

The Audubon Public School District (07-0150)
Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service
DRAFT I

Date: 06/24/2021

Date Revised: TBD

On May 17, 2021, Governor Murphy announced that upon the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year, portions of [Executive Order 175](#) allowing remote learning will be rescinded, meaning that schools will be required to provide full-day, in-person instruction, as they were prior to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) will share additional information regarding State requirements or guidance for health and safety protocols for the 2021-2022 school year as it becomes available.

The Audubon Public School District will return with full-day in-person instruction for the 2021-2022 school year as directed by the Governor and the New Jersey Department of Education. The first day for school for all students is Tuesday September 7, 2021. The District website and social media forums provide additional and updated information.

The Safe Return Plan incorporates the federally required components. For each mitigating strategy listed below (1-8), please describe how the LEA will maintain the health safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of such policies, on each of the following safety recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

1. Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks

The Audubon Public School District will continue to follow the mandates from the [New Jersey Department of Health](#) and the Governor's [Executive Order 175](#) regarding the wearing of face masks. If these expectations are updated, the Pandemic Response Team will review prior to the implementation of any changes.

General Audubon Public School District Face Mask Guidelines:

- Employees/Students must wear clean and well-maintained masks appropriate for a work/school environment that meets one of the approved face masks types identified below.
- Employees/Students are not to share face masks.
- Employees/Students should carry at least two masks with them daily to ensure that they have a replacement if one becomes unusable while in a district space; replacement disposable masks are available in all classrooms.

- Employees/Students need to remember not to unnecessarily touch their face mask, face, and other surfaces throughout the day.
- Employees/Students must wear a face mask at all times in hallways, classrooms, public spaces, and other common areas (includes bathrooms).

Activities Which Permit Face Mask Removal:

- Employees that work in their own enclosed space (e.g. classroom, cubicle that extends above the head of the employee(s), office) or open space (e.g. building and grounds) are permitted to remove their mask if they are seated 6 feet or more away from others. The employee must wear a mask if anyone comes into the space.
- Employees/Students may remove their mask while eating or drinking *IF* they are situated at a safe distance (TBD) away from others. Once done eating, the student must follow proper hygiene and sanitizing protocols.
- In the case of extreme heat (Heat Index > 79°F) masks are optional for students and employees when outdoors and when indoors as approved by administration. When the heat indoors is extreme, administration will attempt to find another location prior to the removal of masks and/or going outdoors for relief.
- Masks are optional when students and employees are engaged in sustained high-intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities.
- When masks are temporarily removed they should *NOT* be placed on tabletops or other surfaces. The CDC suggests placing the mask on your lap or dropping it below the chin (not when eating).

2. Physical Distancing (e.g. Cohorts/Podding)

The Audubon Public School District will continue to follow the mandates from the [New Jersey Department of Health](#) and the Governor’s Orders regarding physical distancing. If these expectations are updated, the Pandemic Response Team will review prior to the implementation of any changes.

The District will teach, expect, and reinforce social distancing protocols. The CDC defines social distancing, also called “physical distancing” as a means to keep a safe space between yourself and other people who are not from your household. Initially, in order to practice social distancing, it was expected that all employees, students, and visitors on school property, stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people who are not from their household. Social distancing was expected in both indoor and outdoor spaces. Signage was posted throughout the schools and facilities.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention list six (6) [Tips for Social Distancing](#) which include; 1) Know Before You Go; 2) Prepare for Transportation; 3) Limit Contact When Running Errands; 4) Choose Safe Social Activities; 5) Keep Distance at Events and Gatherings; and 6) Stay Distanced While Being Active. Be safe. Keep a safe social distance.

General social distancing guidelines and expectations for the Audubon Public School District include the limiting room capacity when possible, the use of visual cues and signage, limiting elevator occupancy (2-4 maximum occupants), limiting in-person meetings, closing employee break and lunch rooms for gatherings, using larger instructional spaces for classes greater than 25 (students and staff included in count), and not permitting visitors (including parents) into district buildings at any time or on school grounds when in-person instruction is occurring unless deemed as an essential visitor by administration.

Additional social distancing protocols are defined below:

- ❖ **Entrances/Exits.** Entrances and exits are clearly marked and remind faculty, staff, students, and visitors of the CDC requirements for general hygiene, face coverings, and social distancing. See screening protocols for additional information. Hand sanitizers and additional PPE (face mask and gloves) are available if needed at each receptionists' office. All school offices, classrooms, and large group spaces have additional supplies as well. Face shields, N95 masks, and gowns are available when required.

