

Alfred-Almond Central School District
Draft Reopening Plan for 2020-2021



Dear Parents, Guardians and Community Members:

Thank you for taking the time to review the **draft** of the Alfred-Almond Central School District Reopening Plan for the 2020-21 school year. We assure you, the health and safety of our students, staff, and families is our top priority. Our reopening plan incorporates recommendations and guidance from the [New York State Department of Health \(NYSDOH\)](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), and the [New York State Department of Education \(NYSED\)](#). In the event the guidance from any of these governing bodies appears to be contradictory, the guidance and mandates from the New York State Department of Health supersedes all others.

The draft of our reopening plan will provide information needed to imagine what the opening of school may look like. Over the next month, more details will be put into place and shared with the community. Please keep in mind our reopening plan is a living document, meaning it will continue to evolve as new information and/or guidance is released. We will share pertinent new information as it becomes available.

While districts have been instructed to prioritize efforts to return all students to in-person instruction, they are also required to plan for remote learning as well as a hybrid model that combines in-person instruction and remote learning. Priority has been placed on the safety of students and staff and considerations included: transportation, classroom instruction, food service, social distancing, etc. Given the strict guidelines for each of the above categories, we are not able to safely open at full capacity and remain in compliance.

We understand these are challenging times for all and may be most difficult for parents/guardians to decide whether or not to send their child(ren) to school in September. Knowing parents/guardians may have varying levels of comfort, we have decided every family will be given the choice for their child(ren) to participate under our hybrid model or as a full-time remote learner. More details pertaining to each model can be found within the draft reopening plan. An opportunity for all parents/guardians to select the learning model for their child(ren) will be released in the near future and will have a deadline for its return. Families will have the opportunity to reassess this decision at the end of each quarter.

Other important notes about the start of the school year:

- The status of Interscholastic Sports has been delayed by NYSPHSSA (New York State Public High School Association) until at least September 21st
- Only extracurricular activities and field trips that are conducted virtually will be allowed
- The use of our indoor and outdoor facilities (i.e. fitness center, track, tennis courts, playground, etc.) will continue to be closed to outside groups

As a friendly reminder, the reopening plan presented is a **draft**. The manner in which we begin the school year may change as we navigate the upcoming months and conclude the school year. Therefore, our reopening plan is a living document, subject to change. Due to the recommendations and guidance from our partnering agencies and the Executive Orders of the Governor we may need to alternate between our hybrid model and remote learning throughout the year. The level of infection, the spread of the disease in our community is at the forefront of our decision making.

Thank you for your contributions and support as we navigate this uncharted territory.

Sincerely,

Tracie Bliven, Superintendent of Schools

INTRODUCTION

As a district we know a return to in-person instruction is a very important step in reestablishing the continuity of the learning process for students. We appreciate your patience and input during this difficult time. Please know, we are doing all we can to provide a learning environment that is safe and healthy for all students and staff and to allow for a school day that is as normal as possible under the guidelines and parameters we have been provided by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED). A perfect plan does not exist as the parameters we must follow are very strict. **This plan is a living document and will be updated regularly** to reflect any changes to protocol and guidance from the NYSDOH and NYSED.

As we return to in-person instruction, it will be vital for students, parents, and staff to work together to adhere to the guidance and parameters we must follow to protect the health and welfare not only of our students and staff, but that of the entire Alfred-Almond School District Community. As we continue to plan for the new school year, our faculty, staff, and administration continuously and diligently review areas that need to be adjusted or improved to make all instruction more effective for students, whether it is in-person, hybrid, or remote. As soon as it is safe to do so, we will return to our traditional model of school five (5) days per week for all of our students.

It should be understood that the following information will not include every detail related to how the school day will progress as we return to in-person instruction. As we identify more details that need to be added to this plan, we will update the document. Further, both the elementary and secondary schools will have details specific for their students. That information will be available on the school website in the near future as plans continue to evolve. It is very likely that classroom teachers will reach out directly to parents to explain some specifics related to the daily procedures within their classrooms. There may also be other professional staff who will need to connect with parents directly as well.

The following district staff were involved in reviewing information, addressing issues, and offering suggestions as to how we follow the state education and department of health guidance for in-person instruction. We offer our sincere gratitude to these individuals for giving of their time, sharing their expertise and their dedication to ensuring students have an outstanding educational experience while maintaining the health and safety of our educational community as a top priority. Furthermore, we utilized a survey sent to all district employees and made available a survey to obtain the perspective of the community while developing this plan. This plan will be posted to the school district's website and updated when necessary.

