

# White Mountains Regional School District - SAU #36



## 2022-2023 Return to School Plan

August 11, 2022

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August 11, 2022

To: The WMRSD School Board

From: Dr. Marion Anastasia, Ms. Lisa Miller, and the District Leadership Team

### Executive Summary

Given the current science regarding COVID-19 and any variant, we will continue to follow the in-person learning model on September 6, 2022.

Following more than three years of the pandemic, we are committed to continue our efforts to re-engage students and staff as they return to school in September. Given this, we must address gaps that were exacerbated by the pandemic and strengthen our District. We have identified eight key strategy areas for “return to school” recommendations that prioritize health & safety, social & emotional health, and increasing academic achievement. Health and safety continue to be our top priority. NH DHHS has established a resource to assist schools in responding to COVID-19.

In addition to health and safety, we are prioritizing social, emotional, and mental health to support a strong foundation for learning. We will assess the SEL needs of students, invest in effective SEL activities and strategies, and use a multi-tiered approach to address behaviors that are restorative and equitable.

We want every student engaged and progressing academically. We have provided summer sessions for all students whose family requested, or whose IEP mandated. We have also invested in evidence-based strategies, resources, and professional development for the 2022-2023 school year. CTE courses and offerings include college and career pathways.

The District Leadership Team, Nurse Miller, and I recommend the following concepts, procedures, and overall framework for approval for the 2022-2023 WMRSD Return to School Plan. This plan is a continuation from a concerted effort with nearly 70 community and school stakeholders representing the Reopening Taskforce.

### Guiding Beliefs

1. Safety first. Guidance from the CDC, NH DHHS, NHDOE, local physicians, and our community emergency management team will determine our mitigation and infrastructure strategies.
2. Implement in- person instruction.
3. Create a plan that will be achievable, clear, and consistent.
4. Balance safety, SEL, and academic achievement.

5. Focus on the whole child.
6. Be fiscally responsible and responsive in the context of our community.
7. Continual communication with staff, students, families, and the community.

### Timelines for 2022-2023 Reopening

- New Teacher/Staff orientation will be held on August 23, 24, 25, 2022
- Teacher In-service will be held on August 30, 31, and September 1, 2022
- Students' first day of school is September 6, 2022.

### Acknowledgements: The WMRSD Reopening Task Force

We would like to acknowledge and thank the WMRSD Reopening Task Force Members and Steering Committee that was formed to craft the original Reopening Plan dated August 19, 2021. The Reopening Task Force was comprised of WMRSD staff, community members, parents, health professionals, town officials, students, police officers, transportation company, and a school board member. The work was divided into eight domain teams: Communication, Facilities/Physical Plant, Health, Instruction/Sports/Co-Curricula, Operations/Transportation, Technology, Wellness/SEL/Foodservice, and Human Resources. Each team did considerable research, met virtually, and eventually crafted final recommendations to share with the other Domain teams.

### Decision Making Framework

The Domain Committees made recommendations to the Steering Committee (District DLT, Town Health Officer, NEA Representative, School Board member, local physician, and a town Emergency Management Team member). The Steering Committee considered all recommendations and made the final recommendations that were brought to the School Board for approval.

The recommendations do not need to be granular - the individual schools will determine the specific methodology for their school in collaboration with the DLT and staff (example: food service schedules, playground schedules, instructional schedules, etc.) However, overall reopening recommendations will be adhered to safety measures, physical plant accommodations, cleaning protocols, identification of any necessary cohorts, etc.