- ❖ **Flow.** Students will follow visual cues including signage, floor and wall decals, and collared tape indicating social distancing protocols directing traffic flow through common areas, entry and exit points, hallways, stairwells, and vestibules. Elevators and restrooms will be clearly marked with occupancy capacities and guidelines. By staggering entry and exit times as well as alternating bell schedules (buildings A-B-C, grade levels, hall ways, odds and evens, etc.) the number of students traversing the hallways at any given time will be limited. These protocols will need to be revisited often until the best possible plan can be determined.

- ❖ **Instructional Spaces.** The District will allow for social distancing within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable. This will be achieved by ensuring students are seated as much as possible three or six feet apart. When desks cannot be removed, students' seating assignments will be staggered and alternate by cohort. If the District is not able to maintain this physical distance, additional modifications will be considered including using physical barriers between desks,

turning desks to face the same direction (rather than facing each other), and/or having students sit on only one side of the table, spaced apart.

Equipment for [Faculty & Staff](#) and [Students](#) guidance documents. Face coverings are to be worn when moving about the classroom.

The District has removed soft items (rugs, curtains, other fabric materials) due to disinfecting challenges. Alternate seating that was acquired by staff members that is fabric-based was taken home or discarded. Staff have been encouraged to minimize clutter in the classroom. Individual student items were not to be shared and stored in student specific locations (e.g. labeled bins and cubbies, lockers). Student items such as backpacks, coats, jackets, and other resources were taken home daily. Desktops were kept uncluttered. Items that need to be sprayed electrostatically such as face shields could be left on the student's desk overnight.

- ❖ **Noninstructional Spaces.** All instructional and non-instructional rooms in schools and district facilities comply with social distancing standards to the maximum practical extent. Clear physical barriers were put in place in reception areas, school offices, and where 6 feet distancing is not possible (library media centers distribution desk). Maximum occupancy for open office spaces was five (5) people per 1,000 square feet.
- ❖ **Shared Resources.** The use of shared resources including but not limited to athletic equipment, computers, keyboards, manipulatives (early childhood, math, etc.), turnstiles (digital sign-in) have been limited when possible. The school may purchase individual sets when possible and/or encourage student purchased items. Shared objects that are difficult to be cleaned or disinfected are discouraged. Protocols for library books need to be explored further, e.g. mist, let sit for 14 days, etc. Individual student belongings are to be kept separated from others using individually labeled containers, cubbies, bags, and/or areas. When resources are shared, cleaning protocols are in place.
- ❖ **Restrooms.** The number of people permitted in a restroom is determined by the size of space and layout of toilet partitions to ensure at least 6 feet of distance between individuals. Restrooms have exterior signage indicating maximum occupancy. Restroom toilet partitions provide appropriate separation of individuals. In cases where partitions are not currently in space and do not extend above the individual's head, signage indicates the use of every other toilet stall and/or urinal. In locations where the amenities are not 6 feet or more apart, one or more of the toilets or urinals have been sectioned off. The same procedure has

been followed for restroom sinks. Pre Kindergarten, kindergarten, and teachers of students with toileting needs have been provided with disposable gowns and booties upon request. Restrooms are slated to be cleaned daily and misted with the electrostatic sprayer every 2.0 to 2.5 hours when students are present; this time frame may be shortened or extended when a 'regular' school day is being followed. Adult restrooms were equipped with an alcohol-based aerosol cleaner for staff so that staff may spray after and prior to use.

- ❖ **Physical Barriers.** Physical barriers were located in all high traffic areas including but not limited to main offices, administrative assistants, counseling offices, and library media centers. Faculty and staff also have access to face shields and non-latex gloves. Desk shields will be available upon request by classroom teachers or parents.
- ❖ **Main Offices.** The school and District offices are high traffic areas. Additional barriers have been installed in all offices. Faculty and staff have been directed to refrain from unnecessary visits to the office suites. Prior to entering an office area, faculty and staff are to refer to the posted maximum occupancy signs and follow building-based protocols, e.g. knock and request permission for entry. Students waiting for pickup will first report to the main office. Additional seating will be included outside of and/or at various locations for students that are sent to the office, e.g. discipline, parent pick up, etc. Alternate mail delivery and pickup options have been considered, e.g. general aides, maintenance staff, and/or student runners. Prior to entering
- ❖ **Nursing Suites.** The nursing suites have been used primarily for the daily nursing needs of faculty, staff, and students. The suites have limited access for confirmed or potential COVID-19 positive cases, i.e. the nursing suite will not be used for temperature checks and/or quarantine. Nursing suites may have plastic barriers if required for initial entry and additional social distancing, e.g. Mansion. Nurses will have access to additional PPE as described in the health and safety section of the plan, e.g. N95 Masks, Face Shields, Disposable Gowns. Patients will be socially distanced following CDC and DOH guidelines, e.g. 6 feet or more away and/or with the appropriate PPE. Additional oral and temporal thermometers have been purchased as well.
- ❖ **Counseling Suites.** Guidance suites may have a plastic barrier if required. Counselors will have personal and student face shields as needed. The counselors may request additional PPE including but not limited to N95 masks, face shields, disposable gowns, etc. Counselors and students will be socially distanced