AACS REOPENING PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

District Planning Committee

- Tracie Bliven, Superintendent of Schools
- Melissa Rivers, Secondary Building Principal
- Brett Dusingberre, Elementary Building Principal
- Jason Oliver, GST BOCES Curriculum Administrator
- Karleigh Ormsby, School Nurse
- Gene Snyder, Maintenance Supervisor
- Bryan Burdick, Transportation Supervisor
- Michelle Miller, GST BOCES Food Service
- Tori Parmenter, GST BOCES Food Service
- Greg Elliott, GST BOCES Food Service
- Joe Kilmer, GST BOCES Food Service
- Katherine Palmer, CSE Chairperson
- Kate Wall, Elementary Teacher and AATA President
- Burt Turner, Secondary Teacher and AATA Vice President
- Molly Turner, Administrative Intern and Elementary Special Education Teacher
- Earl Pierce, Board of Education President
- Gary Acker, School Board Member
- Terry Caleb, WNYRIC Supervisor - Field Technical Services
- Joanne Demetreu, Secretary to Superintendent

Secondary School Planning Committee

- Tracie Bliven, Superintendent of Schools
- Melissa Rivers, Secondary Building Principal
- Jason Oliver, GST BOCES Curriculum Administrator
- Jami Snyder, English Teacher
- Amy Powers, Art Teacher
- James Dineen, Social Studies Teacher
- Burt Turner, Social Studies Teacher and AATA Vice-President
- Julie Bensley, Math Teacher
- Becky Hartnett, Science Teacher
- Steve Rech, Science Teacher
- Christina Rawady, Instrumental Music Teacher
- John Gemmell, Physical Education Teacher
- Mike Levey, Technology Teacher
- Katherine Palmer, CSE Chairperson
- Sally Allen, Teaching Assistant
- Molly Turner, Administrative Intern
- Matt McAneney, School Counselor
- Katie Byrne, World Language Teacher
- Karleigh Ormsby, School Nurse
- Alinda Mulligan, Secretary to School Counselors

Elementary School Planning Committee

- Tracie Bliven, Superintendent of Schools
- Brett Dusinger, Elementary Building Principal
- Jason Oliver, GST BOCES Curriculum Administrator
- Katherine Palmer, CSE Chairperson
- Molly Turner, Special Education Teacher and Administrative Intern
- Christina Rawady, Instrumental Music Teacher
- Karleigh Ormsby, School Nurse
- Heidi Putnam, Secretary to Elementary Principal
- Casey Dusinger, Instructional Coach
- Casey Barber, School Psychologist
- Heidi Pfaff, Title I Math Teacher
- Tammy Olix, Elementary Teacher (2nd grade)
- Kate Wall, Elementary Teacher (6th grade) and AATA President
- Jeanna Olin, Teaching Assistant

HEALTH & SAFETY

Students, parents, and staff need to be aware of some of the common symptoms associated with COVID-19. We will all need to monitor our physical condition to protect ourselves and those around us. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, you should contact your medical provider and seek direction on any treatment or testing that may be recommended.

This list is not all inclusive as some individuals may display other symptoms or none at all. As of 7/13/2020, the following are listed as the most common symptoms of COVID-19:

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|--|------------------------------|
| ● Fever or chills (greater than 100.0°F) | ● New loss of taste or smell |
| ● Cough | ● Sore throat |
| ● Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing | ● Congestion or runny nose |
| ● Fatigue | ● Nausea or vomiting |
| ● Muscle or body aches | ● Diarrhea |
| ● Headache | |
| ● Persistent pain and pressure in the chest, confusion, inability to stay awake, bluish face or lips | |

Per NYSED recommendation, all staff will be instructed to watch for students and other staff who may show signs of any type of illness such as:

- Flushed cheeks
- Rapid or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity)
- Fatigue, and/or irritability
- Frequent use of the bathroom

Students and staff exhibiting these signs with no other explanation for them should be sent to the school health office for an assessment by the school nurse. Anyone who has a temperature of greater than 100.0°F or has a positive response on the screening questionnaire must be isolated from others and sent home immediately (parents/guardians must be sure each child has an emergency plan in place in the event the parent/guardian is

not readily available to pick up their child). Students will be supervised in an isolated area while awaiting transport home. The school nurse will instruct parents they must contact their medical provider. The school nurse will also instruct staff to contact their medical provider. If a student develops symptoms outside school hours, parents should contact the school nurse via email kormsby@aacssapps.com. Staff should contact their immediate supervisor, building principal, or the superintendent if their medical status changes outside school hours.