### Communications Domain Committee

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|--|--|
| 1. Patricia Ainsworth and Michael Curtis*, WMRHS Co-Principals | 3. Jennifer Tetreault,<br>Communications Coordinator |
| 2. Michael Cronin*, WES Principal                              | 4. Eileen Armstrong, WES<br>Administrative Assistant |

5. Pat Car, WMRHS SRO, Whitefield PD
6. Chief Charbonneau, Lancaster PD
7. Chief Samson, Whitefield PD
8. Beth Chase, LES Administrative Assistant

9. Ben Gaetjens-Oleson\*, Town of Lancaster Emergency Management Team

#### Facilities Domain Committee

1. Rob Scott\*, WMRHS CTE Director & Director of Facilities
2. Stephanie Glidden, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent
3. Gary Brown\*, Assistant Facilities Director
4. Roy Palmer, WES Lead Custodian

5. Tim Phillips, LES Lead Custodian
6. Kenneth Oaks, WMRHS Lead Custodian
7. Justin Kenision, Community Member/Parent
8. James Murphy\*, School Board Member

#### Health Domain Committee

1. Cathy Scott, Administrative Assistant, WMRHS Principal
2. Amy Kopp\*, LES Assistant Principal
3. Dr. John Ford\*, Community Physician
4. Alison Breault, Parent
5. James Akerman, Parent/RN
6. Lisa Miller\*, School Nurse, COVID Coordinator

7. Andrea Roy, School Nurse
8. Patricia Belanger, School Nurse
9. John Ross, Community Health Officer
10. Callie Dingman, Parent
11. Clare Brooks, Parent
12. Dr. Chan, Consultation only: NH State Epidemiologist
13. Robyn Lindquist, Parent
14. Marion Anastasia\*

#### Instruction/Sports/Co-Curricular Domain Committee

1. Shelli Roberts\*, Director of Student Services
2. Steven Nilhas\*, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

3. Kerry Brady\*, Athletic Director
4. Patricia Ainsworth\*, WMRHS Co--Principal, Scott Holmes\*, LES Principal
5. Jackie Garneau, Preschool Teacher

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 6. Christine Stevens, Special Education Teacher | 12. Gail McVetty, Teacher Leader                       |
| 7. Katrina Noyes, Special Education Teacher     | 13. Jeannine LaBounty, Teacher Leader                  |
| 8. Catherine Carter, UARTS/Music                | 14. William Klein*, NEA Representative, Teacher Leader |
| 9. Matt Holland, CTE Teacher                    | 15. Amanda Garneau, Middle School Teacher              |
| 10. Sarah Slater, HS Teacher                    | 16. Laura Read, Parent                                 |
| 11. Tina Mooney, Kindergarten Teacher           |  |

#### Transportation Domain Committee

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. WW Berry Transportation Company: Tina Reynolds | 3. Heather McIntire, Parent |
| 2. Marion Anastasia*, Superintendent              |                             |

#### Technology Domain Committee

1. Jeremy Noyes\*, Director of IT
2. Alex Kittredge, IT
3. Aric Mooney, IT

#### SEL/Wellness Domain Committee

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Melodie Stevens*, Director of Food Service | 4. Karen Keller, School Social Worker/Homeless liaison |
| 2. Chelsea Arsenault, School Psychologist     | 5. Sharal Plumley, WES Assistant Principal             |
| 3. Breanna Hurlbutt, School Counselor         |  |

#### Human Resources Domain Committee

1. Cody Arsenault\*, HR and Payroll Manager
2. Kris Franklin\*, Director of Finance
3. Melisa Wadsworth, Assistant to the Director of Finance

## Timelines

8/4/22: Lisa Miller and Marion Anastasia reviewed and revised the August 2021 Return to School Plan

8/4-10/22: Sub committees revised their sections of the plan

8/11/22: Draft of revised Return to School Plan presented to the WMRSD Board for approval.

### Key Strategies: Recommendations by Domain

#### 1. Communications

1. Once the revised plan has been finalized and presented/approved by the Board it will be published on the District website and pushed out to families and staff via alert email blast and a link posted on social media.
2. Communicating COVID-19 information will take place on our WMRSD COVID Information Dashboard. We will display the number of new daily cases in each school, the total number of active cases in each school, the number of resolved cases in each school, as well as the county transmission rates. We will use the CDC COVID Data Tracker to determine the level of transmission in our area. This metric is calculated weekly and uses case rates and COVID-19 hospital admissions to determine whether transmission is low (blue) moderate (yellow) substantial (orange) or high (red). There will be a section on the dashboard for notices and we will post COVID-19 related information there.

