

Augusta School Department
Framework for Return to Classroom Instruction
Based on the Maine Department of Education Framework
Fall 2020

Table of Contents

Part 1 - Physical Health and Safety Considerations

Part II - Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Considerations

Part III - Academic Programs and Student Learning Considerations

Part IV - Common Expectations for Remote Instruction

Part 1 - Physical Health and Safety Considerations

1. Determining When it is Safe

Many of the decisions regarding the re-opening of the Augusta School Department (ASD) will be from guidance and directives of state-level officials including, but not limited to:

- Maine Governor Janet Mills
- Maine Education Commissioner Pender Makin and Maine Department of Education
- Maine Centers for Disease Control
- Kennebec County Emergency Management Coordinators

The Augusta School Department will work with applicable State and Local orders to determine school capacity and readiness markers.

The ASD will do the following to mitigate children and employees at higher risk for severe illness:

- Educators and other staff who are at a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 will be encouraged to consult with their health care providers about whether and under what circumstances a return to in-person school settings would be medically inadvisable.
- Establish a point of contact with the local health department such as the District's school physician through Kennebec Pediatrics.
- Provide hand sanitizer for students and staff.
- Provide PPE to vulnerable students and staff as appropriate.
- Allow vulnerable students to complete their coursework virtually.
- All vulnerable students and staff to wear PPE throughout the school day (to the extent possible).
- Establish a process for regular check-ins with vulnerable students and staff.
- Allow an early transition for vulnerable students to go to classes.
- Limit large group gatherings/interactions for all students and staff.

The following measures will be in place to screen students and staff upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure:

- Provide screening questions for parents to use prior to sending their child to school. Encourage parents to keep their children at home if they answer "yes" to any of the screening questions and if their children have any symptoms.
- Provide screening questions for all staff and encourage staff to stay home if they answer "yes" to any of the screening questions and if they are sick. All staff should check in with administration daily.
- Require the Bus Drivers to screen students as they enter the bus.
- Establish a protocol for students and staff who feel ill/experience symptoms when they are at school, which includes an isolation room.
- Homeroom teachers will check in with students each morning to screen for any symptoms and report them to the principal and school nurse. The nurse will screen them in the classroom if possible before bringing them to the clinic or designated isolation room.

- Establish a protocol for visitors to call before entering, screening visitors, requesting use of face coverings/masks, etc. Restrict nonessential visitors and volunteers.

The following guidelines will be in place to promote healthy hygiene practices:

- Teach and reinforce good hygiene measures such as hand washing, covering coughs, and use of face coverings.
- Provide hand soap and hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, paper towels, and no-touch trash cans in all bathrooms, classrooms and frequently trafficked areas.
- Post signage in classrooms, hallways and entrances to communicate how to stop the spread.
- Clean/disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects after each use.
- Provide masks and other appropriate PPE to staff.
- Allow students and staff to bring hand sanitizer and masks.
- Turn off water fountains and provide bottled water or allow students and staff to bring bottles from home.
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly.
- Create training videos for families, students and staff.

The ASD is prepared to intensify cleaning, disinfecting and monitor adequate ventilation. Here are the plans:

- Create a training model for staff to review use of cleaning materials, safety protocols and plan expectations. Staff will complete the training before the start of school and be required to sign off.
- The Director of Building and Grounds will monitor the ventilation controls to provide adequate ventilation.
- All custodial staff have received additional training from Clean-O-Rama and the Director of Building and Grounds on disinfecting and will receive detailed guides on areas to focus on for disinfecting during a pandemic.

The following plans will be in place to encourage social distancing through increased spacing, small groups and limited mixing between groups, if feasible:

- Size of classrooms will determine the number of students in the class for learning. Classrooms will be set up following the recommendations from the CDC of 6ft social distancing whenever feasible or no less than 3ft as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). All desks will be facing the same direction.
- Class sizes will be reduced in the hybrid model and to meet the social distancing requirements in the classroom. Limit mixing between groups to the extent possible.
- Provide additional time for transitions.
- Designate areas in hallways (i.e. lanes) as flow paths to keep students separated and minimize congregations of students.
- Plan staggered class changes to decrease the number of students in the hallways at one time.
- Have the same group of students stay with the same staff all day for young children and as much as feasible for older children.

There is a plan for all staff to be trained on health and safety protocols. The training will be completed before the school year starts as part of the required annual training. Staff will be required to sign off after completion of the training.

The following procedures will be followed for encouraging staff and students to stay home if they are sick:

- Require daily screening for parents to use prior to sending their child to school. Encourage parents to keep their children at home if they answer “yes” to any of the screening questions and if their children have any symptoms.
- Require daily screening for all staff and encourage staff to stay home if they answer “yes” to any of the screening questions and if they are sick.
- All staff will be encouraged to check in with administration daily.
- Require families to pick up students ASAP if contacted to pick up their children when reported as being sick in school.
- Provide education signs to educate anyone entering schools.

