. Depending on the number of students choosing not to participate in person, the District may be required to purchase additional technology resources and to repurpose current staff and/or hire additional personnel.

School Liaison, Communications Plans, and Data Collection

The COVID-19 Healthy and Safety Compliance Liaison for Branford Public Schools will be the Superintendent of Schools or Designee.

The District has recently updated its website and associated communication system. The new website allows families to translate posted information into their primary language and presents that information in full ADA compliance. The District will post its final reopening plan on the website in a way that allows families to utilize this technology. In addition, the BPS website uses an app that allows for notifications, text messages, and phone calls related to any website post. The District will use these systems to ensure that staff, students, and families receive timely notice of updates to or additional information about the transportation, meals, and the District's reopening plan, particularly when there are changes to policies, protocols, procedures, and health data.

Information affecting the entire District will be communicated through the Superintendent's office. Information to a specific school may be communicated through that school's principal and individual website, or through the Superintendent's office and District website, depending on the content. When appropriate and specific to classroom instruction, teachers may be asked to communicate directly with their students and families using available District technology.

In July 2020, BPS surveyed its families regarding their initial intentions for the return to school and school transportation. After the BPS reopening plan has been shared publicly, the District will solicit questions from families and host a Town Meeting in which to offer clarifications and address the concerns raised. A re-opening FAQ will be posted to the District website and updated regularly. In addition, a second survey will be sent asking parents to confirm their decision regarding whether their child will attend school, and if so, use District transportation. Parents who indicate that they will be keeping their children home will be directed to Central Office to complete the required paperwork. Those opting to provide their children with private transportation to/from school will similarly be required to complete formal paperwork so that the District can provide its transportation company with accurate records regarding school bus ridership.

In addition, the District has convened an ad hoc reopening advisory committee containing representatives from the school community, including families, staff, and students (see Appendix A). That committee began meeting in July and will continue to meet on a regular basis throughout the re-opening process to provide input and feedback regarding the plan and its implementation. Its advice informs the ongoing work of the Branford Administrative Council (see Appendix B) and District staff.

Operations Plan**Facilities**

For Branford Public Schools, the health and safety of our staff and students is the most important priority and will not be compromised. The District will work within existing space limitations to maximize school building layouts to ensure social distancing, achieving six feet when at all feasible. To the degree possible, classrooms will be configured to maximize the distance between teachers and students during instruction. In the coming month, building administrators will work closely with Facilities personnel to plan out the use of classroom space and to create model spaces for school personnel to view. Alternate spaces within each school building will also be used to support implementation of social distancing throughout the day.

To support mitigation efforts, [Stop the Spread signs](#), [prevention strategies reminders](#), and [handwashing posters](#) will be posted in English and other languages appropriate for the District's school population. Visual cues will be used to indicate appropriate social distancing in classrooms and other spaces and to encourage unidirectional traffic flow when possible. School leaders will reinforce these messages in school announcements and newsletters to staff, students, and families.

Following the latest guidance from the state, the District's school calendar will be adjusted to reflect the required 177 days for students. This will allow for additional staff days to be used to provide all staff with required training related to all required health and safety protocols and practices. This training will address social distancing, including the importance of maximizing space between teachers and students due to the risk of increased droplets during instruction, hygiene practices, relevant cleaning protocols, and other operational procedures such as those related to arrival and dismissal, lunch, recess, and other transitions. Such training may use a combination of online and in-person delivery, and attendance will be recorded to monitor staff participation.

Procedures directly impacting parents and guardians, such as those for arrival and dismissal, will be communicated to families by each school's principal, and additional training will be made available to interested families. Students' initial days of school will include training and practice in all necessary health and safety protocols. Each school's principal will also appoint a staff member responsible for ensuring that temporary personnel such as substitutes and any staff entering school outside of the established start of school also receive all required training. Building administrators will work with staff to ensure that additional review of the training is repeated as needed.