SCREENINGS

Student Screenings

Student temperature screenings will take place prior to entering school buildings. Any student with a temperature that exceeds the approved limit (greater than 100.0°F), will be immediately sent to the isolation room, if parents are not present to take them home immediately.

Parents will be required to keep a student home from school if their child develops COVID-19 related symptoms or has a temperature that exceeds the approved limit (greater than 100.0°F). Parents should contact the school nurse as soon as possible during school hours or via email if symptoms are experienced after school hours kormsby@aacssapps.com

Entering School Buildings

- Students will enter through designated doors upon arrival.
- Trained staff members will take each student's temperature. Other staff members will monitor students who are waiting for their screening.
- Any students who have a temperature that exceeds the approved limit (greater than 100.0°F) will be immediately placed in the monitored quarantine area. Parents will be contacted to pick-up their child. If a student or staff member has measurable signs/symptoms of COVID, they will be required to be tested. A standing order for a COVID test has been signed by our School Medical Director, Dr. Zahi Kassas and can be obtained by contacting our School Nurse, Karleigh Ormsby.

If a student arrives at school after the normal opening of school, the student will enter the school building through the designated doors. A trained staff member will take the student's temperature in the small foyer before entering the main hallway. Parents or the responsible adult delivering the student must verify the student's temperature is permissible prior to leaving the school grounds.

Boarding School Buses

- If the parent/guardian's assessment of their child shows signs of COVID 19 or the student's temperature is beyond the approved limit (greater than 100.0°F), the student will not be permitted to enter the school bus.
- If a student becomes ill on the bus they will be escorted to the isolation room by personnel in PPE.

Periodic Questionnaire Regarding Student Health

The district will communicate with parents periodically to acquire screening questionnaire information on student health.

Staff Screenings

Staff (other service providers) will be required to answer a series of questions related to the potential symptoms of COVID-19 prior to entering the school building. Any staff who are experiencing symptoms will be directed to stay at home and report their symptoms to the school nurse. Staff will also have their temperature checked upon entry to the school building.

The screening questionnaire will address the following:

- knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;
- tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days;
- experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature of greater than 100.0°F in the past 14 days; and/or
- traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days.

Staff and other service providers reporting to the school building after the normal opening of school, will be required to enter the building through the main secondary entrance (located by the district office) or the main elementary entrance (the upper entrance). Temperatures will be registered upon entrance to the building.

Staff will be required to stay home from school if they develop COVID-19 related symptoms or have a temperature that exceeds the approved limit (greater than 100.0°F). Staff should contact their immediate supervisor, building principal, or the superintendent as soon as possible symptoms are experienced.

Visitor Screenings

Any visitor seeking entry into the building must have a bona fide reason for entering the building. The district will be restricting unnecessary visits in the building. Visitors to the Elementary Building must enter through the Elementary Main Entrance. Visitors to the Secondary Building must enter through the Secondary School Main Entrance. A trained staff member with appropriate PPE will take the temperature of the visitor in the small foyer before entering the main hallway. Each visitor will also be asked to respond to the screening questionnaire.

HYGIENE PRACTICES

Healthy hygiene practices should be taught and re-taught in school settings for both students and staff. Schools are strongly encouraged to provide instruction to the school community in hand and respiratory hygiene, along with providing adequate supplies and time to allow for frequent hand hygiene. Additionally, schools must post signs throughout the school and should regularly share messages with the school community.

Hand Hygiene

Students and staff must practice good hand hygiene to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. The school will plan time in the school day schedule to allow for hand hygiene.

Hand hygiene includes:

- Traditional hand washing (with soap and warm water, lathering for a minimum of 20 seconds), which is the preferred method.
- Use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers when soap and water are not available, and hands are not visibly dirty. Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the school building.

- Per Department of Transportation (DOT) hand sanitizers that are alcohol based are not allowed on buses due to fire regulations.
- If students or staff are not able to use alcohol-based hand sanitizers for health reasons, they will be permitted to wash their hands with soap and water

Respiratory Hygiene

The COVID-19 virus spreads from person to person in droplets produced by coughs and sneezes. A supply of tissues are available in each room. Always perform hand hygiene after sneezing, coughing and handling dirty tissues or other soiled material.

