



2020-2021 Re-Opening Plan Update

April 19, 2021

Forward:

On April 9, 2021 the New York State Department of Health issued an update to its guidance for reopening schools in New York State. The “Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency” contains adjustments to some guidelines which schools must follow. This April 2021 update is intended to align this guidance to the most recent recommendations from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

This document, the Elmira Heights Central School District 2020-2021 Re-Opening Plan Update dated April 19, 2021, describes adjustments and adaptations which the Elmira Heights Central School District is making after review of the NYSDOH Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, in consultation with the Chemung County Department of Health, as well as having received input from families and staff members.

The updates contained in this document reflect edits and adaptations to the original district plan to open for the 2020-2021 School Year. This document does not contain the full comprehensive details contained in the original plan, only those aspects which have been updated. Any aspect of school reopening not contained in this document would refer to the original document as posted. *Example: All screening protocols for students and staff remain unchanged from the original and current practice which includes temperature checks and symptom monitoring.*



Adjustments: Cohen Elementary School – move to 3-foot distancing guidelines.

According to the data available to the Elmira Heights Central School District, assessed using the risk factor charts from the CDC (attachments 1 & 2), and in accordance with the Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, Cohen Elementary will begin full length days, five days a week, adjusting out of the Hybrid Schedule which the school has been in since the beginning of the school year. *Start date for this return is April 21, 2021.*

Feedback – Parents and Community:

In addition to several notifications from the Cohen Elementary office via email about specifics of the planned reopening a Virtual Town Hall event was held in order to share specific reopening information and have a dialogue for feedback opportunities for parents and staff. The Building Principal also thoroughly reviewed the reopening plan, including very specific information on lunches and spacing inside classrooms, in open sessions of the Board of Education which are Live-Streamed.

The following are highlights of the adjustments to the original plan:

1. Re-adjusting elementary classrooms from a 6-foot distanced class for student seating to up to 3 feet minimum of distance.
2. Elementary Breakfast and Lunch Planning: shift seating to 6 foot minimum.
3. Arrival and Dismissal procedures have been adjusted to accommodate the increased numbers of students into the building.

Other Planning modifications:

FOOD SERVICES

All eating arrangements will be at the 6ft social distance rule within the classroom. Based on room size and student numbers, some students may be moved to the hallway to eat lunch or breakfast. Students who do have to eat in the hallway will be supervised and will eat with at least one other student.

Upon entering the building, breakfast stations will be set up in the hallway for any students choosing to have breakfast. It will always be encouraged to have your student eat breakfast at home, if possible.

Lunch will be supervised by our support staff within the classrooms. Lunch orders will be taken the previous day as we currently practice. Students may continue to bring their lunches from home.

TRANSPORTATION

On Monday, April 19 bus transportation slips were sent home in student's backpack. Adjustments were made to transportation routes, times, and pick-ups. The transportation department prepared transportation plans for all eligible students.

Message sent to parents on transportation: If you will not be using the buses, please notify the school as soon as possible. Please email kwillis@gstbooces.org for any updates to transportation. Please also include RVanhouten@gstbooces.org our Director of Transportation. Please do this by as soon as possible after receiving the notification. Please be sure to include your child's name in the correspondence to Mrs. Willis and Mr. VanHouten. I am sure many of you will continue to drop-off your child at school.



CDC and DOH GUIDANCE

We are still under the current state and local department of health guidance regarding COVID-19 protocols governing school operations. The significant update that is allowing us to return to school for a full day is a change from 6ft to 3ft social distancing in the classrooms.

MASKS: Another significant update to the guidance is that students and staff are to wear their masks at all times unless they are eating. We are working on interpretations and clarity of this guidance.

COVID PROTOCOLS

Covid-19 transmission is still a risk for students and staff. Though the number of positive cases has dwindled significantly, the possibility still exists that a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19.

A positive COVID-19 cases in school will continue to follow the same procedures we have followed from the beginning of the school year. Contact tracing, classroom quarantine, and online learning will all remain part of our required protocols.

Message sent to parents on transportation: If your child is sick at home or presents sickness at school, we are still required to follow the same COVID-19 protocols as before. COVID-19 like symptoms will require either a ten (10) day quarantine or a negative COVID-19 test in order to return to school.