Daily Operations

Branford Public Schools will implement cohorts for students in grades K through 8 to minimize cross-contamination and simplify contact tracing. To the extent possible, cohorts will be maintained throughout the day. However, the District acknowledges that at certain times, such as but not limited to transportation to/from school and some specialized classes, cohorting may not be feasible. Similarly, the District's obligation to provide all eligible students with specialized services may require some mixing of cohorts when necessary. Any resumption of school sports will similarly require students from different cohorts to interact with each other.

In elementary schools, students in grades K through 4 will be placed into cohorts of approximately 8 to 10 students within each class. These students will stay within this cohort for all instruction and school activities and the cohort groups will be maintained regardless of whether the District is using a full in-person This is been revised. or hybrid model. At the intermediate level, students in grades 5 through 8 will be placed into cohorts of 10 to 13 within a grade level team, with some exceptions based on individual students' learning needs. Although it is not feasible to create cohorts in grades 9 through 12, the use of AM/PM sessions in full in-person schooling This has been revised and alternate day scheduling in a hybrid model will reduce the total population to which high school students are exposed.

Branford Public Schools will prohibit all visitors to school, unless such visitation is required to provide a legally mandated service, and will limit the use of school space before and after school only to those activities and programs deemed necessary. To the extent possible, all such activities and programs will be conducted in a way that adheres to the same policies and practices followed by BPS during the course of a school day. BPS has a thriving School-Age Child Care (SACC) program that typically operates in all three elementary schools, providing care for students in grades K through 5. However, the repurposing of spaces in those schools coupled with the need to implement split sessions will impact those operations. As a result, the District is partnering with the Town of Branford to explore alternate spaces. Should the SACC program be able to run, staff will be expected to adhere to all applicable BPS policies and practices, including those related to the mitigation of COVID-19.

Child Nutrition

Eligibility for child nutrition programs will be determined per usual. The district will continue to meet the requirements to provide students with the appropriate meal(s), breakfast and/or lunch, during in-school days. Extension of the SFSP into the school year, as was done in 2019-20, will allow meals to be offered by curbside pickup to students on days when they are not scheduled to be physically in school. All USDA regulations and policies will be followed. Accurate counting and claiming methods will be followed. Extension of the SFSP with associated waivers, to include and site eligibility for schools not

normally eligible for SFSP would greatly simplify counting and claiming and allow significantly increased teaching and learning time by eliminating individualized student recordkeeping. In the absence of SFSP extension, payment for reduced and full-price lunches will be made by online contribution only; in order to protect students and staff, cash payment will not be accepted. Cold, prepared lunches only will be available for elementary students. Some limited variety, including hot options may be available at the intermediate and high schools, in which case students will not touch anything and will be handed the complete lunch by cafeteria staff. All necessary precautions and provisions for students with food allergies will continue to be in effect, with any needed adjustments made via the Wellness Committee or, in the case of individual students, the 504 process.

Transportation

Low Transmission Risk

Under low transmission risk conditions, district transportation will operate at full capacity over the course of a school day. However, the District lacks access to additional bus assets. With the health and safety of our students as the top priority, BPS will work with its transportation provider to develop schedules that allow for operation of buses with reduced ridership in order to ensure adequate social distancing. **These schedules will involve the use of morning and afternoon sessions at each school. This has been revised.** All passengers will be required to wear face masks or cloth face coverings and to follow health and safety protocols for loading and unloading. Such protocols will require passengers to load into the bus from the back row to the front (where the first passengers onto the bus sit in the back row) and then unload the bus in a controlled manner upon arrival at the school from front to back by seat. If necessary to enforce passenger adherence to these mitigation efforts, bus monitors may be used, particularly on the runs with the highest ridership. The District further acknowledges that there may be situations in which students may not be able to strictly adhere to the loading and unloading protocols.

Moderate Transmission Risk

Under moderate transmission risk conditions, district transportation will operate at reduced capacity, with all non-family members sitting six feet apart using alternating diagonal seating. In addition district transportation will continue to follow the requirements and protocols from low transmission risk conditions. Again, bus monitors may be used if deemed necessary to enforce passenger compliance.