following CDC and DOH guidelines, e.g. 6 feet or more away and/or with the appropriate PPE.

- ❖ **Quarantine Areas.** The identified quarantine sites across the district have been dismantled. They were rarely used if not at all during the 2020-2021 school year. Safe spaces will be defined that will provide a modicum of privacy and confidentiality prior to the start of the new school year. Quarantined students will be required to follow the PPE protocols while waiting for an additional temperature scan and/or pickup. The selected sites also permit for easy departure and decreased contact from parents; it is highly possible that a child's parent/guardian may be infected if the student is found positive.

3. Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

The District will continue to teach, expect, and reinforce hygiene etiquette and practice as defined by the CDC. Hygiene is typically thought of in terms of proper handwashing, body washing, and facial cleanliness. Although these practices are essential to overall cleanliness and interrupting the spread of disease, another component of good hygiene consists of practicing good hygiene etiquette. The District will continue to train faculty, staff, and students at the beginning of each school year and reinforce throughout the school year. Training consists of formal lessons, posters and signage, and the sharing of CDC videos; these items will be shared with parents and caregivers.

- ❖ **Coughing and Sneezing Hygiene.** Covering coughs and sneezes and keeping hands clean can help prevent the spread of serious respiratory illnesses like influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), whooping cough, and COVID-19. Germs can be easily spread by:
 - Coughing, sneezing, or talking
 - Touching your face with unwashed hands after touching contaminated surfaces or objects
 - Touching surfaces or objects that may be frequently touched by other people

To help stop the spread of germs:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Throw used tissues in the trash
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands

Remember to immediately [wash your hands](#) after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. Washing your hands is one of the most effective ways to prevent

yourself and your loved ones from getting sick, especially at [key times](#) when you are likely to get and spread germs.

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- If soap and water are not readily available, [use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer](#) that contains at least 60% alcohol to clean hands

To help prevent the spread of respiratory disease, you can also avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you are ill, you should try to distance yourself from others so you do not spread your germs. Distancing includes staying home from work or school when possible.

❖ **Handwashing Hygiene.** The District expects faculty, staff, and students to wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer at regular intervals. Faculty, staff, and students are required to wash their hands before eating, after using the restroom, and after blowing their nose, coughing, and sneezing. Faculty, staff, and students should either wash their hands or use hand sanitizer when transitioning to and from different rooms. Washing hands can keep you healthy and prevent the spread of respiratory and diarrheal infections from one person to the next. Germs can spread from other people or surfaces when you:

- Touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Prepare or eat food and drinks with unwashed hands
- Touch a contaminated surface or objects
- Blow your nose, cough, or sneeze into hands and then touch other people's hands or common objects

Key Times to Wash Hands. You can help yourself and your loved ones stay healthy by washing your hands often, especially during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After [changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet](#)
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage

[Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way.](#) Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community—from your home and workplace to childcare facilities and hospitals.

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

❖ **Hand Sanitizer.** The District expects faculty, staff, and students to wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer at regular intervals. It is recommended that hand sanitizer is to be used upon entering and exit of any district facility, main entrance, office area, classroom, etc. Faculty, staff, and students are required to wash their hands before eating, after using the restroom, and after blowing their nose, coughing, and sneezing. Faculty, staff, and students should either wash their hands or use hand sanitizer when transitioning to and from different rooms. Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based [hand sanitizer](#) that contains at least 60% alcohol. The District has hand sanitizer available in all classrooms, formal entrances/exits, offices, and large group rooms. Students five (5) and younger will be closely monitored and supervised when using hand sanitizer. School nurses are to contact maintenance for [hand sanitizer that is designed for students with skin allergies](#).

Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. However, sanitizers do not get rid of all types of germs, hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy, and hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals from hands like pesticides and heavy metals.