#### 2. Facilities/Physical Plant

##### A. Increasing ventilation

- Rooms will be well ventilated with HVAC systems, air purifiers and when appropriate, open windows.
- Outdoor activities and outdoor learning environments are encouraged.
- Replacement of the HVAC system at WES is underway with completion during the 2022-2023 School Year.

## B. Cleaning and disinfection

- Cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces will take place daily.
  - If a person with COVID-19 was in a school building, we will clean and disinfect the areas that the person came into contact with
1. It is a recommendation to adhere to the recommendations of Siemen's in relation to HVAC controls in each of the SAU buildings. Air purifiers, with HEPA filters, will continue to be utilized at each of the buildings.
  2. It is recommended that classrooms be set up to be in compliance with whatever range social distancing is recommended to keep students and staff safe.
  3. Facility usage requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and with consideration of community transmission.

## 3. Health

The 22-23 school year brings us to the 4th year that schools have operated with COVID-19 guidelines in place. The pandemic has not ended, but we do recognize that we are in the transition phase from pandemic to endemic. Vaccination and therapeutics have allowed us to scale back on some of the mitigation measures that we have taken in past years.

Our core prevention strategies will focus on increased ventilation, hygiene, testing of symptomatic students and staff and isolation and quarantine of those who have active COVID-19 infection or have a positive household contact and have not received all of the COVID-19 vaccines they are eligible for. We'd like to be clear that our mitigation measures will minimize risk, not eliminate it. Anyone who is in a high risk category is encouraged to take extra measures (vaccination, masking, distancing) to increase their safety. NH DHHS has established a resource to assist schools in responding to COVID-19.

We are using that document as the framework to our reopening plan. It can be found at the following link and a hard copy is included at the end of this plan:

<https://www.covid19.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt481/files/inline-documents/sonh/schools-c-covid19-response.pdf>



### Promote Vaccination

- Achieving a high level of COVID-19 vaccination among eligible students, staff and families (and communities) is the most important action people can take to protect their own health, end this pandemic and end the need for mitigation measures. We strongly urge parents to consider acquiring vaccines for their children when they are eligible.

### Face Mask use

- We do recognize masking as an effective strategy to limit the transmission of COVID-19 and encourage anyone to wear masks when the community transmission rate is high or when an individual feels they are in a high risk health category.
- Face masks are not required in our buildings unless a student or staff member is returning early from an active COVID-19 infection, returning early from quarantine, or has a COVID-19 positive household contact. If a student or staff member does not want to mask when returning to work or school early (after 5 days of isolation or quarantine) they will be required to remain home for a full 10 days of isolation or quarantine.
- Hand washing and respiratory etiquette
  - Hand hygiene will remain a priority.
  - Students and staff will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes.
  - Hand sanitizer stations should be set up wherever sinks are not available and should be used whenever someone enters and leaves a classroom (entrances to the building, classrooms without sinks, etc.).
- Staying home when sick and getting tested
  - We will continue to have a low threshold for symptomatic students and staff attending school and ask that parents keep their children home if they are not feeling well.
  - Students and staff with new signs and symptoms of a viral syndrome (fever, chills, body or muscle ache) or respiratory viral infection (sinus congestion, sore throat, runny nose, cough) will be excluded from school and asked to

test prior to their return to the building. If they refuse testing, we will consider them positive and ask that they isolate at home for 10 days.