Health Practices and Protocols

Before the start of the school year, families will be provided information regarding procedures and protocols to be implemented at their child's school as part of the reopening process. Each school will subsequently schedule time at the start of the year to educate students in these procedures and protocols. Such education and training will be provided in a manner that is developmentally appropriate for the grade levels involved and may make use of video and in-person delivery of information.

The practices in which students will be trained will include

- [social distancing](#), including its application to interactions with friends and teachers,
- frequent [hand washing](#) and use of hand sanitizer,
- [use of cloth face coverings](#) that completely cover the nose and mouth (NOTE: No masks with exhalation valves can be used),
- [respiratory and cough etiquette](#), and
- cleaning of surfaces as appropriate.

Students will also be educated about the use of cohorts, where applicable, and the expectations for continuing mitigation practices on the bus.

Adequate supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethyl alcohol or 70% isopropyl alcohol (for staff and older students who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, cloth face coverings (as feasible), and no-touch/foot-pedal trash cans will be available for student use.

See Appendix C for more information.

Reporting Illnesses and Addressing Vulnerable Populations

All staff and/or students will be informed that they should tell their school if they are sick with [symptoms consistent with COVID-19](#), particularly if they had a known contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 and have also had contact with the school population. When the school receives information that a student or staff member is sick with symptoms consistent with COVID-19, it will be reported to the school nurse. The protocol for tracking and reporting such information to DPH is being developed in consultation with the East Shore Health Department.

As part of its reopening school communications, the District will also provide information to staff and families about [when to stay home](#), including instruction regarding self-assessment prior to leaving for school to identify fever and other possible COVID-19 symptoms, and communicate the expectation that symptoms consistent with COVID-19 require that the affected student or staff member stay home.

Social Distancing

While the exact changes will be building-specific, Branford Public Schools will reorganize instructional and other spaces to maximize social distancing between individuals to the greatest extent possible to reduce the transmission of the virus, consistent with public health guidelines at the time. Classrooms will be configured with the appropriate spacing and with visual cues to help teachers and students maintain that spacing. In addition, hallways and larger spaces will be marked in ways that indicate to staff and students how to remain socially distanced while transitioning or using a non-classroom area. Staff areas will be similarly reconfigured and marked.

Use of Face Coverings, Masks, and Face Shields

Branford Public Schools will require the use of [face coverings](#) for all students and staff when inside a school building, outside on school grounds in situations that do not allow adequate distancing, and riding District-provided transportation. Exceptions to this requirement will be made according to [CDC guidance](#) and may include anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance, or has a medical reason making it unsafe to wear a face covering. Students or staff seeking a medical exemption to wearing a face covering must provide documentation from a medical professional. Branford Public Schools will provide a mask to any student, staff member, or visitor to a school building who does not have one.

Health Monitoring Plan**Planning and Distribution of Information**

The Branford Public Schools will continue to review the most updated guidance on monitoring for COVID-19 and develop protocols consistent with the applicable recommendations. As of the date of this document, [CDC guidance](#) explicitly states that the CDC “does not currently recommend universal symptom screenings (screening for all students in grades K-12) be conducted by schools.” BPS will continue to consult with the East Shore Health Department and its medical advisor regarding the advisability of limited or universal screening.

BPS will actively monitor staff and student absenteeism. Should the screening of individuals manifesting symptoms that could be related to COVID-19 be necessary, District health personnel have been provided with touchless thermometers for their use. If an individual tests positive for COVID-19, the District will provide any needed collaboration to the East Shore Health Department, within what is allowable according to relevant privacy and health laws, so that ESHD may conduct contact tracing and determine the quarantining of individuals as necessary.

Containment Plan

Branford Public Schools will follow the system provided by the Connecticut Department of Public Health when making decisions regarding partial or full class-cancellation. Such decisions will be made in ongoing consultation with the East Shore Health Department and the District's medical advisor. The District's protocol for establishing and using an isolation room at each school is provided in Appendix D.

Should such use be necessary, the District will immediately coordinate its response with the local health department so that contact tracing may be implemented. Response teams within schools will include the school principal or designee, school nurse, and custodial staff responsible for ensuring the containment room is aired and cleaned as required after use. Students or staff who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 shall be dismissed from school in accordance with District requirements.