How to Use Hand Sanitizer:

- Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

4. **Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities (Including Improving Ventilation)**

In order to maintain in-person instruction, healthy school environments will continue to be a priority for the District. Prior to the pandemic, the Building & Grounds department had comprehensive cleaning procedures. These protocols have been expanded and include an increase in frequency of cleaning and disinfecting. Daily and nightly inspections sheets will be incorporated into our current plans. The District will be implementing the guidelines for daily, weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly deep cleanings, disinfecting, and improved ventilation as recommended by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the Camden County Department of Health. The following protocols and procedures will be updated and refined upon further guidance from the CDC and/or CCDOH.

Maintenance and custodial staff are fully informed regarding expectations for the use of [cleaning agents and disinfectants](#). As is practice, the District increases the use of disinfectants during the months of January, February, and March (Cold and Flu season) and when student and/or staff absentee rates increase. An electrostatic disinfectant sprayer is used in “trigger” areas. The COVID-19 protocols include additional measures. Questions regarding building cleanliness are to be directed to the building maintenance staff AND the building principal(s).

- ❖ **Frequent Cleanings.** Daily and throughout the day (every 1.5 to 2.5 hours) cleanings of high-contact areas during in-person instruction include:
 - Door handles and push plates;
 - Handrails;
 - Kitchens and bathrooms (nursing bathrooms will be inclined more frequently);
 - Light switches;
 - Buttons on vending machines and elevators;
 - Shared telephones (staff responsibility);
 - Shared desktops (student/staff responsibility);
 - Shared computer keyboards and mice (student/staff responsibility);
 - Drinking fountains (See Below);
 - Main Vestibule(s);
 - Mail and copy room(s); and
 - Quarantine areas.

Bathrooms will be sanitized as much as possible using protocols outlined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the CDC. Every hour-and-a-half to two hours, the custodians will spot clean and hydrostatically spray each restroom. Junior-Senior High School students will be assigned individual lockers; locker dials will be cleaned frequently.

- ❖ **Daily Cleanings.** Additional daily/nightly cleanings include:
 - Classroom desks and chairs (staff/students may elect to complete more frequently);
 - Instructional spaces (full electrostatic spraying daily);
 - Lunchroom tables and chairs (not currently being used);
 - Athletic equipment and sports areas, daily before and after use (See Athletics); and
 - School bus seats and windows (See Transportation).

- ❖ **Signage.** Placards and mini-posters have been placed in the following locations throughout the district:
 - [Stop the Spread of Germs](#) - All bathrooms large (8" x 11") on exiting door and small (4" X 5½") all mirrors,
 - [Wash Your Hands](#) - All student bathroom mirrors PreK-6 (4" X 5½"),
 - Handwashing Superhero - All [boy](#) and [girl](#) student bathroom mirrors (4" X 5½"),
 - [Stop the Germs: Wash Your Hands](#) - All Junior-Senior High student bathrooms (8" X 11"),
 - [Lead by Example](#) - All faculty & staff bathrooms (4" X 5½"), and
 - [Don't Spread Germs at Work](#) - All faculty lounges exiting doors (8" X 11")

- ❖ **Additional Staffing.** The District will continue to supporting our cleaning efforts by utilizing federal monies to employ additional part-time per-diem day- and night-time custodial staff; Two (2) (AM & PM) Audubon Junior-Senior High School, One (1) (AM & PM) Mansion Avenue Elementary School, and One (1) Haviland Avenue Elementary School.

- ❖ **General Classroom and Room Supplies.** Each classroom and District office has Re-Juv-Nal sanitizing wipes, liquid hand sanitizing gel, a spray bottle with Re-Juv-Nal, and a microfiber towel (towels will be replaced daily). Gloves and disposable face masks will be available as needed.

- ❖ **Technology Devices.** Electronics, such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and trusties (sign-in scanners) will be maintained following the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and disinfecting. Alcohol-based wipes and/or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol will be used when and if appropriate. Surfaces will be dried thoroughly in order to maintain functionality.

- ❖ **Ventilation.** All indoor facilities have adequate ventilation, including operational heating and ventilation systems where appropriate. The maintenance staff maintains all units across the district. Problem areas that have been identified are monitored regularly. Recirculated air has a fresh air component, windows will be opened, if practical, if air conditioning is not provided. The District has purchased improved MERV-13 filter(s) for A/C units and are being maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations. Older units may continue to use MERV-8 filters following the manufacturer's recommendations and CDC guidelines. The District has purchased additional filtration systems for spaces without windows and nursing suites. Classroom doors and windows may remain open as directed. Increased safety and security measures will be put in place when hallways are required to be open for increased airflow. Exterior doors will not be opened or propped if doing so poses a safety risk (e.g. asthma trigger, falling, intruder access). It is important that all classroom doors remain locked as per the directives included in the District School Safety Plan. At no time should an exterior door be left ajar.