The ASD will use guidance from the CDC as to the protocol, if a staff member or student tests positive for COVID. In addition, there will be a designated isolation space separate from the nurse’s office or other space where medical care is provided. The district will communicate information to CDC and other local agencies to coordinate the response. Families will receive updates through email, robocall, and websites as deemed necessary by the Superintendent.

2. Preparing Prior to Reintegration

In creating reentry plans, the most disadvantaged and marginalized populations were considered to make sure that they are supported in any one of the models. Here are some of the considerations:

- One to one learning devices with hot spots available for families when needed.
- Software selection that is engaging and connected to the curriculum, able to differentiate instruction, encourage feedback loops, built in assessments and to promote communication.
- Increased Licensed Counselors to meet the social and emotional needs of the students.
- Increased nurses to respond to the health needs.
- Identify weekly staff office hours to check-in with students and families.
- Provide necessary supplies and materials for at home use for all students.
- Communicates are translated for ESOL families.

3. Preparing the Facilities

Below are the following steps that ASD is and will be doing to prepare the facilities for reopening:

- The Business Manager, Director of Building and Grounds and Administrators will meet to discuss any necessary changes or additions that will need to be made.
- The Superintendent, Business Manager, Director of Building and Grounds, Nurses and Administrators will communicate as needed to ensure that all of the necessary supplies for supporting the health and safety guidelines are available.
- Custodial staff will receive additional training on cleaning and disinfecting to ensure that all buildings and classrooms are thoroughly cleaned. Staff will be provided with wipes and disinfectant spray that can be used as needed.

- All carpets will be wrapped and stored for future use. All furniture that cannot be properly cleaned and sanitized will be removed. All toys that cannot be cleaned and disinfected daily will need to be bagged so that students are not able to use them.
- All high touch areas will be disinfected as often as possible and at the end of each day.
- All areas such as doorways, bathrooms, sinks or other areas where students may congregate will be marked to promote a 6 foot standing space.
- All hallways will be marked with arrows to show the flow of traffic. If one way traffic is possible all hallways and stairwells will be marked accordingly.
- Signs will be used to remind students to keep their hands to themselves, keep a 6 foot distance, wear a face covering, and use proper hand washing protocols.
- Each School Administrator will educate families and students on the plan for vehicle traffic flow, drop off, and pick up logistics and signage will be placed as needed.
- The installation of plexiglass shields in high traffic areas such as secretaries and nursing areas will be provided and installed.
- Additional hand sanitizing stations will be set up in all facilities. All classrooms, entrances and office areas will have them available for use. All elementary classrooms have individual sinks for handwashing. Middle and High School students will be encouraged to wash hands as often as possible and to use the hand sanitizing stations.
- The Director of Building and Grounds will monitor the Building Automation System to ensure that proper ventilation is taking place. He will also work with Siemens Building Technology to monitor scheduled operation times and will increase them as necessary.
- Communication through daily announcements, emails, and social media will be used to raise awareness among staff, families and students regarding any new procedures and expectations.

4. Educating Staff, Families, and Students PRIOR to Re-Entry

- Custodial and Food Service staff will be training on the safe and health protocols before the start of school.
- Create a training model for staff to review use of cleaning materials, safety protocols and plan expectations. Staff will complete the training before the start of school and be required to sign off.
- Consider a virtual “open house” or pre-entry webinar for families.
- Ensure all communication, signs and procedures are communicated through language/visuals and modes that ensure the information is accessible for all students.
- Offer Kid-friendly videos to teach proper donning and doffing of face coverings, keeping 6’ apart and other health and safety guidelines.
- Staff and Parent Handbooks will be provided with the expectation that they are reviewed. Staff and Parents will sign off that they have read the handbook.

5. Responding to a Positive Case of COVID-19

- Identify an isolation room or area to separate any one who exhibits COVID like symptoms.
 - Each facility will need to establish a space and inform all staff.
 - Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone sick home or to a healthcare facility.

- Contact family members to pick up their child ASAP.
- Use First Student to help transport home if the parent/ guardian is not available.
- Contact local authorities if someone needs to be transported home.
- Notify health officials, staff, and families immediately of a positive case while maintaining confidentiality and other applicable federal and state privacy laws.
- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use before cleaning and disinfecting.
 - As areas are closed off the space will be disinfected as soon as possible if the room is needed right away.
- Advise sick staff members and children not to return until they have met CDC Criteria.
- Inform those who have had close contact to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms and to follow CDC guidance, if symptoms develop. If a person does not have symptoms, follow appropriate CDC guidance for home isolation.