Cancellation of Classes, Remote Learning, and Reopening Plans

The District is currently awaiting guidance from the Connecticut Department of Public Health regarding specific community and school-based indicators for determining the thresholds for class cancellations and/or school or district closure. Local decisions regarding cancellation of classes or closure of schools for health and safety reasons related to COVID-19 will be made in consultation with local health department officials. In addition, all schools will be prepared to transition to remote learning in the event that the Superintendent, their designee, or state government suspends or cancels in-school classes for some or all participants. Such preparation will include class-specific plans for distribution of needed learning materials and educating students in the use of District platforms such as SeeSaw and Google Classroom and Meet to support the continuation of learning online. As stated elsewhere, the District will continue its practice of ensuring that all students have a technology device with which to engage in online learning and access to an internet hot-spot should it be necessary.

Future Planning for Remote Blended Learning

Branford Public Schools is prepared to provide hybrid and fully remote learning models as necessitated by evolving public health conditions. Such models include clear guidance for faculty and staff regarding individual roles and responsibilities and expectations for the participation of students that will be communicated to students and families in advance.

At the start of the year, teachers will prepare students to navigate online learning should it be necessary, including but not limited to the use of SeeSaw and Google Classroom. Teachers will use these online learning management systems to organize their instruction, regardless of model. This will allow for smooth transition of individual schools or the whole district into hybrid or remote learning should it become necessary. In addition, the hybrid model will use and maintain the cohorts created for full in-person learning as a primary means of organizing students.

In Spring 2020, families, students, and teachers completed feedback surveys regarding their experiences with Branford's online learning plan that was implemented as a result of the March 2020 COVID-19 closure of school. The information from those surveys has been incorporated into the planning process for both the hybrid and fully remote models of learning for the 2020-21 school year, particularly regarding clarity and consistency of expectations, provision of regularly scheduled synchronous learning, and multi-tiered frequent communication.

Before the start of the school year, Branford Public Schools families will receive access to school-specific schedules and expectations for hybrid and remote learning so that they can plan for a time when public health conditions require the implementation of one or the other.

Academics

Special Education

While reopening schools presents challenges for all students, students with disabilities may experience these challenges to a greater degree than their nondisabled peers. Students with disabilities bring diverse needs to the table, including unique health concerns. As such, these children are noted to be disproportionately impacted by changes in or disruptions to their educational routines and so require deliberate planning to assure their successful return to school. To address these complexities and support students with disabilities in the re-entry, the following is considered:

- The District is prepared to provide all students with disabilities with a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). When considering LRE, the District is paying particular attention to minimizing the number of students with whom a student interacts on any given day, particularly where such students are grouped into cohorts. In order to preserve cohorting as much as possible, planning and flexibility around service delivery options has been occurring and will continue in perpetuity with necessary stakeholders.
- Whenever possible and appropriate in light of student needs, students will receive their specialized instruction with his/her nondisabled peers in their general education classes.
- Whenever possible and appropriate, the provision of related services such as speech therapy, counseling supports, occupational therapy, etc. will occur outside the students' classroom to minimize exposure to students from other cohorts. The District will minimize instruction in related service offices/classrooms, but acknowledges that some students and situations may require use of a quieter setting than the hallway.
- The District shall conduct its IDEA-related evaluations/re-evaluations via face-to-face and/or remotely (where appropriate) so long as the reliability and validity of the evaluation instruments can be maintained. All in-person testing will comply with social distancing standards to the greatest extent possible and PPE donning requirements. Materials and environments will be sanitized between testing sessions using approved District sanitization protocols.
- Special education teachers and related service staff members will communicate with families of students with a high level of need to develop entry plans to assist these students in their return to their respective school buildings.