- ❖ **Water Systems.** To minimize the risk of disease associated with water fountains, all non-bottle stations have been turned off. The District has invested in bottle stations for all schools. Water bottle station bubblers have been turned off; bottle filling is the only option. The bottle filling stations will be cleaned and disinfected every hour-and-a-half to two hours during in-person instruction. Each building will share their protocols in order to maximize student access while limiting student Cleaning will include a formal whip down with Re-Juv-Nal and electrostatic spraying. All faculty, staff, and students may bring their own bottles. Junior-Senior High School students must use a clear bottle. The District is looking into replacing all touch faucets and toilet/urinal flushers with touchless devices. (Touchless paper towel dispensers are being explored as well).

5. Contact Tracing (In Combination with Isolation and Quarantine (In Collaboration with the State, Local, Territorial, or Tribal Health Departments))

The superintendent and/or school nurses will respond to outreach from the Camden County Health Department in order to address positive cases of COVID-19 that impact the school community that may have been reported to them to commence contact tracing and case investigations. Should the District report to the health officer about staff, students, or any person with a close relationship to the school that tested positive, that information will be verified by the health department before it commences contract tracing and case investigation.

All positive persons will undergo contact tracing and case investigations whether the information was first passed through the school or came automatically through the Health department communicable disease surveillance system. The Camden County Health Department will handle all contact tracing and have staff available to perform contact tracing and case investigation.

The Superintendent and any designee(s) will continue to work closely with the Camden County Health Department to support efforts toward identifying employees and/or students necessary to facilitate contact tracing for confirmed COVID-19 cases that impact the Audubon school community. In order to support the efforts of the Camden County Health Department, the District will be sure to have accurate accounting methods for student cohorts, classroom student seating assignments, staffing classroom/teaching assignments, and faculty, staff and student daily attendance. Dr. Paschal Nwako and his team will be completing all ‘formal’ contact tracing with support from District officials.

It is important to note that contact tracing is a decades-old common practice in public health. It is not the same thing as "exposure notification" or "digital alerting" tools. These consumer apps, such as those created with Google and Apple's API, are not contact tracing tools. These apps function as a way for the public to track if they have come into contact with a person who has tested positive and entered that information into their phone. For more information, visit the [New Jersey COVID-19 Testing and Contact Tracing Information Page](#).

6. Diagnostic and Screening Testing

In all stages and phases of pandemic response and recovery, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that Districts address the following areas; Screening Procedures for Staff; Screening Procedures for Students; Protocols for Symptomatic Staff; Protocols for Symptomatic Students; and Contact Tracing Protocols. The Audubon Public School District will safely and respectfully screen faculty, staff, and students for symptoms of, history of, and exposure to COVID-19 following [BOE Policy 1648](#). Possible incidents of exposure and/or spread of COVID-19 will be shared with local health officials and upon their confirmation and direction, this information will be shared with faculty, staff, and families per the guidance of the CDC and NJDOE while maintaining confidentiality. The School Nurses in coordination with the Superintendent and the School Business Administrator, will maintain an on-going ledger of positive faculty, staff, and students that have been screened and found exposed to COVID-19 in some way. At no time will formal medical documents be stored in this ledger (i.e. no temperatures will be recorded).

❖ **Screening Procedures for Staff ([Staff Waiver](#)) and Students ([Student Waiver](#)):**

All faculty and staff will be required to sign a waiver that reviews the symptoms (fever \geq 100.4° F, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, fatigue, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and/or diarrhea) and exposures risks (proximity, travel) associated with COVID-19. The initial waiver will include a COVID-19 history of exposure.

By signing the waiver, faculty, staff, and students (parents/guardians) verifying that they are symptom-free, have not had exposure to someone with COVID-19, and/or have not traveled out of state; travel is specifically in reference to States and Countries on the New Jersey travel quarantine list. Staff that knowingly travel to a location on the quarantine list, will not be eligible for EPSLA leave compensation.

If any of the statements on the Daily Pre-Screening Waiver are true, the employee/student must remain home, share their symptoms with the school nurse, and contact their healthcare provider.