SPECIAL NOTE: If a child has both a rapid test and a PCR test for COVID-19, both tests must come back negative in order to return to school Parents can email the COVID-19 test results to Amy Brewer, (abrewer@gstboces.org) our school nurse. She will be happy to answer any questions you have regarding COVID-19 protocols.

We also kindly ask, if your child is absent from school, please call to talk to Nurse Brewer regarding your child.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMING

Consistency, from now until June 23rd will be a benefit to both teachers and students alike. In order to create that consistency, we will be providing the following educational programing for the remainder of the year.

In-Person Learning

Students who attend school every day and are physically present in the building.

Remote/Online Learning

Students who learn from home in classes from Mrs. Reed, Mrs. Paulga, or Mrs. Mayotte
These students have been in this learning option and will maintain it for the remainder of the year.

Remote-In Learning

This temporary learning option will only be for students who are out of school for COVID-19 protocols. They will be offered the opportunity to remote into the in-person classroom schedule if they are out because of a pending COVID-19 test or quarantine. Other absences will not have the option of remotng into the classroom.

Special Note: Any parent requesting their child change from in-person learning to the remote/online learning option will be required to present a doctor's note specifically stating the reason the child cannot attend in person learning. It must also be approved to be approved by the Elmira Heights School physician.



Elmira Heights CSD Guidance adjustment Assessment process for current formatting:

The Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency can be found at the following:

https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Pre-K_to_Grade_12_Schools_MasterGuidance.pdf

Steps for assessing our status under the new guidelines at each level:

Step 1: County Designation for Community Transmission Assessment-

What is our County Transmission assessed at using the CDC Tables sited in the NYSDOH Guidelines?

We are currently assessed as being a county with “HIGH” risk of Community Transmission according to the new CDC charts used in our new State Guidelines.

Our Level of Community Transmission can be found on the CDC website at:

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>

Step 2: Determine appropriate format strategy-

What guidelines are our schools able to organize our classroom strategies (6 feet or 3 feet between student stations) under?

Our designation as a County of “High Transmission” rate requires us to follow the corresponding “High Transmission Red” designation prevention strategies.

In counties with high risk of transmission, elementary schools can maintain physical distancing of at least three feet between students in classrooms and cohorting is recommended when possible. However, in middle and high schools three feet between students in classrooms is recommended only when schools can use cohorting. When schools cannot maintain cohorting, middle and high schools must maintain physical distancing of at least six feet between students in classrooms. (Taken from the “Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency”, page 8)

This assessment is echoed in a recent statement dated April 16, 2021 by Chemung County Executive Chris Moss:

The guidance is specific and indicates “when schools cannot maintain cohorting, middle and high schools must maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet between students and classrooms.” The guidance issued on April 9, 2021 gives a complete definition of cohort, basically meaning that the same students should remain together throughout the school day. Students should remain 6 feet apart unless the cohorting method, as outlined in the guidance, is being adhered to.



Adaptations to adjust to the Update New York State Department of Health Guidance: Cohen Middle School & Thomas A. Edison High School

Here are the highlights of the changes we have put in place for Cohen Middle School, and Thomas A. Edison High School.

- **Cohen Middle School:**

- State Guidelines designate, according to our local data, we can bring back all of our middle school students if they are cohorted. We are unable to cohort our students if we combine our two hybrid groups. This is due to small classroom sizes and/or limited staff numbers we have available to us here in the Heights.
- As a result of this assessment we have attempted to maximize the space we do have in a prioritized manner:
 - NYS Guidelines set standards for maximizing our student population in classrooms set up using six-foot minimums:
 - Prioritize students of special needs, then struggling and at-risk populations of students
 - Over the past week we have been able to bring back our students of special needs to a four-days a week schedule. When we have had some additional space at some grade levels. We have identified our next most at-risk students to bring in four days a week.
 - *Status at print* – we have reached our available limit within these current guidelines.

- **Thomas A. Edison High School:**

- State Guidelines designate, according to our local data, we can combine our two hybrid groups at the high school if they are cohorted. We are unable to cohort our students if we combine our two hybrid groups. This is due to small classroom sizes and/or limited staff numbers we have available to us here in the Heights.
- As a result of this assessment we have attempted to maximize the space we do have in a prioritized manner:
 - NYS Guidelines set standards for maximizing our student population in classrooms set up using six-foot minimums:
 - Prioritize students of special needs, struggling and at-risk populations of students
 - Over the past week we have been able to bring back our students of special needs to a four-days a week schedule. When we have had some additional space, we have identified our next most at-risk students to bring in four days a week.
 - *Status at print* – we have reached our available limit within these current guidelines.