- Direct instruction and adult modelling as well as the use of social stories, visual cues/reminders, and other age-appropriate developmental strategies will be used to teach and reinforce social distancing and protective equipment protocols.
- Students participating in community-based transition activities will follow all workplace safety protocols identified by OSHA, CDC and East shore Health District and the State of Connecticut. Such protocols include, but are not limited to, social distancing, wearing face-masks, and following cleaning and hygiene processes.
- The District is aware some special populations may have difficulty following social distancing guidelines and/or require closer physical proximity to benefit from instruction, e.g., speech therapy, etc. Precautions will be in place for these circumstances, and shall include, but not be limited to:
 - Face shields may be worn by staff and students during, for example, speech and language therapy sessions, when face coverings/masks are not appropriate for the activity or interfere with the therapy's intent.
 - The District will provide face shields for students unable to wear face masks for developmental, safety or other health reasons. Sanitization processes will align to District protocols.
 - If students with disabilities are unable to access the District's reopening plan, the District will facilitate alternative means of reentry on an individual basis using underlying antecedents in collaboration with the functional needs and attributes of the affected student(s). Considerations shall include, in part, the student's present levels of performance, developmental and disability characteristics, and input from the student (as feasible) and his/her parents/guardians.
 - The District is aware there are high-risk students and/or families who may require continuing remote instruction on a full-time basis related to underlying health conditions, ongoing disease treatment, or residing with others who are at higher risk for contraction. In these cases, the District is prepared to provide individualized remote learning opportunities with the intent of implementing student IEPs to the fullest extent possible under the conditions.

The District will conduct any PPT meetings remotely where feasible and to the greatest extent possible in an effort to reduce the number of individuals entering the school buildings.

English Learners (ELs)

While returning to school will present challenges for all, English learners (ELs) may experience these challenges to a greater extent than their peers, as they transition back to a school setting from remote learning and continue to develop their English language proficiency concurrently while learning grade-level academic content.

To mitigate these challenges, Branford Public Schools will:

- Make every effort to provide support to ELs to allow them to access academic content
- Provide English Language Learners with supplemental language instruction while providing adequate scaffolds and supports to grade level content.
- Communicate with parents and guardians that have limited proficiency in English in a language they understand as required by Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. As during traditional schooling, communications during school closures due to COVID-19 may be provided through translation and/or interpretation.
- Provide ELs who are also identified as students with disabilities, supports for their EL needs, as well as supports for their disabilities.
- Establish systems for ongoing collaboration between TESOL teachers, EL paraprofessionals, and grade-level and content-area teachers to ensure that classroom teachers embed accessibility tools, such as scaffolds, explicit vocabulary instruction and differentiated supports into their grade-level and content-area instruction.
- Develop and maintain ongoing communication with families of ELs regarding remote learning and returning to their school building.
- Create procedures for supporting translation and interpretation for families with limited English proficiency regarding remote learning, instructional methods and returning to school.
- Establish a process for carrying out the required procedures for potential English learners and identified English learners including:
 - Ensuring adherence to the statewide identification procedures (i.e., Home Language Survey, English language proficiency screener);
 - Continuing to provide parental notifications (i.e., EL identification letter, EL continuation of services letter, EL exit letter);
 - Adhering to annual English language proficiency assessment requirements;
 - Offering translation and/or interpretation to parents/guardians with limited English proficiency.

Family and Student Engagement

Family Support and Communication

Branford Public Schools will continue to comply with all state and federal family engagement requirements (e.g., School Governance Councils and Title I requirements) during the COVID-19 pandemic. As noted above, BPS will use its communication system to provide families with clear and ongoing information about what to expect, during and prior to reopening. This includes, but is not limited to, guidance on the school protocols related to health and safety guidelines. The ad hoc reopening advisory committee containing representatives from the school community, including families, staff, and students, will continue to meet on a regular basis. In addition, the district will continue to survey families, staff, and students regarding implementation of its plan. Reopening plans will be available on the district website and will identify the District and school liaisons.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mental Health

Based on an analysis of data, BPS schools will implement plans to re-engage all students, staff, and families, with specific strategies to identify and support disengaged populations and individual students. These plans will include but not be limited to

- analyzing data from online learning in Spring 2020 to identify disengaged students,
- using multiple outreach methods, including phone calls, letters, and home visits, to re-engage those students,
- building social-emotional supports directly into all students' weekly schedules, and
- providing for additional layers of support to disengaged students, EL students, and special education students during times when the District is using hybrid or remote learning.