New staff members and students will be required to sign the waiver before entry to school facilities. Reminders will be sent monthly to faculty and staff about the requirements under the waiver as well as general signs of illness. If guidance changes a new waiver may be required.

❖ **Employees and Students:**

Daily temporal screenings will not be required for employees and students at this time.

❖ **Visitors:**

There will be limited access to District buildings including elementary PTAs, and high school parent groups (e.g. Project Graduation) and boosters. Assemblies will follow CDC and NJDOH guidance and may be held in a digital format and/or with limited in-person attendance. School facilities are not accessible to the visitors or the public during in-person instruction days (e.g. courts, fields, and track). Limited outside organizations will be able to use buildings or facilities. The building principals will provide additional guidance to parents and guardians regarding contacting the school. Dropping off and picking up materials and their children. Meetings (e.g. IEPs, 504s, I&RS, Discipline, etc.) will be held virtually (e.g. Google Meet, Skype, Zoom) or through phone conferences when possible.

❖ **Screening Protocols for Contracted Services and Visitors:**

Contracted services and visitors will be required to complete a paper-copy ([Contracted Services and Visitor Waiver](#)). The waiver reviews the symptoms (fever $\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, fatigue, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and/or diarrhea) and exposures risks (proximity, travel) associated with COVID-19. The paper-copy waiver will include a COVID-19 history of exposure. The service provider and/or visitor will have to affirm that they are symptom-free, have not had exposure to someone with COVID-19, and/or have not traveled out of state; travel is specifically in reference to States and Countries on the New Jersey travel quarantine list. A visual check of symptoms will occur and a temporal temperature check ([Failed Temperature Check Letter - Visitors](#)) . The School Nurse, administrator, and/or administrator's designee will review the completed waiver and determine the service provider's or visitor's ability to come on-site. If any of the statements on the Contracted Services and Visitor Waiver are true, the person will not be permitted on school grounds. They will be encouraged to contact their healthcare provider.

Health checks will be conducted safely and respectfully and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and as per guidance of the Camden County Health Department.

7. Efforts to Provide Vaccinations (Educators, Staff, Students) If Eligible

The superintendent of schools worked closely with the Camden Department of Health and the Camden County Department of Education to secure vaccinations to all interested employees in the spring of 2021. Any paid staff member (e.g. administrative assistant, administrator, aide, bus driver, coach, teacher, shared service provider, substitute teacher, etc.) regardless of insurance status, was able to get vaccinated.

Notices of vaccination availability for adults and children 12 and older were shared often and will continue to be shared with all stakeholders. This practice will continue as long as there is an identified need.

8. Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities with Respect to Health and Safety Practices

The District will continue to meet the obligations to students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible. Specific strategies and considerations for students with disabilities will be critical points of discussion for every safe-return-to-school scenario. As additional guidance is provided to districts by the United States Department of

Education (USDE) and the NJDOE, the District will pivot and adjust in order to address the tenets of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

All Special Education Students:

- ❖ The support and services outlined in students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) will be implemented to the greatest extent possible.
- ❖ This plan will be re-evaluated on an ongoing basis. Necessary adjustments will be made to ensure students are supported to the greatest extent possible.
- ❖ The district will communicate frequently with families of special education students including the specifics of the reopening plan as it relates to their individual child(ren).
- ❖ The district will communicate frequently with families of students (placed in and out of the district) with significant medical risk factors and determine if additional precautions or unique measures are necessary to support individual students' return to school.
- ❖ The Child Study Team (CST) will review student data/progress/levels of functioning to determine the need for additional services to address learning loss.
- ❖ The CST will consider the impact of missed services on student progress toward individual goals and objectives and determine if compensatory services are needed to address any regression to recoup skills within a reasonable amount of time.
- ❖ The CST will develop procedures to complete any pending or incomplete evaluations necessary to determine or re-determine eligibility for special education.
- ❖ The CST will identify students whose post-secondary plans were adversely affected by COVID-19 school closures and provide support, resources, and assistance which can facilitate connection to resources at local, state, and federal levels.
- ❖ The district will communicate to parents/guardians regarding the referral procedures for the identification of potentially disabled students.
- ❖ The CST meetings, including identification or referral meetings will be performed remotely using conference or video call options. In-person meetings will resume when available and according to CDC guidelines.
- ❖ Special education may utilize a variety of modalities including virtual learning, electronic and video options, and paper-based instructional activities and assignments only if not in-person. Related services including Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech-Language Therapy, and school counseling that are provided remotely will be delivered through a variety of modalities including online tools and platforms, electronic communication, and paper-based materials/activities only if we are not delivering in-person instruction.