Part II - Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Considerations

1. Prior to Re-Entry:

The ASD has consulted and communicated with mental health staff, counselors, social workers, and educators to develop plans to support staff, students and families as they return to school. The district conducted a survey to collect feedback about the reopening plan, which was posted on social media for families and emailed to staff. Grade level meetings were held to gather staff ideas, concerns and to answer questions. Building administrators have sent weekly updates and held staff meetings when necessary. There is a COVID resource button on the district's website with the important documents and communications. There is also an FAQ section. Information is translated and the district translator and ELL staff is available as needed. The School Board welcomed public feedback and there were opportunities for the public to speak at the Board meeting. There will be Informational opportunities to communicate with families and students in preparation for the reopening.

The ASD is prepared to reach out to higher needs students and families throughout the remote learning period and to have Deans, social workers or counselors develop individualized support plans as needed through the following means:

- Each school's Student Assistance Team meets to assess family situations and identify student needs, then creates a plan to support.
- Deans, social workers and/or counselors will reach out to identified families through phone calls, emails, texts, etc. to create two way communication.
- Deans, social workers and/or counselors will establish and document a method of successful two way communication with each family.
- They will Contact at-risk students prior to the start of school.
- They Monitor student progress and student needs on a regular basis by having regular two-way communication with families, students and staff to share information about student/family needs and progress.

Below are the plans for ASD to continue to implement trauma informed practices:

- Train staff in school-wide trauma informed practices and social emotional learning..
- Incorporate mindfulness into daily routines

- School clinicians, counselors and Deans of students will create training for staff days in August.
- School counselors will adapt fall plans to support in the classroom where students need extra support, offer small groups, and create Social and Emotional Lessons (SEL) to address social and emotional curricular needs.
- Communicate with staff the Maine School Safety Center training opportunities.

Below are the plans to mitigate impacts of adjusting to new cultures, new languages, and new community resources and supports for students and families.

- Make sure all communication is sensitive to the needs of all families. Consider available skills, resources and language of all families.
- Family survey translated to Arabic. Home calls made for smaller ELL populations of Spanish and Chinese speaking families.
- Provide staff with implicit bias training to ensure common language.
- Include ELL teachers, interpreters, and CANMP as supports for families.
- Provide school clinician support to McKinney Vento Students to facilitate counseling and outreach to local agencies to support student basic needs.
- Consider the impact of wearing masks on the ability to read emotions and facial expressions, follow speech, participate in speech-related interventions, and ability to generally follow and participate in academics. Consider additional impacts on English Language Learners, students with disabilities, including those who are deaf and hard of hearing.
- Review bullying protocols with students and staff.

2. **Structuring Re-Entry to Support the Unique Needs of Your School Community: Consult with mental health staff, counselors, social workers, and educators.**

The ASD planning subcommittee consists of K-12 staff representing administrators, counselors, clinicians, deans of students, and student support staff as well as representatives from the Augusta School Board and Educators' Association. The following are the considerations determined by the subcommittee to address the need for differentiated approaches based on age, grade and developmental levels; consider looping models for flexibility:

- District wide plan developed by subcommittee with recommendations for individual buildings to adapt for their specific needs.
- Staff training with clinicians to discuss what anxiety/stress can look like at each grade span and develop strategies to share with staff to reduce or address stress responses and develop trauma sensitivity in their classrooms.
- Counselors/Clinicians model and facilitate classroom meetings in collaboration with the teacher to allow students to collectively process their experience.
- Title I staff provide supplemental literacy and math supports for students.
- Special Education staff provide professional development on differentiation.
- Social and Emotional curriculum purposefully embedded into core academic subjects to ensure they can be delivered in scenarios that would require an abbreviated day, a hybrid schedule or an abrupt switch to virtual learning.

- Continue to implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports plan and to support Restorative practices.
- Create smaller class sizes where teachers and students can increase their Social and Emotional care for one another.

The ASD recognizes the importance of check ins with staff; to encourage mindfulness and use of employee assistance plans for well-being. The ASD will provide self-care training for staff and build opportunities into the school culture including mindfulness during the day and wellness activities after school. School clinicians and counselors will develop and send out weekly self-care and self-reflection emails promote wellness and mindfulness and to reduce stress. Staff will be encouraged to use the Employee Assistance Program. Mentor teachers will monitor the new staff as well as encourage colleagues who may need support to access resources available.

Through the professional development provided to staff prior to the school year, it will be important to provide awareness of anxiety and depression as part of the trauma informed work. In addition there will be:

- School-wide SEL - establish regular contact with individual classrooms by counselors, clinicians, Deans of students in order to touch base with staff and students, focusing on stressors and proactively addressing them.
- Create a clear referral process in each building. Establish a process to help identify and provide supports for staff and students perhaps at higher risk for significant stressor trauma from COVID-19.
- Encourage staff to identify and utilize coworker supports within the building including mentors for first year staff.
- Create mask break opportunities
- Staff will model good mental health practices, self-care and coping mechanisms for students.

