This document identifies the critical "REQUIREMENTS" needed for each local educational agency (LEA) or school operator to submit a reopening plan in accordance with the Connecticut School Reopening Plan — ***Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together***. In providing the LEA's response, it is imperative to work through the Connecticut School Reopening Plan, which elaborates on certain requirements with additional considerations and also includes "GUIDANCE" to consider while developing the unique local approach.

While the submitted plans do not require approval by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), plans will be retained. Receipt and consideration of the plans will allow the CSDE to share best practices and provide technical support for those LEAs who require it.

LEAs should submit a reopening plan that clearly and specifically addresses the requirements outlined in each section below. The CSDE recommends plans be developed inclusive of, but not limited to 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.

Additional Details:

Plans should be submitted in font size no greater than 11pt, in PDF format.

Due: July 24, 2020

Submit to: SDE.REOPEN@ct.gov

Include the following completed table at the top of your submitted plan:

Date of Submission:	
LEA Name:	
Reopening Plan Point of Contact:	
Contact Email:	
Contact Phone:	
LEA COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison:	
Liaison Email:	

If schools plan to iterate and/or improve their plan as result of newly released guidance and/or changes in their local communities, those should also be submitted to the CSDE at the email listed above.

This document reflects preliminary guidance and considerations as of the date published, and should not be interpreted as mandates, except where there is indication of a requirement. The Connecticut School Reopening Plan — *Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together* may be updated due to the rapidly changing response to this pandemic emergency and ongoing updates from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or changes to federal and state orders and guidance. The Connecticut State Department of Education will provide any such updates to Superintendents.

Clearly and specifically detail how you will address each critical **"REQUIREMENT"** listed below in your plan. While crafting your responses, it is imperative to work through the Connecticut School Reopening Plan which elaborates on certain requirements with additional considerations and also includes **"GUIDANCE"** to consider while developing a unique local approach.

Priorities
Fall Reopening Model
- LEAs should plan to have all students, in all districts, return to schoolhouses for full-time instruction at the beginning of 2020-2021, so long as public health data continues to support this model. This model will be supported with more intensive mitigation strategies and specific monitoring, containment and class cancellation plans.   - In addition to full-time instruction plans as indicated above, LEAs must be prepared to modify their plans to support a partial reopening or to allow for scaling back at a future date if the public health data changes.   - Identify gaps and develop action plans for reopening that specifically address inclusion, equity, and access for all learners with strategies and clearly defined action steps.
Temporarily Choosing Not to Participate
Plan for parents and students who may temporarily choose not to participate in the return to school.
School Liaison, Communications Plans, and Data Collection
- Designate an employee to serve as a COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison. This designated person will be responsible for engaging with students, parents, faculty, staff, and administrators to answer questions or concerns about health and safety requirements regarding COVID-19 concerns (e.g., school nurse).   - Put systems in place to communicate the most up to date policies and protocols related to the considerations herein, for staff, students, and families.   - Make communications plans available in relevant languages of families in the community, as well as accessible to those with visual and/or hearing impairments.   - Ensure the development of plans for ongoing two-way communication with the school community (staff, families, and students) about any new policies and/or protocols *prior* to reopening, any time there is a significant policy change, and upon re-entry if a school closes temporarily during the year.   - Develop expectations around frequency of communication, and ensure detailed updates are provided any time critical information regarding policies, protocols, or health data changes.   - Put in place a plan for how the community will be notified of any changed policies, need to cancel classes, or other changes or restrictions.   - Make plans easily accessible, including but not limited to being visible on the main landing page of the LEA and school websites.   - Prioritize gathering information from families prior to reopening. Collect information from families to properly plan for resuming classes in the fall.   - This should align with the forthcoming CSDE District Reopen Survey

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Operations Plan
Facilities

- Maximize social distancing between student workstations, achieving 6 feet when feasible, when determining the classroom layout.
- Where necessary, assess other space that may be repurposed for instruction in the school, in municipal or other community space, or if the school will require additional modular space.
- Maximize space between the teacher and students due to the risk of increased droplets from teachers during instruction.
- Ensure all signs and messages related to stopping the spread are accessible for students with disabilities and in languages appropriate for the school population.
- Identify the training needs of staff related to health and safety protocols; perform such training prior to the first day of classes.
- Consider having training days and days to practice new protocols with staff only prior to having students enter the building.
- Plan an in-person or online training that includes: social distancing; cleaning protocols; and hygiene practices. Require attendance by all students and staff, and make available to families who are interested. Consider repeating this training during the first months that school reopens, and as needed.
- Ensure training is provided to substitutes or others who may enter the school outside of the first day or typical calendar start.