- ❖ Evaluations that cannot be completed in-person will be completed remotely when and if absolutely necessary. The purpose of the safe-return-to-school plan is to return to past practices while mitigating the spread of the virus.
- ❖ Electronic mail is used to provide parents with copies of written notice and other required copies of documentation until standard mail options are available. Paper copies are mailed to parents in addition to electronic copies.
- ❖ Special services providers and/or contracted specialists are working in consultation with the CST in order to assure accurate accounting and delivery of services.
- ❖ Accommodations for students who are unable to wear a face covering (if still required by the CDC and/or NJDOH) will be addressed according to that student's particular need and in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and health guidance.

Specific Student Populations:

- Out of district and/or medically fragile students:
- Careful consideration will be made for and implementation of accommodations for students in this category.
- The district will communicate frequently with families of students with significant medical risk factors and determine if additional precautions or unique measures are necessary to support individual students' return to school.
- Students will be supported in their specialized schools whose plans will be reviewed by the district. Ongoing consultation between the district and out of district placements will occur to address the need for changes in accommodations or supports as the school year progresses.

In-District Students:

- Are anticipated and expected to return to in-person instruction as per the Governor and NJDOE.

Special Education Staff:

Special consideration will be given and additional support afforded to the protection for staff members, such as school nurses, custodians, and identified Special Education teachers, paraprofessionals, service providers, and/or case managers, who will be in close contact with students or will handle waste materials. Additional preventive measures will include the use of additional PPE (N95 face masks, face shields, gloves, surgical gowns and booties, physical barriers, etc.). Special education staff members are encouraged to thoroughly review and consider each student's academic, social-emotional, and physical needs prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

In addition, the District will continue to refine and define its' multi-tiered systems of support throughout the grade levels. Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is a systematic approach to prevention, intervention, and enrichment that includes academic and behaviors across grades pre-kindergarten through twelve. Universal screenings (DIBELS, MAP, RAN/RAS, WAP-T, etc.), collaborative problem solving teams (CST, 504, HIB, I&RS, RtI, School Safety), family engagement, and data-based decision making are critical components of a successful MTSS.

Wraparound Supports

Additional wraparound supports (comprehensive approach to addressing the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of students) are considered for both inside and outside of the school environment. The District currently provides guidance and support for services such as mental health, primary health and dental, family engagement, expanded after-school (KEYS and homework club, peer tutoring), summer learning (IEP- and Title I-based), and mentoring programs (per-to-peer). The district continues to reach out to local daycares for information and support. The school counselors are revamping and updating social/emotional lessons for their own instruction and the classroom teachers based on the impact of the pandemic. The Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) teams are conducting similar reviews and teacher-turnkeys.

The Safe Return Plan incorporates the federally required components. The updated plan must; 1) account for and ensure continuity of services; 2) provide for public comment and involvement in the final plan development; 3) be presented in an accessible format for community members with limited English proficiency and/or disability; and 4) promote professional learning and technical assistance for school employees throughout the pandemic and beyond.

1. Continuity of Services

The District will ensure the continuity of services including but not limited to; a) services to address students' academic needs; b) students' and staff social emotional, mental, and general health, and c) food services:

- a) The District will continue to address the learning needs of a diverse student population throughout the grade levels. Current programs include but are not limited to:
 - i) After School and Extended School Day Opportunities
 - ii) Credit and Course Recovery (High School)
 - iii) Enrichment Activities, Courses, and Opportunities
 - iv) Extended School Day Opportunities
 - v) Individual One-on-One Instruction

- vi) On-line and In-Person Remediation Opportunities
 - vii) Orientation and Transition Programs
 - viii) Remediation Activities, Courses, and Opportunities
 - ix) Small Group Instruction
- b) Conditions for learning involve the social, emotional, and environmental factors that can impact educator capacity to teach and student capacity to learn, including standards for maintaining healthy and safe school conditions. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and School Culture and Climate will be considered and included in the District Plan focusing on re-engaging students, supporting adults, and building relationships, and creating a foundation for academic support. As schools reopen, the impact of social isolation on both educators and students is a key area of concern for the District. The District will capitalize on District, local, county, State, and national resources. The opening and future inservice days will include learnings for faculty and staff in the area of SEL. By building a strong foundation and continuing with ongoing support throughout the year(s), the District will be able to grow and adapt and support faculty, staff, students, parents/guardians, and the community.