- For as long as test kits continue to be provided to schools by the NH Emergency Operations Center, COVID-19 antigen (rapid) testing will be available at each school. Parents can make arrangements with the school nurse to have their symptomatic students tested prior to entering the building. If a student becomes symptomatic during the school day, parents will be notified and can opt to have testing done at school, take their child to an outside agency to test, or dismiss their child and test at home with a home kit. Again, parents who refuse testing for their child will have to keep their child out of school for an isolation period of 10 days.
- Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine
  - Positive cases that occur at school (students or staff) will be reported to DHHS via the weekly aggregate reporting on the nh.gov website.
  - We will continue to follow DHHS guidance for quarantine and isolation as outlined in the following link:  
[https://www.covid19.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt481/files/inline-documents/s-onh/isolation-and-quarantine-recommendations\\_0.pdf](https://www.covid19.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt481/files/inline-documents/s-onh/isolation-and-quarantine-recommendations_0.pdf)

Update: August 12, 2022 [DHHS guidelines as of 8.12.22](#)

- Contact tracing of cases and notices of positive COVID-19 cases will no longer be emailed home. New daily cases will be reported on the COVID Information Dashboard located on the SAU 36 website.

#### Nurse's office

- An Isolation room is recommended at each school.
- Limit traffic to the health office and treat/medicate students in the classroom (or hallway outside of classroom) when able to avoid mixing healthy students with ill students.

## COVID Coordinator

- Continue with assigning the additional responsibilities for the overall management, processing, crafting protocols, and reporting of COVID cases and science for the 2022-2023 school year.
- Participate in the District Leadership Team meetings when appropriate to provide guidance and recommendations.

## 4. Instruction/Sports/Co-Curricular

1. At the time of the publication of this document, there is no intention or requirements from the NH DOE to offer remote learning for the 2022-2023 school year. Given this, WMRSD will not offer remote for a learning model. However, if conditions warrant, remote learning may be necessary in the future.
2. A variety of authentic assessments in addition to standardized assessments will be used to determine where students are in their learning and to create a growth plan based on the district curriculum. This includes individual education plans, EST plans, and 504 plans.
3. In addition to academics, our students' experience will consist of building classroom communities and relationships with families, SEL, mental health, responsive classroom, and executive function skills.
4. Considerations to address learning loss will need to be personalized in accordance with how effectively the student accessed learning programs from last year.
5. Teacher-Leader directed professional development for all grade level teams including special education teachers.
6. SEL practices will continue in conjunction with academics throughout the school year as developmentally appropriate.
7. Student absences due to COVID will be treated the same as any other student absence. Teachers/administrators will contact families and will provide support with developmentally appropriate practices. We will address each absence scenario individually.
8. Reallocation or addition of staff may be necessary in the event there are large numbers of absences which can't be serviced by classroom teachers.
9. Requirements for students receiving special services will be followed regardless of the education model we are in during the year.

## Special Education

Students with disabilities will receive all special education and related services pursuant to their IEPs/504's through in-person instruction following the SAU #36 proposed opening plans.

The purpose of Special Education is to provide students who qualify, with the services they require, in order to make meaningful progress in the general education setting. Special Education is intended to increase a student's access to what's happening in the general classroom. The Special Education department of the White Mountains Regional School District will provide students with the services, accommodations, and modifications as outlined in their plans (IEP, 504, MTSS), in order for them to have the opportunity to make meaningful progress in school. SAU #36 is committed to taking any and all necessary steps to meet its obligation to provide a free and appropriate education to each of its students.

All students with disabilities who have an IEP, will receive services:

- Special Education Services - direct instruction in academics *and*
- Related Services - services to provide students with the tools they need to access their education. (*Examples: Speech, OT, PT, Teacher of the Vision Impaired, Teacher of the Deaf, Applied Behavioral Analysis*)

Students will follow their class cohort in general education, according to the recommendations outlined in the Health section of the plan.

All students are entitled to be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) of special education supports and related services will be integrated into classroom instruction (as much as possible).

All students with disabilities who have an IEP or 504 plan, are entitled to accommodations, as needed.

Implementation of services will be held within the school day.

