

Frequently Asked Questions Related to School Reopening

Q: Will Unified School District #1 be opening for full time, in person learning in the fall?

- Based on the guidance issued by State Department of Education and the Department of Public Health in alignment with the Indicators for Learning Models below, Unified School District #1 will be opening on September 8th with full time, in person learning. New COVID-19 cases will be examined daily to determine if a transition to hybrid or full remote learning is needed.

Safely Reopening Schools

Indicators for Learning Models

Risk Level	Leading Indicator	Secondary Indicators		
	New COVID-19 Cases (7 day avg. per 100k pop.)	Percent Test Positivity	New COVID-19 Hospital Admissions (7 day avg. per 100k pop.)	Percent COVID-like illness hospital ED visits
Low (Favors more in-person learning)	<10	Trending down to flat No statistically significant changes		
Moderate (Favors hybrid learning)	10 - 25	Trending flat to upward Any statistically significant changes		
High (favors remote learning)	>25	Trending upward Consistent statistically significant changes upward		

Q: What will “Hybrid Learning” look like?

- Unified School District #1 has developed a reduced enrollment model pending a change in health and safety guidance that impedes the full return of students to school. A reduced A/B schedule will be enacted to minimize numbers of students in the school buildings on a given day and limit class sizes to support enhanced social distancing. This plan identifies A Day Students and B Day Students who alternate on A and B days. In this model, students will attend school onsite every other day with work being sent to the cottages for remote learning on distance days. In this model, students will receive in-person instruction on the days they are in school and participate in asynchronous learning on the days they are in their units.
- The education team will collaborate to ensure content aligned, grade level work is being provided to students.
- Progress monitoring and feedback mechanisms have been created to support student learning and needs.

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Q: Will masks/face coverings be worn?

- USD #1 requires the use of face coverings in accordance with CDC, State Department of Education, and Connecticut Department of Correction guidelines for all students and staff when they are inside the school building, with certain exceptions.
- Face masks must cover the mouth and nose.
- Face shields, while not required, may be worn by staff in addition to face masks.
- Staff working with students who are not wearing face coverings due to one of the exceptions below and also cannot maintain social distancing will be provided increased personal protective equipment, including but not limited to medical grade masks and disposable gowns.
- Exceptions for mask wearing:
 - If students or staff are eating, drinking, engaged in physical activity or outside, they are permitted to remove their masks, but should make efforts to maintain social distancing.
 - For anyone who has a medical reason making it unsafe to wear a face covering, a mask should not be required.
 - 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.

Q: How will teachers enforce the requirement to wear masks by students?

- USD #1 will communicate Connecticut Department of Correction and district expectations and enforcement strategies for face coverings to all students and staff.
 - All stakeholders will be informed of the requirement for all students to wear masks in school.
 - Students not wearing a mask in an appropriate manner will be reminded by a staff member to wear their mask.
 - Students without a mask will be provided one.
 - To protect public health and safety, students who refuse or repeatedly exhibit non-compliant behavior will be counseled on the expectations and requirements of wearing face coverings. Progressive discipline may be utilized. Should the behavior persist, said students will be required to participate in the district's distance/remote learning program.

Q: Will there be any time when students (or staff) can have mask breaks?

- Yes. While this is not a state requirement, the guidance allows school districts to determine when/where it is feasible.
- We are planning to implement mask breaks when social distancing recommendations can be supported.

Q: What is the plan if someone in school is suspected of having COVID-19?

- Each school has collaborated with facility leadership to establish a response plan that aligns with the Connecticut Department of Correction protocols. Each school's

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plan will be shared with education staff as part of the reopening professional development plan.

Q: What will the school do if there is a confirmed case of COVID? When will a single school close down versus closing schools within the whole district?

- A decision to change the model of instruction that students receive will be made in collaboration with the Unified School District #1, the Connecticut State Department of Education, and the Connecticut Department of Correction.

Q: What will Remote Learning look like, if one or all schools had to close?

- When in full remote learning, the school will return to the connected learning/remote learning model that was enacted when the Governor issued the school closure guidance in March 2020.
- Unified School District #1 will collaborate daily with custody leadership to determine health and safety trends that may indicate an uptick in COVID-19 cases. Each facility's COVID's rate will be calculated daily to assist in determining whether school should be held or cancelled.
- Schools will follow the directives given from the Governor, Commissioner of the Department of Education, and the Department of Correction.

Q: What will Remote Learning look like if a parent opts to keep his/her child, or an adult learner opts to learn from his/her unit?

- If a parent or an adult learner opts for remote learning, the school will reinstate the current distance learning model. This model includes content aligned, grade level work, personalized contact from members of the students' education team, and weekly lessons and feedback. Due to cohorting, class sizes, staffing, and continuity of learning, students will remain in distance learning until the end of the semester/marking period for consistency of instruction.