Social Distancing

Social Distancing also called “physical distancing” means keeping a six (6) foot space between yourself and others. Students and staff will keep social distance when possible. Social distancing will be in effect in all school buildings, on school grounds, and in school buses. Some social distancing practices will include:

- Turning student desks to face in the same direction rather than facing each other to reduce transmission caused by virus-containing droplets (e.g., from talking, coughing, sneezing).
- Open windows to improve ventilation. Do not open windows if there is a health or safety risk (e.g., allergies).
- Keep individual student belongings separated. Limit use of shared supplies to one group of students, clean between use by cohorts of students.
- Using visual aids (e.g., painter’s tape, stickers, posters, cones etc.) to illustrate traffic flow and appropriate spacing to support social distancing.
- Explore the use of alternate spaces for eating lunch and breakfast. If alternate spaces are not available, ensure classroom groups are together in lunchrooms while adhering to the social distancing rules.
- Playgrounds may continue to be used when proper safeguards are in place. Staggered playground times will be determined to limit the number of students on the equipment at the same time. Wash hands before and after touching play structures and keep 6 feet of space from other children as much as possible.
- Outdoor spaces will be utilized for instruction when appropriate and social distancing requirements will remain in effect.
- Ensure that a distance of twelve (12) feet in all directions is maintained between individuals while participating in activities that require projecting the voice (e.g., singing), playing a wind instrument, or aerobic activity (physical education).
- Canceling or limiting student assemblies, athletic events/practices, performances, school-wide parent meetings.
- Limiting visitors to school buildings. Consider using online meetings with parents and other persons when feasible.

Face Coverings

Face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected, but does not have symptoms. Face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators, or other medical personal protective equipment. As we return to in-person instruction, students and staff will be required to wear a face covering for a great portion of the day because social distancing will not be an option. Students will be permitted to take breaks from wearing their face covering at particular points during the day.

All individuals in school facilities, buses and on school grounds must properly wear a face covering (over their nose and mouth). The exceptions are during scheduled breaks or when drinking or eating. Students and staff are able to wear their own face coverings that meet the guidelines established by departments of health. The district

will provide face coverings to students and staff for those who do not have their own or are not school appropriate with regard to language, etc. We realize face coverings may be challenging for students (especially younger students) to wear in all-day settings such as school. Classroom teachers will schedule mask breaks periodically during the day. All individuals will be required to maintain the 6' socially distanced spacing during those breaks.

Students will be instructed on how to:

- properly wear face coverings
- wash hands before putting on and after removing their face covering
- the importance of routine cleaning of reusable face coverings
- face coverings are for individual use only and should not be shared

If Students or Staff become Ill with Symptoms of COVID-19 at School

Students and staff will be asked to monitor their physical well-being and symptoms during the school day. Any students who think they are experiencing any symptoms of illness should report this to a staff member. School staff will immediately report any illness of students to the school nurse. Staff who experience any symptoms of illness should report this to the main office (so classroom coverage may be determined) and will be required to obtain a copy of the standing order for the COVID-19 testing provided by our school medical director. If there are several students waiting to see the school nurse, arrangements will be made to have students wait at least 6 feet apart.

Students suspected of having COVID-19 symptoms will be moved to an isolation room with adult supervision. Individuals will be separated by at least 6 feet.

The following will take place when a student or staff member is being sent home with symptoms of COVID-19:

- Students will be escorted from the isolation area to the parent outside the building. Pick-up will be located at the back entrance of the school. Students will be required to go for a COVID-19 test.
- Staff will be assisted in their safe exit from the building. Staff will be required to go for a COVID-19 test.
- The local department of health will be contacted with the appropriate medical information and to seek guidance on how to proceed.
- Symptomatic students or staff members should follow the advice as directed by a healthcare provider or the local department of health. If the administration or school nurse does not feel the appropriate action was taken it will be reviewed by the School Medical Director.
- If the student or staff member has emergency warning signs such as trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to arouse, bluish lips or face, call 911 and notify the operator that the person may have COVID-19.
- If a student or staff member has measurable signs/symptoms of COVID-19, they will be sent for testing with a standing order for a COVID-19 test per our School Medical Director.

School staff will be made aware of the symptoms of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) associated with COVID-19 which is a serious condition associated with COVID-19 in children and youth. The district will notify parents if their child shows any of the following symptoms and recommend the child be referred for immediate follow up with a healthcare provider:

- fever
- abdominal pain
- vomiting

- diarrhea
- neck pain
- rash
- bloodshot eyes
- feeling extra tired

Return to School after Illness

The district will follow guidance from the local department of health and/or the NYS DOH for allowing a student or staff member to return to school after exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. If a person is not diagnosed by a healthcare provider with COVID-19 they can return to school:

- Once there is no fever, without the use of fever reducing medicines, and they have felt well for 24 hours.
- If they have been diagnosed with another condition or illness they will be required to have a healthcare provider written note stating they are clear to return to school.