Any amendments to IEPs will be a team decision, based upon individual students' needs.

Continuous progress monitoring will be implemented in order to ensure student growth.

### Athletics/Co-Curricula

- Spectators for school athletic and co-curricular events will follow state guidelines.
- We will follow the guidance plan for athletics and co-curricular per the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA) and State Guidelines (if provided). .
- Co-curricular activities will resume based on the health and safety guidelines in the other sections of this plan.

### 5. Transportation

1. Two students to a seat.
2. Will keep windows open (weather permitting) for increased air flow.
3. Children may ride a different bus only if they provide a note to the school on the morning of the change. The school will provide a note to the bus driver so that all parties are aware of the temporary bus change.

### 6. Human Resources

The safety of SAU 36 employees and students are our top priority during the COVID-19 pandemic. As we prepare to return to school procedures have been updated to minimize the risk of exposure and prevent the spread of COVID-19 using recent CDC and NH DHHS guidelines.

Outlined below is an overview of safety measures implemented by SAU 36 employees upon re-entry to our school buildings.

SAU 36 COVID-19 PROTOCOL for Employees:

- Employees will continue to minimize their risk of exposure by adhering to all state and federally ordered guidelines.
- Employees will continue to engage in frequent handwashing.
- Employees will comply with the mask wearing requirements that may be established by the School District.

#### PROCEDURES:

- Employees must report symptoms to administration as soon as possible.
- Procedures will be modified as directed by the district's COVID Coordinator.

#### Employer Responsibilities

SAU will continue to:

- provide supplies required for cleaning and disinfecting work areas as well as PPE (masks and other as appropriate) and;
- consider the emotional and medical needs of all employees (especially those who are medically vulnerable).

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) - Federal <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fmla>

To be eligible for FMLA, an employee shall have been employed for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period preceding the commencement of the leave. Eligible employees shall be entitled to a combined total of 12 weeks of leave per year to use for qualifying reasons. FMLA leave is unpaid, job protected leave where the district continues to pay its portion of the health insurance premiums.

NH FMLA - State (HB14) September 26th, 2019, the Governor of New Hampshire signed into law HB14 and was made retroactive back to June 30, 2019. This new state law expands FMLA eligibility for NH School District employees by reducing the number of hours an employee must work in the year preceding their FMLA leave request from 1,250 to 900. The

employee who has worked the 900 hours or more shall be eligible for family and medical leave under the same terms and conditions as leave provided to eligible employees under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act.

Accrued Sick/Illness Leave. This is the sick leave employees are awarded each year as part of the employment package. Please see your collective bargaining agreements and/or personnel policies for accrual and usage of sick/illness leave. Negotiated Agreements & Personnel Policies Illness / Sick Leave Bank for employees who contribute to the sick leave bank as per their collective bargaining agreements and/or personnel policies, requesting leave from the bank may be an option should all other available leave options be used.

Americans with Disability Act (ADA). <https://www.ada.gov/> The ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. The ADA does not specifically name all impairments covered under this Act, so if an employee thinks they might be entitled to protections under the law, they should reach out to the HR/Payroll Manager to discuss options. Under the ADA, discussions between the employee and employer take place to try and find reasonable accommodations for employees that meet the criteria under this Act. Medical documentation supporting the disability will be required.

#### Personnel Policies

Vaccination cards: Any employee who has received a full series of COVID-19 vaccination may voluntarily provide a copy of his/her vaccination card to the Human Resources/Payroll Manager. These copies will be kept confidentially in employee's personnel files. The Human Resources/Payroll Manager will use this information solely to confirm vaccination status to the district COVID coordinator in the event the employee is identified as a close contact of someone suspected of having COVID-19.

## 7. Technology

The White Mountains Regional School District Information Technology Department will remain flexible with the ability to adapt to the needs of the District throughout the 2022-2023 school year.