Recognizing that the pandemic has profoundly impacted students' lives, training will be provided to staff that helps them to develop a trauma-informed approach to student interactions and prepares them to identify issues related to abuse and neglect and comply with all mandated reporting requirements.

After-school programming

All Branford Public Schools programs receiving funding from CSDE will consult with CSDE for individual grant-specific guidance. Any after-school program held in the Branford Public Schools in 2020-21 during the current pandemic will follow the requirements outlined in this document, as applicable and feasible, including but not limited to requiring the use of face coverings that cover the nose and mouth, and maximizing social distancing.

Career And Technical Education

Shared equipment in school shop or lab classes will be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use. Teachers will instruct students for the appropriate protocol to clean and disinfect equipment they use, and appropriate cleaning supplies will be available to each classroom.

Staffing and Personnel**Certification and Personnel Planning**

Branford Public Schools will continue to comply with legal and regulatory requirements related to personnel, including but not limited to the EEOC guidance related to the ADA and the COVID-19 pandemic, and is in the process of assessing how to engage a full roster of staff, given federal and state labor requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Branford Public Schools is working with its substitute teacher provider to determine the feasibility and means of supporting the needs of schools.

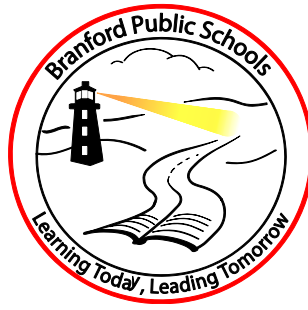
Professional Development

Staff days prior to the start of the school year will be used to provide training that covers signs and symptoms of COVID-19, Standard Public Health protocols, Hygiene Practices, PPE usage, reporting illnesses, and supporting SEL. Such training will be mandatory for staff and attendance will be taken to track participation. In addition, the Branford Public Schools plan has professional learning time built into its schedule and that time will be used as needed for ongoing training as changes occur in recommendations and public health data.



BPS REOPENING AD HOC COMMITTEE

NAME	ROLE
Hernandez, Hamlet	Superintendent of Schools
Alexander, Jennifer	District Parent
Barbash, Bob	Custodial
Carbone, Joe	Facilities/Custodial
Cicarella, Charles	Administrator
Collins, Marc	Custodial
Cowey, Sue	Teacher
Duong, Ashley	Student
Ellis, Roseanne	District Parent
Hales, Cathy	Talent Services
Jackson, Kent	District Parent
Johnson, Erik	Custodial
Kennedy, Sean	Teacher
Laing, Rosalind	Nurses
MacDougall, Sarah	Teacher
Mahraj, Bobby	District Parent
Marinero, Ashley	Administrator
McCarthy, Erin	Teacher
Mingrone, Donna	Administrator
Neagle, Barbara	Transportation
Neel, Don	Administrator
O'Connor, Jim	Administrator
Osgood, Lauren	Teacher
Panagoulas, Lee	Administrator
Polemini, Rob	Teacher
Pscucilla, Michael	Health Department
Reynolds, Raeanne	Administrator
Sexton, Rachel	Administrator
Skultety, Lauren	Administrator
Smith, Vani	Student
Spigness, Laura	Support Staff
Torelli, Melinda	Transportation
Tureene, John	Food Services
VanWinkle, Pam	Paraprofessional
Verzella, Lisa	Teacher
Volkens, Kim	Teacher
Wilde, Melanie	School Based Health
Young, Dr. Richard	Staff Physician
Zolvik, Kim	District Parent