If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider based on a test or their symptoms or does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, they should not be at school and should stay at home until:

- The district will also coordinate with the local health department regarding the return to school of a student or staff member. This returning to learning protocol must include at a minimum, documentation of evaluation by a healthcare provider (healthcare provider note clearing a person to return to school), negative COVID-19 testing, and symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation as required by DOH.

COVID-19 Testing

The district will not conduct COVID-19 testing on campus. The decision of whether a test needs to be conducted will be determined by a healthcare provider, the school medical director, or the local department of health.

Contact Tracing

Contact tracing is a public health function performed by local public health departments to trace all persons who had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. This allows public health officials to put in place isolation or other measures to limit the spread of the virus. The district will assist public health departments in providing information of those who may have had contact with a confirmed case through school by:

- Keeping accurate attendance records of students and staff members
- Ensuring student schedules are up to date
- Keeping a log of any visitors which includes date, time and where in the school they visited

Confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state laws and regulations. School staff will not determine who is to be excluded from school based on contact without guidance and direction from the local department of health.

School Closures

The district will collaborate with the local health department to determine the parameters, conditions or metrics that will serve as early warning signs that positive COVID-19 cases may be increasing beyond an acceptable level. School administrators will consider closing school if absentee rates impact the ability of the school to operate safely. The district may choose to modify operations prior to closing to help mitigate a rise in cases. The district will work with the local department of health when making such decisions.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

District cleaning staff will follow local, state, and federal guidelines regarding cleaning and disinfecting school buildings and buses. School wide cleaning will include classrooms, restrooms, cafeterias, libraries, playgrounds, and buses. A general framework for cleaning and disinfection practices will include the following:

- Normal routine cleaning with soap and water will decrease how much of the virus is on surfaces and objects, which reduces the risk of exposure;
- A schedule will be created for cleaning and disinfection frequency for each facility and area type, and will maintain logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection in a facility or area.
- Cleaning plans will include the safety of custodial staff and other people who are carrying out the cleaning or disinfection.

High touch surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected frequently throughout the day. Examples of high touch surfaces include but are not limited to:

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|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| • Tables | • Handles | • Toilets/restrooms |
| • Doorknobs | • Desks | • Faucets and sinks |
| • Light switches | • Phones | |
| • Countertops | • Keyboards/tablets | |

Students should not be present when disinfectants are in use and should not participate in cleaning and/or disinfection activities.

School Health Office Cleaning

School health office cleaning must occur after each use of cots, bathrooms, and health office equipment.

SAFETY DRILLS

Education Law §807 requires that schools conduct 8 evacuation and 4 lockdown drills each school year. When planning drills, consideration should be given to how a school may modify their drill procedures to minimize risk of spreading infection. Steps will be taken to minimize the risk of spreading infection while conducting drills. Protocols for conducting drills in the 2020-21 school year may be somewhat different than used in the past. Regardless of the modification used when conducting a drill, students will be instructed that if it was an actual emergency that required evacuation or lockdown, the most imminent concern is to get to safety; maintaining social distancing in an actual emergency that requires evacuation or lockdown may not be possible and should not be the first priority.

Lockdown drill modifications will include maintaining social distancing and using masks and conducting the drills without hiding / sheltering. Classroom teachers will provide an overview of how to shelter or hide in the classroom in the event of a real emergency.

CHILD NUTRITION

A successful nutrition program is a key component to a successful educational environment. Our GST BOCES food service management staff will be involved in the planning and implementation of our plan to feed students during the day. The district will make meals available to students in attendance at school and if students are learning remotely – if applicable. Federal and state child nutrition program requirements will continue to be followed.

Meals Consumed Onsite

Face coverings are obviously not possible while students are eating. Therefore, social distancing will be required while students are eating meals. The school cafeteria alone is not large enough to create adequate social distancing for student meals. All students will eat their breakfast and lunch in their respective classrooms.