Daily Operations

- Implement the key strategy of establishing stable cohorts within the school population, when feasible. Placing students in cohorts is **strongly encouraged** for grades K-8, and **encouraged where feasible** for grades 9–12.
- Develop consistent policies to address when clubs, before- and after-school programs, or other voluntary groups may be allowed to use school space. Include ways to safely allow access for before- and after-school and childcare programs.

Child Nutrition

- Schools and institutions that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program, and Special Milk Program (SMP) as applicable, must continue to determine eligibility for and make available free and reduced-price meals and snacks and free milk to all eligible students.
- Schools and institutions must comply with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) regulations and policies for school meals and milk including the meal pattern requirements.
- Schools and institutions that participate in the NSLP are required to claim meals/milk provided to eligible students using accurate counting and claiming methods.

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Operations Plan, continued

Transportation

Low Transmission Risk

- Plan to operate at full capacity or close to while maximizing health and safety protocols, as well as considerations outlined in the plan.
- Require passengers to wear a face mask or cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth during transit, prior to boarding the bus, and must be kept in place until they are completely off the bus.
- Passengers should 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.

Moderate Transmission Risk

- Plan to operate at significantly reduced capacity while maximizing health and safety protocols, as well as considerations outlined in the plan.
- Bus passengers should be spaced with family members sitting together and non-family members should be spaced 6 feet apart utilizing alternating diagonal seating.
- Require passengers to wear a face mask or cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth during transit, prior to boarding the bus, and must be kept in place until they are completely off the bus.
- Passengers should 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.

Health Practices and Protocols

- Ensure that students are educated and engaged in the new expectations related to all public health policies and protocols. As part of this requirement, assess the best approach to communicating the information for the age group, and plan to set aside time at the beginning of the school year, as well as frequent reminders, to review the new policies and protocols.
- Familiarize all participants of the standard public health practices used to prevent the spread of diseases. These practices include, but are not limited to:
    - social distancing,
    - frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer,
    - use of face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth,
    - respiratory and cough etiquette, and
    - enhanced cleaning/disinfection of surfaces.
- Provide 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.

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Health Practices and Protocols, continued
Reporting Illnesses and Addressing Vulnerable Populations

- Instruct students and staff to inform the school if they are sick with COVID-19 related symptoms, particularly if they had a known contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 and have also had contact with the school population.
- Develop consistent protocols for information reporting, and a point person to appropriately receive and safeguard this information, such as the school nurse, district nursing supervisor, or principal.
- Educate staff and families about when to stay home. Schools should properly communicate the content of this or any updated guidance.
  - Instruct staff and students (or their parents and guardians) to perform a self-assessment prior to leaving for school to identify fever and other possible COVID-19 symptoms. Communicate this expectation and provide parents with reminders about the symptoms consistent with COVID-19 that require keeping their students at home.
- Establish and communicate school-wide sick protocols, including signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and temperature thresholds requiring students or staff to stay home.

Social Distancing

- Assist staff and students to maintain maximum social distancing between individuals to reduce the transmission of the virus per the public health guidelines at that time.

Use of Face Coverings, Masks, and Face Shields

- Adopt policies requiring use of face coverings **for all students and staff when they are inside the school building, with certain exceptions listed below**.
  - For anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance, face coverings and masks should not be required, per CDC guidance.
  - For anyone who has a medical reason making it unsafe to wear a face covering, masks should not be required.
- Be prepared to provide a mask to any student or staff member who does not have one.

Health Monitoring Plan
Planning and Distribution of Information

- Include in the LEA reopening plan written protocols for monitoring of symptoms that could be related to COVID-19, with the goal of decreasing the risk of spreading or contracting the virus and maintaining oversight related to the pandemic while complying with relevant privacy and health laws.

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Containment Plan

- *The Connecticut Department of Public Health will be providing a tiered system to assist leaders and define the decision-making approach should partial or full class-cancellation become necessary. Anticipate this will be available at the time decisions will need to be made related to containment and possible school class cancellations.*
- Include in the LEA reopening plan written protocols for containment and immediate response if an individual has signs or symptoms of COVID-19, there is a known exposure, or a member of the school community has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19. The purpose of containment plans are to decrease the risks of spreading COVID-19, and shall include the following:
  - Immediate coordination with the local health department, including being ready to comply with requests for information from the local health department to assist with contact tracing.
  - Identification of a response team within the school and LEA with specific responsibilities.
  - Consideration of what signs and symptoms exhibited by students or staff would require their immediate dismissal from school; for what period of time; and conditions for their re-admittance to school.
- Identify an "isolation room" (besides the health office) to accommodate students who exhibit symptoms consistent with COVID-19 until a parent or guardian arrives.
- Create a consistent policy for dismissal of students or staff who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 and must be dismissed from school.