BPS ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

NAME	ROLE
Hernandez, Hamlet	Superintendent of Schools
Sexton, Rachel	Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Neel, Don	Chief Operating Officer
Anaclerio, Peter	Walsh Intermediate School Assistant Principal
Aviles, Dianibel	Coordinator Related Services
Briganti, Joe	Branford High School Assistant Principal
Byrd, Stephanie	Branford High School Assistant Principal
Cicarella, Charles	Director, Student Services
Clark, Maria	John B. Sliney School Principal
Cucchiarelli, Doug	Walsh Intermediate School Assistant Principal
Dadio, Dianne	Branford High School Dean of Students
Goeler, Robin	Mary T. Murphy School Principal
Marinero, Ashley	5-12 Curriculum Coordinator
Mingrone, Donna	Technology Director
O'Connor, Jim	Mary R. Tisko School Principal
Panagoulas, Lee	Branford High School Principal
Reynolds, Raeanne	Walsh Intermediate School Principal
Skultety, Lauren	PK-4 Curriculum Coordinator

BPS Reopening Protocols Summary

In planning for the reopening of schools, the health and safety of students and staff is the highest priority for the District. The following summary of protocols is provided for ease of reference.

Entering the Facility:

- Visitors entering a BPS school will be limited. Parent/guardian appointments and meetings are strongly encouraged to occur virtually but may be conducted in-person on a case-by-case basis. When an in-person meeting is considered essential, it will be scheduled by appointment through the main office.
- Visitation will be by appointment only unless there is an emergent situation (Appointments can be made by contacting the main office of the school.)
- Unless there is a medical issue that prevents someone from wearing a mask, all persons within a facility are required to wear a face covering.
- Parents/Guardians will have access to specified areas for pick-up and drop-off of students.
- If an in-person meeting is needed, parents/guardians must make an appointment and follow the visitation protocols of the school, including the expectation that any planned visit will be cancel should the parent/guardian experience symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- Parents/Guardians will be required to sign in at the main office and wait to be directed by school personnel.
- Deliveries are to be left on the loading dock and brought into the building by BPS staff.
- Repair workers are to sign in at the office, report to the custodian and must wear the appropriate PPE.
- All non-building staff must sign in at the main office and complete the COVID 19 tracing log sheet. This includes other BPS staff members & parents/guardians.
- If a possible COVID 19 situation arises, staff must contact the administrator and the nurse.
 - Symptoms to be aware of include:
 - Fever or chills.
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell

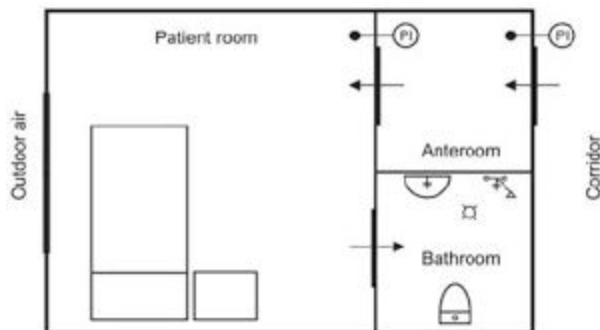
Branford Public Schools Isolation Room Specifications and Operating Protocols

PART 1. Standard Isolation Room at normal atmospheric pressure

Public schools do not have an Airborne Infection Isolation Room (AIIR) (See PART 2, below). In the absence of an AIIR, the CDC recommends:

- (a) Develop triage and signage systems to identify students with known or suspected infections that require Airborne Precautions. *In other words, students / staff suspected of coronavirus infection should be diverted to an isolation room, rather than to the principal nursing station, to avoid contamination of other students and staff.*
- (b) Admit student with suspected airborne infection to the isolation room and close the door. Instruct student with suspected airborne infection to wear a surgical mask and observe Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette.
- (c) The nurse should don PPE (personal protective equipment) including NIOSH-approved N95 respirator in the anteroom, enter the isolation room, and examine the student. The student then returns to class, or, is discharged to the care of parent / guardian. Minimize student's egress through the school building. Student should depart via the closest exit.
- (d) Once the patient leaves, the room should remain vacant for the appropriate time, generally one hour, to allow for a full exchange of air. The room is then cleaned.
- (e) Note: a staff member should be available who can remain in the Isolation room with a student.

