



2021-2022 School Year Reopening Plan

(All details subject to change, per changes in COVID-19 guidance)

Fall 2021 Reopening Guidance

“Schools are an important part of the infrastructure of communities. They provide safe and supportive learning environments for students that support social and emotional development, provide access to critical services, and improve life outcomes. They also employ people, and enable parents, guardians, and caregivers to work. Though COVID-19 outbreaks have occurred in school settings, multiple studies have shown that transmission rates within school settings, when multiple prevention strategies are in place, are typically lower than – or similar to – community transmission levels.” (CDC School Guidelines)

In accordance with federal and state CDC guidelines for schools (updated July 9, 2021), RSU 22 will return to school five days a week with all students and staff in-person for the 2021-22 school year.

Health & Safety Guidance

Vaccination - The district strongly encourages all students and staff to obtain a complete COVID 19 vaccination when eligible. The district will continue to partner with local healthcare providers and pharmacies to promote vaccination as appropriate. The district’s nursing staff will routinely collect staff vaccination status and report aggregate numbers, as required, to the state monthly for publication. All vaccination data will be confidential and viewable by nursing staff only. In addition to state reporting, the data will be used to determine quarantine requirements should a staff member be identified as a close contact.

Masks - Indoor masking will be contingent upon several factors, including vaccine eligibility and community transmission levels. The district will utilize the [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#) to determine community transmission rates and masking recommendations for Penobscot and Waldo counties. The status of **both** counties will determine RSU 22’s district wide masking

protocol. As we have both students and staff who may reside in one county and attend school/work in the adjacent county, we believe both areas must have equal weight in our decision for all schools. Masking will not be required outdoors. Federal transportation mandate requires masking on school transportation including busses and vans. The following outlines RSU 22's contingent masking protocol based on immunization eligibility, community transmission levels or employee status:

Universal masking in grades PreK-6 -- With students under 12 not currently able to be vaccinated against COVID-19, masking when indoors will be required in grades PreK-6*. (*While we recognize that some 6th grade students may be vaccine eligible, the vast majority are not; thus, masking at the 6th grade level would be required.) **When the PreK-6 group (or a subset) becomes vaccine eligible**, masking will become optional as long as **both** Penobscot and Waldo counties are designated **blue** or **yellow** (low or moderate community transmission risk) on the [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#). If either Penobscot or Waldo county is designated **orange** or **red** by the CDC, masking will be required inside RSU 22 facilities for students.

Contingent masking in grades 7-12 -- If **both** Penobscot and Waldo counties are designated **blue** or **yellow** (low or moderate community transmission risk) on the [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#) masking will be **optional** for our students in grades 7-12, regardless of vaccination status. If **either** Penobscot or Waldo county is designated **orange** or **red** by the CDC, masking will be **required** inside RSU 22 facilities for all 7-12 students.

Universal masking of all staff and visitors -- Masking will be required for all staff and visitors **regardless of vaccination status and at all county transmission levels**; however, the district will continue to monitor CDC guidance and may adjust our staff masking protocol at a later time (dependent upon CDC recommendation and vaccination rates within our schools).

Masking during transportation -- Masks are required on all district related transportation (buses, vans, and other district provided modes of transport) for all individuals regardless of age or vaccination status. (see Transportation below).

Distancing - Social distancing of 3' will be maintained whenever possible and when compatible with full in person return per CDC guidelines. Distancing will not be required during brief (<5 minute) transition periods such as in hallways or during active/cooperative learning activities in class. Distancing is not required outdoors. Unvaccinated staff should maintain adequate distancing (6' recommended) from students when possible and as is compatible with educational needs. Social distancing in cafeterias is not compatible with a full return to school and will not be required. Outdoor lunches on K-5 campuses are encouraged.

Pooled testing - All students (with parental consent) and staff are encouraged to participate in weekly pooled testing. Pooled testing for unvaccinated students and staff is strongly encouraged. Testing will be conducted in accordance with MDOE guidelines and provides several advantages including: early detection of positive cases, continuous collection of data for

ongoing decision making, and minimal quarantining. Participation in pooled testing is optional and parents, guardians, staff should contact their student's school nurse for additional details.

Air Quality/Ventilation - Needlepoint BiPolar Ionization is installed and actively working in each school building to deactivate the COVID 19 virus. School ventilation systems will continue to be operated to ensure high rates of air change through HVAC equipment, maximizing outdoor air to the extent possible and using MERV 13 filtering for all recycled air such as may be required by colder temperatures. Teachers will continue to be encouraged to keep windows open when temperatures allow.

Hand Hygiene - All students and staff will continue to utilize frequent hand washing; hand sanitizer will remain available in all spaces.

Symptom check protocol - The district will continue to utilize our daily At-Home-Health Screening. The assessment will be modified, as guidance is updated, and schools will communicate guidance and requirements regularly to families. Health assessments must be conducted daily before arriving at school for all students and staff. Individuals who are feeling unwell or showing symptoms of illness are required to stay home.

COVID response protocols for positive cases - RSU 22 will continue to follow current state guidelines for handling the occurrence of a COVID positive case in school. As of August 2021, this includes required reporting, contact tracing and quarantine of individuals who test positive, as well as notification and quarantine, if necessary, of those identified as close contacts.

Cleaning protocols - Custodial support will continue to utilize best practices for cleaning in our buildings; classroom cleaning supplies will be available for all spaces and staff is encouraged to clean surfaces as practical within their day.

Additional Considerations

Transportation - District transportation will return to pre-COVID capacity limits. Masks will be required for all students and adults school provided transportation, including buses, vans, and other modes of school sponsored transportation, per federal CDC guidelines. When weather permits, windows should be opened for increased ventilation.

Performing Arts/Music - Consultation with RSU 22 music staff - largely returns to COVID advised practices, with safety precautions in place as recommended by Department of Education and/or professional music association COVID 19 safety practices. Particular attention will be paid to grades 6 and younger and for groups where spacing is restricted.

Parent volunteers/visitors (school day) - Schools may resume their volunteer programs, following appropriate protocols (including universal masking and a sign-in form/sheet that includes an acknowledgement form outlining safety protocols).

Meetings (in-person vs. virtual) - RSU 22 will continue to utilize virtual meetings when appropriate depending on meeting size, participants, and agenda. In person meetings may be possible and scheduling should be determined on a case-by-case

basis. District Policy BED Remote Board Meetings will be recommended for Board adoption for use in emergency situations.

Hybrid/Remote Learning - RSU 22 is not offering hybrid or remote learning options in 2021-2022. Families who are looking for a long-term, full remote program should explore external options like Maine's virtual charter schools, national virtual learning companies or homeschooling.

Superintendent Latitude - The Board agrees to provide the Superintendent latitude to collect data and adjust the district's Return to School Plan, as necessary.

Community Transmission Ratings -

The CDC identifies four levels of community transmission and provides a county-level map ([CDC scale](#)) based on weekly new infection rates.

Blue - Low Transmission (0-1.2 new cases/day or 0-9.9 new cases/week per 100K population)

Yellow - Moderate Transmission (1.3-7 new cases/day or 10-49.9 new cases/week per 100k population)

Orange - Substantial Transmission (7.1-14.3 new cases/day or 50-99.9 new cases/week per 100K population)

Red - High Transmission (>14.3 new cases/day or ≥100 new cases/week per 100K population)