Table 1. CDC Indicators and Thresholds for Community Transmission of COVID-19¹

Indicator	Low Transmission Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
Total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days ²	0-9	10-49	50-99	≥100
Percentage of NAATs that are positive during the past 7 days ³	<5.0%	5.0%-7.9%	8.0%-9.9%	≥10.0%

¹If the two indicators suggest different levels, the actions corresponding to the higher threshold should be chosen. County-level data on total new cases in the past 7 days and test percent positivity are available on the County View tab in CDC's COVID Data Tracker.

²Total number of new cases per 100,000 persons within the last 7 days is calculated by adding the number of new cases in the county (or other community type) in the last 7 days divided by the population in the county (or other community type) and multiplying by 100,000.

³Percentage of positive diagnostic and screening NAATs during the last 7 days is calculated by dividing the number of positive tests in the county (or other administrative level) during the last 7 days by the total number of tests resulted over the last 7 days. Additional information can be found on the Calculating Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) Laboratory Test Percent Positivity: CDC Methods and Considerations for Comparisons and Interpretation webpage.



Table 2. Recommended Prevention Strategies for K-12 Schools and Levels of Community Transmission

Prevention Strategies: All Schools			
<p>All schools implement 5 key prevention strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal and correct use of masks required • Physical distancing • Handwashing and respiratory etiquette • Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities • Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine 			
Prevention Strategies by Level of Community Transmission			
Low Transmission ¹ Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
<p>Elementary Schools Physical distancing: at least 3 feet between students in classrooms</p>		<p>Elementary Schools Physical distancing: at least 3 feet of distance between students in classrooms Cohorting² recommended when possible</p>	
<p>Middle and High Schools Physical distancing: at least 3 feet between students in classrooms</p>		<p>Middle and High Schools Physical distancing: at least 3 feet of distance between students in classrooms Cohorting recommended when possible</p>	<p>Middle and High Schools Schools that can use cohorting: at least 3 feet of distance Schools that cannot use cohorting: at least 6 feet distance between students in classrooms ²</p>
<p>Sports and extracurricular activities Sports and extracurricular activities occur with at least 6 feet of physical distance to the greatest extent possible⁶</p>	<p>Sports and extracurricular activities Sports and extracurricular activities occur with at least 6 feet of physical distance required⁶</p>	<p>Sports and extracurricular activities Sports and extracurricular activities occur only if they can be held outdoors, with more than 6 feet of physical distancing⁶</p>	

¹Levels of community transmission defined as total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days (low, 0-9; moderate, 10-49; substantial, 50-99; high, ≥100) and percentage of positive tests in the past 7 days (low, <5%; moderate, 5-7.9%; substantial, 8-9.9%; high, ≥10%).

²Cohorting involves creating groups of students that are separated from other groups by at least 6 feet throughout the entire day. Cohorting can be implemented in either full in-person instruction or hybrid instruction, or through other strategies.

³In middle and high schools, 6 feet is recommended in areas of high community transmission, unless they can implement cohorting. Schools may consider using reduced attendance, hybrid instruction, or other strategies to ensure 6 feet of physical distance between students in middle and high schools that do not use cohorting. Diagnostic testing for SARS-CoV-2 is intended to identify occurrence of SARS-CoV-2 infection at the individual level and is performed on individuals with or without suspected COVID-19 infection in accordance with the test's authorization and labeling.

⁴Middle and high schools in areas of high community transmission should implement cohorting if they use less than 6 feet between students in classrooms. If cohorting is not possible, 6 feet between students is recommended. Middle and high schools can use strategies such as reduced attendance (some students are virtual only at all times) or hybrid instruction to achieve 6 feet of distance.

⁵School officials should implement limits on spectators and attendees for sports, extracurricular activities, and events to ensure 6 feet of physical distance and require use of masks.

⁶Schools may consider using screening testing for student athletes and adults (e.g., coaches, trainers) who support these activities to facilitate safe participation and reduce risk of transmission. See screening testing section and Table 4 for additional details