### Issued Technology

1. All WMRSD Teachers, Para educators, and support staff have been issued a laptop computer. These laptops can be picked up at the school where they are assigned. The staff members' first login must take place at the school. Staff should follow any instructions sent by the IT Department via email.
2. All Students in Grades Kindergarten through grade 12 have been assigned a Chromebook.
  - a. Chromebooks in Grades K-8 will be organized by school class lists into charging carts.
  - b. Chromebooks in Grades K-4 will remain in the Chromebook charging carts when not in use and shall not leave the building unless the unfortunate event that the district has to return to remote learning.
  - c. Chromebooks in grades 5-8 will remain in the Chromebook charging carts when not in use, however it will be at the discretion of building administrators whether Chromebooks are able to leave the building.
  - d. Chromebooks in Grades 9-12 will be issued to students at the school by grade level on the first day of school or as designated by the high school administration.

### Technology Support

1. All technology support issues will be entered into the District Technology Help Desk.
  - a. Technology support for teachers will be administered at the school through remote means for most issues. If there is a need to physically interact with the laptop, we will organize a time with the teacher.



- b. Technology Support for student Chromebooks will be done at the school remotely. Should there be a need to physically interact with a Chromebook, we will issue a spare.

## 8. Wellness/SEL

To ensure the social emotional and wellness needs of our students and faculty are met, our SEL/Wellness task force committee recommended the following:

1. Many tools/programs/practices support SEL development and a variety of modalities to teach SEL skills should be encouraged. Continue the work of SEL skill development, by focusing on SEL competencies of social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. Lesson planning to infuse SEL competencies into all academic and unified content should be the District's long term goal.
2. Assessment of mental health needs should be a priority, The DESSA universal screener is the instrument chosen by SAU 36. Access to school counselors/mental health providers will be available to all students in need.
3. SAU 36 plans to explore additional SEL supportive programs, including a focus on our 6-8 middle school population, given this was one of the hardest hit populations in our schools due to their limited in-person time.
4. Interventions will be developed as a result of these assessment findings. Interim interventions (prior to the first 6 weeks) should be considered and implemented on a case by case basis.
5. Professional development in the areas of SEL, mental health, trauma, educator self-care and wellness will be ongoing (including completion of Conscious Discipline) to support the needs of our staff. Staff should also have safe places/spaces to process stress and feel supported during these challenging times. Creating an environment of wellness is critically important to support our

staff.

6. Elicit human resources department to establish what District supported wellness programs and mental health services are available for staff members.

### District and School Contacts

School Administrative Unit #36

14 King Square

Whitefield, NH 02598

(603) 837-9363

- Marion Anastasia, Superintendent
- Kristin Franklin, Director of Finance
- Shelli Roberts, Director of Student Services
- Steven Nilhas, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- Rob Scott, Director of Facilities
- Jeremy Noyes, Director of Information Technology
- Kerry Brady, WMRSD Athletic Director
- Gary Brown, Assistant Director of Facilities

White Mountains Regional High School

127 Regional Road

Whitefield, NH 03598

(603) 837-2528

- Patricia Ainsworth, Michael Curtis, Co-Principals
- Robert Scott, Director of Facilities and CTE Director

Whitefield Elementary School

34 Twin Mountain Road

Whitefield, NH 03598

(603) 837-3088

- Michael Cronin, Principal
- Sharal Plumley, Assistant Principal

Lancaster Elementary School  
35 Ice Pond Road  
Lancaster, NH 03584  
(603) 788-4924

- Scott Holmes, Principal
- Amy Kopp , Assistant Principal

Guidance Documents/Resources:

<https://www.covid19.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt481/files/inline-documents/sonh/schools-cc-covid19-response.pdf>

[https://www.covid19.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt481/files/inline-documents/sonh/isolation-and-quarantine-recommendations\\_0.pdf](https://www.covid19.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt481/files/inline-documents/sonh/isolation-and-quarantine-recommendations_0.pdf)