

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

CSDE ARP ESSER



May 27, 2021

I. Health and Safety Strategies

Montville Public Schools closely follows all state Executive Orders, DPH and CSDE regulations and guidance regarding the health and safety of the school community. The superintendent attends weekly updates with the DPH to ensure the district responds appropriately to any changes in this guidance. The following table provides an explanation of the ways in which current guidance is being implemented. Mitigating strategies will be re-evaluated based on changing case rates. This plan will be revised as strategies are reevaluated and parents/staff will be apprised of changes to the plan. The most up-to-date plan will be posted on the website.

	Mitigating Strategies	LEA response
	Universal and correct wearing of masks	At this time, E.O. 12A requires mask wearing in schools. In compliance with this order, Montville Public Schools has adopted Policy 5141.8 Face Masks/Coverings requiring the use of face coverings for all students and staff when in the building unless eating, drinking, or outside. Parents are asked to provide masks for their students; the district provides disposable masks when needed. Students and staff who have medical reasons making it unsafe to wear a mask must provide a medical exemption form signed by their physician. Mask-wearing will be required by attendees at all evening events and by athletes unless the nature of the activity makes mask-wearing unsafe.
	Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)	All classrooms are set up to maximize space between students. Student workstations are spaced to provide a distance that is as close to 3 feet as possible. Carpets, fabric-covered items, and extra furniture have been removed. Students are seated at desks or spaced at tables in pK and K. Teachers have a designated presentation area more than 6 feet from students. Students who are seated at round or horseshoe-shaped tables to promote group work or more individualized instruction from a teacher are separated by Plexiglas dividers. Elementary and middle school students are cohorted by grade level.

	Mitigating Strategies	LEA response
	Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	District-created videos, CDC videos and posters, and classroom instruction are used to educate students in health protocols. Frequent hand washing and respiratory and cough etiquette are taught. Hand sanitizing stations are in every classroom, offices, the cafeteria and common spaces. Training Videos include: Understanding Coronavirus and Stopping the Spread Stop the Spread of Germs, Hand Washing, Coughing, and Sneezing Etiquette
	Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation	Classroom air is exchanged with filtered, fresh outside air at an average of 450 cubic feet per minute and exhausted air is vented at this same rate. This means that the air in a classroom is fully replaced about every 12.5 minutes. All air vent and air conditioner filters have been replaced. Touch-free paper towel dispensers have been installed in every bathroom. Cleaning supplies are on the Environmental Protection Agency's List N. Daily Cleaning: Custodians will clean all classroom bathrooms once a day and all bathrooms in hallways twice a day Custodians will log cleaning of classrooms and bathrooms. The district will strive to hire enough substitute custodians to maintain the established cleaning
	Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments	The district conducts contact tracing for every positive case. Nurses and principals, overseen by the superintendent and with guidance from Uncas Health District, look back 48 hours from the first symptom (or date of positive test for asymptomatic people) and quarantine all unvaccinated adults and non-classroom contacts who were within 6 feet of the positive case for a cumulative 15 minutes or more throughout the day. Students seated at desks in classrooms are considered close contacts if they are closer than three feet from one another. Unvaccinated classroom close contacts are offered the Screen and Stay option or quarantine. Using DPH protocol, all close contacts are contacted personally to explain the quarantine and screen and stay protocols. Fully vaccinated people are not required to quarantine but are informed that they are close contacts who should monitor carefully for symptoms.
	Diagnostic screening and testing	The district requires that any person who experiences symptoms of COVID-19 present a negative PCR test result or a doctor's note with an alternate diagnosis to return to work/school. If they do not provide this information, they must isolate for ten days.

	Mitigating Strategies	LEA response
	<p>Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible</p>	<p>Working with DPH, the district has provided multiple clinics on site for students and community members to be vaccinated. All parents have been informed of each clinic and urged to consider vaccinating their students. The district facilitated appointments for all staff members and provided multiple communications to ensure that every staff member who wanted to be vaccinated was able to make an appointment. In accordance with state legislation, all staff have been required to present either proof of vaccination or a valid medical or religious exemption to vaccination. Staff with exemptions are required to receive a COVID-19 test every 7 days and present the results of that test within 72 hours of testing. Parents have been asked to send vaccine card photos for their students to the school nurse and their vaccination status is logged in our electronic student health system.</p>
	<p>Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies</p>	<p>All students with disabilities who need accommodations with respect to health and safety policies are offered those accommodations. Staff work with families to ensure health and safety protocols are followed to the greatest extent possible to ensure the safety of these students and the school community. Montville Public Schools remain committed to providing high quality programs and services to our students who receive special education and related services. We will: Comply with all federal and state mandates and statutes; Ensure case managers, certified and non-certified staff work together to determine if individual students need alternative supports based on present level of functioning, developmental levels, and student/parent input; and Adjust plans as is necessary to accommodate appropriately.</p>