Cancellation of Classes, Remote Learning, and Reopening Plans

- *The Connecticut Department of Public Health will be developing specific community and school-based indicators to assist leaders and define the appropriate decision-making approach.*
- Develop a plan for school class cancellations and reopening to be implemented in the event that the superintendent, their designee, or state government suspends or cancels in-school classes for some or all participants.
- Notify and consult with the CSDE immediately if the LEA is contemplating class cancellations.
- Include a communication plan and clear policies for faculty and staff regarding individual roles and responsibilities in the event of a shutdown occurring during the school year.
- Prioritize ongoing educational opportunities when drafting the plan for shutdown. Materials for continuity of learning must be made available to allow for school sessions to continue remotely.

Future Planning for Remote Blended Learning

- Be prepared to provide remote blended learning opportunities immediately upon cancellation of in-school classes.
  - Consider implementing a plan to gather feedback from families, students, teachers, and leaders on experience with remote learning. Incorporate any feedback into a revised remote learning plan and incorporate into hybrid learning model.
- Develop a plan for extended absences and communicate it with parents or guardians in the event of a second extended closure.

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Academics

Special Education

- Prepare with the understanding that there has been no waiver of requirements under the IDEA for provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). During COVID-19 school closures, schools were required to provide FAPE consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students, as well as those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students. Schools may not have been able to provide all services in the same manner that they are typically provided. Federal disability law allows for flexibility in determining how to meet the individualized needs of students receiving special education services.

- Treat students eligible for special education and other special populations as general education students first. Guidance and policies related to school reopening plans apply to all students, including students with special needs who qualify for individual education programs under the IDEA and accommodation plans for eligible students under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If students with disabilities are unable to access the reopening plan as designed, facilitate individualized and alternative means of re-entry based upon student need, present levels of functioning, developmental levels, and student/parent input. Consider blended learning schedules if needed.

- Do not make programming decisions based on a student's disability category. However, the nature and/or severity of a student's disability may require unique considerations. Protocols should consider the student's developmental level and skills.

- Address mask and face covering use for the population of special education students, including cases where masks may need to be removed to provide appropriate services, and the approach to implementing any other possible mitigating strategy, including but not limited to maximum social distancing.

English Learners (ELs)

- Understand that like all other students, ELs are entitled to FAPE. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IV, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (1974) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) provide guidance on the services to which ELs are entitled. ELs must have access to the general education curriculum as well as to a supplemental language instruction education program. During school closures due to COVID-19, ELs continue to be entitled to receive their supplemental EL instructional program in addition to their general education program of mainstream, grade-level and content-area instruction. Such language instructional education programs may consist of a range of services, including bilingual education, English as a Second Language (ESL), Sheltered Instruction and others. When returning to school buildings, language instruction education programs must continue.

- Comply with the requirement that eligible students in bilingual mandated districts are offered bilingual education programs. During COVID-19, school districts that are mandated to provide bilingual education remain required to offer a bilingual program to eligible students who have opted into the program. While program implementation may be altered during COVID-19 as compared to traditional in-building schooling, students in bilingual programs are still entitled to receive native language support as part of their school's designated bilingual program model. As with other language instruction education programs, when returning to traditional schooling, bilingual programs must continue.

- 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. During COVID-19, these dually identified students must continue to receive these supports. As in times with traditional schooling, dually identified students should have their language needs represented in their annual meetings about their IEP.

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Family and Student Engagement

Family Support and Communication

- Comply with all state and federal family engagement requirements (e.g., School Governance Councils and Title I requirements) during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Prepare to provide families with clear and ongoing communication 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.
- Continue to engage with families and students as the reopening moves forward to ensure they are informed and have the ability to provide feedback.
- Make reopen plans available on the LEA website, accessible, and clearly identify the school liaison.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mental Health

- Develop a detailed plan to reengage all students, staff and families. Particularly identify strategies to identify and engage populations and specific students that have been disengaged.
- Prepare staff to identify issues related to abuse and neglect in the context of the pandemic and comply with all mandated reporting requirements.

After-school programming

- Programs receiving funding from the CSDE through the State After School, Extended School Hours (ESH) and 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC) programs, consult with the CSDE for individual grant-specific guidance.
- Follow the requirements outlined in this document, as applicable, 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

- Develop a plan for cleaning and disinfecting shared equipment in the shop or lab, before and after each use.

Staffing And Personnel

Certification and Personnel Planning

- Prepare with school human resources and board counsel 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.
- Assess how to engage a full roster of staff, including potential substitute plan, and whether stipends or changes in substitute pay is required to support the needs of the school.

Professional Development

- Prioritize mandatory training for staff, before the beginning of the school year, that covers signs and symptoms of COVID-19, Standard Public Health protocols, Hygiene Practices, PPE, Reporting Illnesses, and supporting SEL. Plan ongoing trainings as changes occur in recommendations and public health data.