The following guidelines will be implemented:

- Students will be instructed to perform hand hygiene before and after eating
- Staff will discourage food sharing between students
- Cleaning of desks and chairs after eating
- Students may continue to bring their own lunches if they prefer, but may not share food brought from home

TRANSPORTATION

School buses are considered district facilities and precautions will be taken to protect students and transportation staff while on buses. Per NYSED guidance, parents are encouraged to self-transport students to and from school if possible to minimize the number of students riding on the buses. However, the district will transport students who do not have another means of getting to/from school. The following guidelines for student transportation will be followed by the district:

- Students and staff will be required to wear a face covering on the bus – as 6ft of social distancing will not be possible throughout the bus when students are seated.
- When students embark and disembark the bus, they should follow social distancing protocols.
- As much separation as possible, between students on the bus, will be created. Every student will be assigned a seat for the morning and afternoon runs. As a general rule, students from the same family will be assigned to sit together in the same seat.
- Students will load the bus from back to front, and exit the bus from front to back.
- High touch areas on the buses will be cleaned after each run, and will be disinfected after the last run for the day.
- Per NYSED guidelines, school buses shall not be equipped with hand sanitizer due to its combustible composition and potential liability to the district. School bus drivers, monitors and attendants must not carry personal bottles of hand sanitizer with them on school buses.
- When outside air temperatures are above 45 degrees, school buses should transport passengers with roof hatches or windows slightly opened to provide air flow. Parents should be sure students have adequate coats / sweatshirts for their ride on the bus.
- Students must remain on the same route, and will not be able to ride/or switch to a different bus route.

School Bus Staff

School bus drivers, monitors, and attendants shall perform a self-health assessment for symptoms of COVID-19 before arriving to work. Transportation staff will also have their temperature checked prior to going out on bus runs. If personnel are experiencing any of the symptoms of COVID-19 they should notify the Transportation Supervisor. Transportation staff, on school bus runs, will wear a face covering while students are riding on the bus.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

School communities (students, parents, and staff) are facing unprecedented challenges as we respond to the compounded difficulties of impact of COVID-19, separation from one another, academic challenges, and returning to in-person instruction in a safe manner. These challenges offer us the opportunity to renew the capacity of our school community to be welcoming, supportive, inclusive, and equitable environments. We trust that parents have involved their students in the crucial conversations – at each student’s developmental level – so they are ready to return to school. District staff will also be a partner in improving the well-being of students and among staff as well.

Along with physical health and well-being, our school community will seek to monitor social emotional well-being of our students and adults – not at the expense of academics, but in order to create the mental, social, and emotional space for academic learning to occur. Some students may return to school with some level of anxiety. Staff will attempt to monitor the physical safety of students and their social and emotional needs. Parents are encouraged to contact their student’s teacher if they believe there are particular emotional concerns as students enter in-person instruction. If a particular student is in need of professional counseling, parents are encouraged to contact the following staff members at school: building principal, school counselor or school psychologist. These individuals can assist in contacting resources in the area. Our Student Services Office (school counselor and school psychologist) will provide on-going check-ins with classroom teachers to monitor any student or adult needs around social / emotional well-being.

Our school staff are not immune to the need to monitor their own social / emotional well-being. It will be important for our school staff to check on one another as we transition back into in-person instruction, and for individuals to monitor themselves and seek help when necessary. One outside resource for our staff is the district sponsored Employee Assistance Program that is offered through GST BOCES. More details can be acquired in the district office.

SCHOOL SCHEDULES

COVID-19 required schools to make critical adjustments to their instructional model in March 2020 with little or no time to plan. The plan for starting school in September 2020, will be to return all grade level students to in-person instruction. Our experience during our school closure made it very clear that remote learning is not the best instructional method for students to gain necessary knowledge and academic skills.

Teachers on our reopening committees have met during July to discuss the positive / negatives / and necessary changes that need to be made relative to remote learning or a hybrid model. Teachers will continue to have conversations and make preparations for the potential of returning to remote learning (only if necessary). If the district needs to make a change to a hybrid model of attendance / instruction, we will make every effort to notify parents of the decision to transition to this model. It is very likely that full remote learning will be a function of the NYS DOH or the Governor’s office mandates school closures.

We are providing our families with the choice of accessing 100% remote instruction or participating in the hybrid model outlined below. The survey data we received from parents would allow this to happen in an equitable/manageable way.

PK-12 HYBRID-MODEL-TWO-DAY ROTATION

This model provides face to face instruction two days per week. Students will remain with the same cohort as much as possible in the secondary classrooms and throughout the day in elementary classrooms. These cohort groups will learn, recreate, transition, and eat together.