Figure 1. Standard Isolation Room at normal atmospheric pressure (non AIIR)



<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/infection-control.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/isolation/index.html>

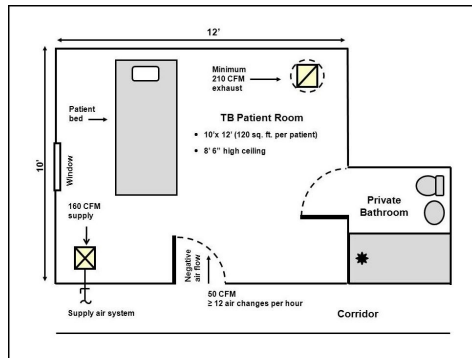
Preparing Your Office or Clinic for Potential COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Patients

<https://www.sfcddp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Preparing-Clinic-for-COVID19-14Feb2020.pdf>

PART 2. Airborne Infection Isolation Rooms (AIIR)

Hospitals and Emergency Departments often have an AIIR to isolate patients with suspected infections which require Airborne precautions. AIIR rooms have negative pressure (air from the corridor is drawn into the room and then vented to the outside of the facility). Both an air supply and an air exhaust are required.

Figure 2. AIIR Room



REFERENCES

https://www.cdc.gov/tb/webcourses/course/chapter7/7_infection_control_7_infection_control_program_airborne_infection_isolation_aii_room.html

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/ep/surge/infectious/airbornenegative.pdf>

- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea.
- The person has had close exposure to anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or traveled to a high exposure area.

Within the Facility:

- Staff/Students will wash hands with soap and water for 20-30 seconds as often as required.
- Staff/Students will wear a face covering at all times when staff or students are moving throughout the school building, or in places where social distancing cannot be maintained unless there is a documented exemption. Per CDC guidance, masks should not be required for those who have documented trouble breathing; or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance; or for anyone who has a medically documented reason making it unsafe to wear a face covering.
- All BPS schools will provide a mask to any student or staff member who does not have one.
- All BPS schools will have a protocol to provide "mask breaks" during the day to support staff and student needs.
- Signage will be placed throughout all BPS buildings reminding students and staff to wash hands before and after using the restroom, to wear PPE, signs of COVID 19, Cough & Sneezing and sign in signs at all entrances.
- All water fountains will be shut off, and water will be made available to students at all BPS schools and programs in a way that will maximize health and safety.
- Elevator use will be limited, and PPE must be used in the elevator if more than one person needs to use it – i.e., Staff & Student.
- Floor markings will be installed to establish movement patterns around the school to maintain social distancing.
- All classroom furniture will be configured to maintain social distancing to the maximum extent possible.
- Extraneous furniture, equipment, and other materials will be removed from the classroom.

Cleaning & Disinfecting:

- Hand hygiene:
 - Reinforce to staff and students the importance of regular handwashing with soap and water for at least 20-30 seconds.
 - Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers at every school entrance and in classrooms.
- Respiratory hygiene:
 - Encourage all staff and students (via signage and verbal reminders) to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of the elbow.
 - Staff and students will be required to wash and/or sanitize their hands after they sneeze or cough.
- All bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected twice a day with CDC approved cleaner and sanitizer and noted on the log.
- Physical distancing:
 - Multi-stall bathrooms should only be used by those who feel well.
 - A separate bathroom will be designated at each school for any student that becomes ill (see Isolation Room design in Appendix D)
 - In multi-stall shared bathrooms, signage will be put in place to maximize social distancing.
 - Bathrooms will be assigned to students by zone, and students will only use their designated bathrooms.
 - The number of persons that can use the bathroom while maximizing social distance determines bathroom occupancy; therefore, it will vary based on the size and layout of each bathroom.
- CDC Disinfecting link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- Deep disinfecting will be scheduled after school hours to minimize exposure to children.
- Spot disinfecting of high-touch surfaces will be performed throughout the day. All staff, as required, will perform these duties. The surfaces include but not limited to door handles, elevator buttons, equipment, handrails, etc.

Training:

- All BPS students and staff will participate in training that covers social distancing, cleaning protocols, PPE use, and hygiene practices.

Protocols developed from information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Connecticut Department of Public Health, and Connecticut State Department of Education.