Q: How will students shift from in-school learning to hybrid or remote learning?

- Unified School District #1 will collaborate daily with custody leadership to determine health and safety trends that may indicate an uptick in COVID-19 cases. Each facility's COVID's rate will be calculated daily to assist in determining the safest learning model.
- Schools will follow the directives issued from the Governor, Commissioner of the Department of Education, and the Department of Correction.

Q: How will USD #1 support social distancing recommendations?

- When determining the classroom layout, require classroom configurations to maximize social distancing between student desks and workstations, achieving six feet when possible.
- Position desks/tables facing forward when possible

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- Maximize space between the teacher and students due to the risk of increased droplets from teachers during instruction
- Reorganize teacher desks/teaching areas while being mindful of safety and security
- Schools will assess additional space that can be utilized for instruction.
- Collaborate with custody administration on allocation of additional space as needed
- Schools will examine the current classroom spacing configurations and space furniture as far apart as feasible. Excess furniture will be removed from the classroom.
- Each school has a plan for the flow of traffic in the hallways, which exterior doors will be used for arrival and dismissal to minimize the number of students in one space, arrival and dismissal procedures to and from individual classrooms, and increased passing time to allow for desks/workspaces to be cleaned/disinfected between classes.
- School specific information will be made available to the school community to include education and custody staff, students, families, and other stakeholders.

Q: How will cleaning and sanitation in the school areas be handled?

- Increase the frequency of cleaning student and staff bathrooms and common areas throughout the day
- Schools have developed cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing procedures for instructional materials including machinery in the CTE classrooms at the end of each school day, consistent with CDC guidelines
- School plans for disinfecting high touch surfaces will include door handles, handrails, sink handles, restroom surfaces, and instructional materials that cannot be assigned to a specific student.
- Schools will develop cleaning protocols between usage for cleaning desks and classroom equipment that are used by more than one group using the Guidance from the CDC on Cleaning and Disinfecting Schools.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html>
- Plan for disinfecting buildings in between uses in the following ways:
 - Desks that are shared during the day
 - Tables that are used throughout the day
 - Chairs that are shared during the day
 - Classroom/office items such as phones, copy machines, computers, etc.
- Schools will work with their custody team to ensure a plan for cleaning of instructional materials.
- Distribute CDC guidance, signs and messages related to stopping the spread of the virus and ensure this information is accessible to all students
- Stop the Spread signage will be posted in every classroom in English and Spanish.
- Wash Your Hands signage will be visible in all restrooms and near sinks. Schools will assign bathrooms available for student use.
- Deep cleanings will be scheduled when school is not in session.

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Q: How will we ensure that staff and students are educated and engaged in the new expectations related to all public health policies and protocols?

- Each school will collaborate with medical staff, physical education/health classes to ensure that students are educated and engaged in the new expectations specific to all public health policies and protocols. Time will be allocated at the beginning of the school year, as well as frequent reteaching, to review new policies and protocols.
- Unified School District #1 has accessed, designed, and disseminated educational materials to schools focused on standard public health practices used to prevent the spread of viruses. These practices include, but are not limited to:
 - social distancing;
 - frequent hand washing and the 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.
 - Professional development for staff and trainings for students and staff will be provided.

Q: Are class sizes being reduced?

- Class sizes have been balanced, as necessary, to fit into the spaces we are utilizing as classrooms.
- Additional and alternate space has been explored.

Q: Are we “cohorting” students?

- Unified School District #1 currently has students grouped in cohorts.

Q: What other kinds of personal protective equipment are available?

- Gloves, gowns, masks, and face shields will be available for staff who work with students to use, as necessary. The Department of Correction is also exploring desk shields and other resources.

Q: Will education staff members be tested for COVID-19?

- Yes, all staff members will be tested. The State of Connecticut decreed mandatory testing for all staff members prior to returning to their facilities.

Q: Will we have traditional PPTs?

- At the time of school reopening, we will continue to conduct all meetings with stakeholders and partnerships virtually through a secure conference call line and/or videoconferencing where available.

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Q: Who will be the district's Health and Safety Compliance Liaison?

- Veron Beaulieu, deputy superintendent of schools, has been identified as the district's Health and Safety Compliance Liaison. The school principal at each correctional facility/school has been designated as the site Health and Safety Compliance Liaison contact to engage with students, parents, faculty, staff, and custody administration to answer questions or concerns about health and safety. In the event the school administrator is not available, Deputy Superintendent Beaulieu will be the facility contact. She can be reached at veron.beaulieu@ct.gov.