<u>Monday</u> Groups Blue and Gold Remote Remote Lessons Student Support	<u>Tuesday</u> Group Blue In school Group Gold Remote	<u>Wednesday</u> Group Gold In school Group Blue Remote	<u>Thursday</u> Group Blue In school Group Gold Remote	<u>Friday</u> Group Gold In school Group Blue Remote
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Hybrid Model (days when learning occurs in-person at school)

Tuesday and Thursday: Group Blue
Wednesday and Friday: Group Gold
Receiving in-person instruction in all academic areas.

Hybrid Model (days when learning occurs remotely at home)

Tuesday and Thursday: Group Gold
Wednesday and Friday: Group Blue
Monday: Groups Blue and Gold
Students will complete assignments given by teachers during “In School” days and/or posted in Google Classroom.

REMOTE LEARNING MODEL

Elementary School Structure (PK - 6)

In the remote learning model, learning can occur asynchronously and synchronously. Asynchronous learning is when instruction and learning do not happen at the same time for all learners. Students access learning at a time that works for them and their families. Regardless of the setting, teachers will be expected to provide learning resources and tasks in Google Classroom, and/or ClassDojo. Synchronous learning is an approach where teachers and students are engaged in learning at the same time. The teacher provides learning resources and tasks through video-conferencing enabled by Zoom, Google Classroom, and/or ClassDojo during a specific time. Grade-specific schedules will be shared by the school at a later date.

Secondary School Remote Learning Model (7-12)

In the remote learning model, learning can occur asynchronously and synchronously. Asynchronous learning is when instruction and learning do not happen at the same time for all learners. Students access learning at a time that works for them and their families. Regardless of the setting, teachers will be expected to provide learning resources and tasks in Google Classroom. Synchronous learning is an approach where teachers and students are engaged in learning at the same time. The teacher provides learning resources and tasks through video-conferencing enabled by Zoom and Google Classroom during a specific time. Grade/Class specific schedules will be shared by the school at a later date.

Remote Learning (ALL learning takes place at home)

Students will be assigned Group Gold or Blue and will follow the schedule synchronously alongside Hybrid Students.

Tuesday and Thursday: Group Blue stream

Wednesday and Friday: Group Gold stream

Receiving in-person instruction in all academic areas.

ATTENDANCE AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

As described in the NYSED guidance document, full remote learning did not work for all students during the 2020 school closures. Our school district had a number of students who did not log on or otherwise participate in online learning opportunities. If we are forced into a hybrid or fully remote learning environment, it will be absolutely critical for students to engage in their grade level instruction. Teachers and administrators will be sure students and parents understand the academic consequences of lost instructional time and address absences before students fall behind in their learning. The district will seek to work with local departments of social services prior to any formal requests for intervention. Initiating an educational neglect or Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) proceeding will only be used as a last resort.

Extensive research indicates that missing ten percent of school days tends to be the “tipping point” when student achievement declines. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing at least ten percent of enrolled school days, which in New York State is eighteen days per school year. Instead of school policies and procedures focusing on truancy, it is essential for school attendance policies to focus on the academic consequences of lost instructional time and for the school procedures to address absences before students fall behind in school.

During these challenging times, the development of positive school relationships may be a lifeline for students. Although flexibility is recommended when monitoring attendance in a remote instructional model, students will be expected to be engaged and complete academic work. If a teacher and the district notice a student is less than engaged, the school will take numerous steps to connect with the students and parents to help them understand the importance of staying engaged and active with academic work.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

One of the most important aspects of the teaching and learning process is the relationship built between teachers and students. One of the benefits of having students return to in-person instruction is to be able build these relationships between new groups of students and their teachers. While many of our students and teachers are familiar with one another, not all of our grade level students have had the opportunity to build a classroom relationship with each other. We anticipate the time with students at the beginning of the school year will help foster those student – teacher relationships before potentially being forced to move to a hybrid or remote model of instruction.

We acknowledge the return to school right now will not be what we have previously thought of as normal. However, our efforts will attempt to return students to school routines and a sense of normalcy in a positive, welcoming environment that supports students.

TECHNOLOGY AND CONNECTIVITY

For New York State students to lead productive and successful lives upon graduation, they must understand and know how to use digital technologies. Technology knowledge and skills are vital for full participation in 21st Century life, work, and citizenship. Sufficient access to computing devices and high-speed internet are essential for educational equity. The district has accomplished the acquisition of 1:1 devices (Chromebooks) for each student in every grade level. The one important component some of our families lack is internet service or service that is robust enough to make it productive for daily remote instruction. The one option – that was available during the most recent school closure – will be the district’s Wi-Fi access connection in the parking lot. While not the most convenient for some in the district, this resource will be available.