LEA must implement, to the greatest extent practicable, each element of the most up-to-date guidance listed in the table

II. Continuity of Services

Continuity of Services - Students' Academic Needs

Teams of teachers worked over the summer and will continue to work throughout the next two years to review and revise course curriculum to ensure our instructional program meets students' learning needs. Expert trainers in mathematics instruction, Readers Workshop, technology integration, and setting priority standards will be used to support teachers' work. We will use purchased benchmark assessments in Early Literacy (DIBELS), reading fluency and comprehension (Fountas and Pinnell), grades 6-12 math and 6-8 science (IXL), along with district-created common assessments and the state's Smarter Balanced and NGSS Interim Assessment Blocks to provide feedback about students' current levels. Results of this Spring's state's summative assessments (Smarter Balanced, NGSS, and SAT) have been analyzed to provide information about students' learning needs. Teachers will be supported as they provide just-in-time remediation throughout the school year. We have used ESSER II funds to ensure small class sizes in grades 1-3, develop an elementary math intervention program, set up tutoring centers at Tyl and MHS, and create a credit recovery program at MHS and Palmer to ensure students who are off-track in their classes are provided with timely support. We have built a more robust summer program for general education students providing high school credit recovery and elective offerings. We continue to focus on the arts as middle and high school students have been offered the opportunity to participate in a summer drama program and elementary students have "specials" five instead of four days a week this year. The high school has a teacher who will work with content area teachers as a "visiting artist" to help integrate music into core area instruction. MHS students' independence is fostered through participation in a Personal Interest Project (PIP) in which students can earn credit through a guided independent study program. A pilot group of MHS teachers are incorporating "Thriving Community" principles into course units so that students can see the connection between what they are learning not only to their personal growth but also to meeting community needs.

Continuity of Services - Students' and Staff Social, Emotional, Mental Health

The district has added an additional social worker to our staff using ARP ESSER funding. Each school except Palmer has a dedicated school psychologist and the district will have 5 social workers. Our school psychologists and social workers are led by assistant superintendent, Dianne Vumback, and have created social and emotional learning materials and supports for teachers. We have established district and school SEL Leadership Teams. We use the RULER program to teach the five areas of emotional intelligence: Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing and Regulating emotions. Tyl Middle School has launched a new program to provide time every other day in which students meet in small groups to pursue high interest activities with a focus on building relationships.

Our schools are participating in a state pilot of the DESSA Aperture program to conduct universal screening, supplemental follow-up assessments, and progress monitoring and to provide social-emotional resources and professional learning for district and school leaders and educators.

The district continues to provide an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for staff who would like to seek professional assessment, counseling, and referral services. This service is extended to all members of the teacher's immediate family. Working with the MEA Labor Management Committee, we are committed to meeting staff social, emotional, and mental health needs. We have used ESSER grant funds to provide the services of a family and child counselor to provide training in staff mental health and to give staff strategies for meeting the needs of their students. We have utilized ARP IDEA funds to bring in a psychiatric nurse practitioner to work with students and staff in our Tyl Pathways program.

Continuity of Services - Student Health and Food Services

Each of our schools has a registered nurse on site. District nurses are led by a head nurse and the Director of Special Services. Unique health needs related to the transmission of infection are met based upon consultation with Uncas Health District and CT DPH. Our Health Manual (policy 5142) is regularly updated and reviewed by our medical advisor.

All students will remain eligible for free meals in 2021-2022 based upon the federal meals program and summer meals will also be provided. Elementary students will be able to bring breakfast home to eat before school each day and on weekends. Our schools all follow healthy meal guidelines as specified in the District Wellness Policy #6142.

III. Public Comment

Students, staff and community members were regularly surveyed during the 2020-2021 school year to provide input to improve our hybrid/remote learning options. In June they were again surveyed to engage stakeholders in the process of re-imagining Montville Public Schools over the next three years. Stakeholders were asked to identify the most important attributes of a Montville Public Schools graduate, to define deep learning, to identify problems with our old "normal," to describe current programs or practices they believe are "sacred," and to identify areas they believe should be targeted for ARP ESSER funding. Analysis of those survey results by our School Community Voice Team, our MEA Labor Management Committees, and our Re-Opening Schools Task Force is currently beginning.

Zoom meetings and a public forum Board of Education meetings are also used to gather stakeholder feedback.

A revised Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan will be posted by August 15th to reflect these survey results and continued public comment. Community members can provide comment at any time by contacting their school principals or emailing the superintendent or assistant superintendent.

IV. Periodic Review Process

Review/revisit Dates:

- June 23, 2021
- December 23, 2021
- June 23, 2022
- December 23, 2022
- June 23, 2023

V. Understandable and Uniform Format

This plan will be provided to parents in on the school website and through a district-wide email link. It will be made available in other languages or other formats upon request.