The Response to Intervention framework and Positive Behavioral Interventions framework includes a focus on the social and emotional needs of the students. Also, resources will be shared on district and school websites. There will be daily check-ins to gauge the needs of the students and staff. ASD will continue to promote staff wellness activities.

Part III - Academic Programs and Student Learning Considerations

1. Overview of Potential Instructional Models:

The ASD has prepared reopening plans for the elementary level, Middle/High School level and for the Capital Area Technical Center. Those plans should be referenced as they each outline the instructional models. The following is the professional development plans for staff in preparation for the instructional models:

- The committee reviewed and monitored the free webinars and live sessions on remote learning and blended learning models available on the MDOE website, as well as other resources.
- Asked teachers through dialogue with grade levels and department what they needed for professional development. Also, include prior ASD survey results, spring 2020 reflections and discussions with staff.
- Professional development for staff will be conducted prior to the start of school (Aug. 20, 21, 23, 25-28, 31 and September 1-4)
 - Train staff on protocols regarding COVID-19.
 - Train staff on remote learning/blended platforms (Seesaw and Google Classroom) and expectations (for students and staff).
 - Train staff on blended approaches and expectations (for students and staff).
 - Train staff on how they will develop their lesson plans- synchronous and asynchronous learning.
 - Train staff on meeting student and staff social emotional needs.
- In addition staff will:
 - Review the curriculum/ standards to highlight what is essential for the specific grade levels/ departments (ie Achieve the Core)
 - Train students in person for all of the instructional models at the beginning of the year, regardless if they are choosing in-person or at home.
 - Create teacher/staff videos explaining how to access technology and resources with remote learning. How-to: Email culture, Google Classroom, Open attachment, Zoom.
 - Ensure that all students have access to technology and/ or paper packets.
 - Conduct and Review Needs Assessment survey (July 2020) for staff and for parents/guardians- access to technology, home learning space, basic needs (nutrition).

The ASD will review current assessment tools (F&P, writing prompt, NWEA, MyMath, Envision Math) as well as formative assessments to ensure that data is being collected and monitored to inform instruction to best meet individual needs. There will be ongoing documentation and communication between staff and families.

The district is committed to making sure that students with disabilities, students who are English Language Learners, and other special populations are considered. Here are those considerations:

- Due to new learning opportunities for all students, requirements of 504s and IEPs are expected. Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) is still expected for all students.
- Ensure that all have access to technology and/or packets, including those that are non-verbal, hearing/vision impaired, etc.
- Differentiated instruction (academics and executive function skills) whether it is in person or remotely; work collaboratively with Sped, ELL, and Title I.
- Ensure that the accommodations of the IEP and 504 are being met.
 - Staff training to meet accommodations in new setting
 - Assess the need for alternative platforms
- Ensure that the learning goals of the IEP are being met (learning disability, speech, cognitive, behavioral).

There are plans to recover learning loss that may have occurred as a result of remote learning. Grades PreK-12 will recover learning lost throughout the year through pre and post tests and the Response to Interventions framework. In addition, Grades 9-12 will provide a plan for 2019-2020 Quarter 4 classes. In order to best measure student progress attained through the end of the third quarter and what was the expected growth through the end of the 2019-2020 school year. The following will be considered:

- Formative academic measures (Math, ELA, Science)
- Social and Emotional Skills (i.e ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences Survey))
- Progress monitoring and intervention data prior to March 2020 and current
- Executive Skills
- Access issues (Was the child able to meaningfully participate in remote learning?)
- Utilize district assessments to assess all students in the fall to identify gaps in learning
- Review academic data prior to March 13th

Part IV - Common Expectations for Remote Instruction

The ASD has prepared reopening plans for the elementary level, Middle/High School level and for the Capital Area Technical Center, which include remote learning. Those plans should be referenced as they each outline the Remote Learning model. In preparation for remote learning teachers will identify power standards by grade level and/or subject area in order to recoup lost instructional time. Teachers will identify the current achievement level of students via formative and summative assessments.

Here are additional considerations for remote learning:

- There will be common expectations at each grade level for appropriate remote learning.
- Students will follow prescribed remote academic schedules outlined at each of their respective schools.
- Remote learning schedules will follow the regular middle and high school schedule, whenever feasible.
- Attendance tracking system will be utilized for all remote learning days.
- School practices and policies related to learning expectations, grading, etc. will be maintained, although some assessments may be altered or replaced.
- At the elementary level, students will have daily virtual check-ins and small group instruction with the teacher assigned. There will be additional online and offline activities and assignments for students to complete.
- PreK-2 will use the Seesaw platform and grades 3-12 will use the Googleclassroom platform.
- A letter describing appropriate digital etiquette will be drafted and distributed on a school to school basis as the needs of primary and secondary students vary.
- School will continue with defined hours of operation for staff.