As we begin the 2020-21 school year the district and teachers will be taking steps to prepare students for the potential of another phase of remote instruction. This will include the productive use of learning platforms and preparing for asynchronous learning or sometimes referred to as a “flipped classroom.” The district will also be surveying parents to determine family access to internet connectivity.

A remote learning model means teachers will post instructional lessons that students will have to access and watch, and then complete assignments based upon that instruction. Teachers will provide support sessions with students to check on their comprehension and completion of assignments. The district will also be working with vendors to minimize the lack of internet access. While the district cannot resolve the issue fully, we believe we can provide some level of access to families – with certain responsibilities placed on students and parents.

In any of the above-mentioned models, Alfred-Almond understands the need for equity and accessibility. The District will work with families to ensure access to reliable internet connections or alternate technology. Parents will need to determine the best method to connect their students with teachers to demonstrate engagement in instructional and the successful completion of academic work.

The district will also be working with teachers to connect them with useful professional development to be ready for another phase of remote learning. We will also be planning how to provide instruction or necessary information to parents on how to utilize the learning platform that will be used in a remote learning situation.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Alfred-Almond CSD reopening planning team has given consideration to special education students’ needs in order to ensure that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) is provided. Services as proposed for each individual student will be provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE) in order to allow each student access to general education curriculum, learning, and the opportunity to make educational progress. Students whose instructional needs are met in district-run self-contained classroom settings will also be provided with instruction and related services on a four day a week basis in an in-person format. Students who receive AIS instruction will do so per their schedule on their designated hybrid day. Related services will be scheduled in-person to the extent possible; some services may be provided via teletherapy/remotely.

To the extent necessary, if parents and the district discuss priority needs that warrant Individual Education Plan (IEP) changes, these changes will be made per regulatory processes and requirements. This information will be communicated with parents in their native language/mode of communication through multiple means that may include:

- individual telephone contacts

- postings on the district website
- via mail and/or email

Per the Part 200 regulations, the district will continue to engage parents in the process of Committee on Special Education (CSE) meetings and Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) meetings. CSE and CPSE meeting notices will be mailed, and participation will be encouraged and verified through email and/or phone calls. Parent participation will be through Zoom or phone conferences. Meeting participants will ensure that social distancing and health and safety guidelines are followed.

The district will maintain Child Find obligations. Information will continue to be posted on the district website providing parents/community members with information related to the district's obligation to locate, evaluate, and identify students with disabilities who are in need of special education services, regardless of the pandemic-related closures or partial closure of schools and school programs.

The district has maintained a list of referrals/evaluations that currently have extended timelines as agreed upon by the district and consenting parents. As such:

- The district will identify evaluation components that need to be completed, prioritizing the use of existing records that may be appropriate for meeting initial evaluative criteria.
- Evaluative components that need to be completed with students may include remote evaluation processes and/or in-person evaluation processes using PPE protocols.

For students in BOCES placements and other state approved special education programs and receiving preschool special education services:

- The district will maintain open communication with each setting where we have district students with special education services placed.
- The district will ensure that IEPs for each student are shared contemporaneously with development, updates/revisions and that program suggestions for amendments necessary to appropriately meet the needs of students are facilitated in a timely manner.
- The district will understand how each program where students are placed is operating during the reopening phase as well as ongoing through the reopening period.
- The district will collaborate with programs and parents in order to ensure that all students' needs are appropriately met, including transportation, meals, child care, instructional plans, related services, and progress monitoring of all needs.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Communication with Families

Communication and translations to parents/guardians will be available in their preferred language and mode of communication.

Instructional Support to English Language Learners

Instructional Units of Study must be provided to all English Language Learners (ELLs) based on their most recently measured English Language Proficiency, including former ELLs.

STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS

General Considerations for Staffing

The district will use video or teleconferencing for faculty and staff meetings to reduce the density of congregations. There may be no more than 50 people together for a faculty or staff in-person meeting.

The District will ensure all teachers, school and district leaders, and pupil personnel service professionals hold a valid and appropriate certificate for their assignment. The District will employ substitute teachers to address staffing needs for the allowable amount of days, given their qualifications and teaching assignment. All staffing regulations as outlined by NYSED will be followed.

Vulnerable Employees

Employees with health concerns, those considered to have vulnerabilities, and/or staff who are at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness are encouraged to contact the School Nurse for additional information and guidance in response to their unique situation so appropriate accommodations may be considered.