Mental Health & Trauma. Theory and past-research suggests that COVID-19 will have psychological and emotional impacts on faculty, staff, and students. The District recognizes the potential negative impact of the Plan's environment (Cohort Model, Use of PPE, Screenings, Changes in Class Structure, Limiting Traditional Athletics and Extracurricular Activities, etc.). Training and support will be available for all stakeholders.

Mental Health and Trauma supports may include and are not limited to counseling support in each school, live and virtual counseling and mental health for students and families, training sessions for administration, faculty, and staff, and trauma-informed mental health activities for all stakeholders. Trauma-informed SEL is an approach to fostering youth's social-emotional development practices that support all students; however, the District will need to be particularly inclusive and responsive to the needs of students who experienced COVID-19 related trauma.

Social-Emotional Learning. The administration, faculty, and staff will be reminded of the developmental trajectory of student's social-emotional learning. There will be needed ongoing professional development in order to naturally infuse and integrate social-emotional learning across the curriculum. The

Mindfulness work that has already been completed, will need to be revisited and reinforced being 'mindful' of the impact of COVID-19.

School Climate & Culture. School climate refers to the school's effects on students, including teaching practices, diversity, and the relationships among administrators, teachers, parents, and students. School culture refers to the way teachers and other staff members work together and set the belief, values, and assumptions they share. The High-School student leaders and an identified School Climate & Culture Committee will gather and collect data through a School Climate & Culture Survey specific to the Audubon Public School District. Priority items for this newly developed team will include:

- Assessing the school climate to identify strengths and weaknesses,
- Prioritizing the health and emotional well-being of faculty, staff, and students,
 - Selecting and prioritizing evidenced-based strategies to focus our work,
 - Identify NJSLS to guide our work to build relationships, set social norms, and identify behavioral expectations,
 - Integrate the identified foci into the curriculum (in-person and remote), and
 - Provide professional development in these identified areas.
- Providing school leaders, counselors, and teachers with the resources to address SEL and trauma,
- Providing sub-groups with opportunities to connect with and learn, grow, and support one another,
- Connecting with students and their families to provide the needed resources and supports, and
- Continuous monitoring of faculty, staff, and student behaviors and needs.

Relationships and the Community. The District leaders and faculty will need to continue to support and foster the strong and supportive relationships between the district and our stakeholders. Communications will be at the heart of this initiative. The District will foster an expanding community approach looking at individual classrooms, grade levels, content areas and departments, schools, buildings, the District, and the town(s). Opportunities for connection and reflection among students, faculty and staff, and families will be facilitated. The District will need to make time for these conversations so we can learn. Grow, and adapt. The District leadership and counseling offices will continue to provide in-house support, partner with outside entities and agencies, and post on-line resources on the District website.

School Counseling Services. School counselors are vital members of the education team and maximize student success. School counselors help to assure all students apply academic achievement strategies, manage emotions and apply interpersonal skills, and plan for postsecondary options (higher education, military, work force). They apply and offer a myriad of supports which include; 1) individual student academic planning and goal setting; 2) school counseling classroom lessons based on the NJSL; 3) short-term counseling; 4) referrals for long-term supports; 5) collaboration with families, teachers, administrators, and community members for student success; 6) advocacy for students at Individual Education Plan, 504, and/or Intervention and Referral Services, and other student-focused meetings; and 7) data analysis to identify student issues, needs, and challenges.

The Elementary counselors will be using the [Zones of Regulation](#) program during RtI periods to instruct and support students. The Junior-Senior High School will be emphasizing the need for teachers to get to know their students before instruction starts ([#connections4curriculum](#)). The counselors have provided the teachers with a list of [activities](#) and [resources](#) to assist the teachers. Small group counseling support will be in place for the first 6 weeks of school. Increased supports will be put in place for struggling students (bi-weekly including a mix of in-person and remote sessions). Faculty and staff that identify a student that is struggling are to reach out to their building principal(s) and the student's assigned counselor. Students will be pulled from instruction minimally (only under crisis situations). Additional training for faculty, staff, students, and parents will include the potential increase in bullying behavior, bias, prejudice, and stigma as they relate to COVID-19. The counseling supports will be and are being taxed even further during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additional Social Emotional Supports for Counselors & Teachers:

- [Large group ice breaker activities](#)
- Teacher Vision - [How to Get to Know Your Students](#)
- ASCD - [Two by Ten Method](#)
- [100 Team Building Activities](#)
- [100 Funny Ice Breaker Activities](#)
- [We Are Teachers Blog](#)
- [Significant#72 Resources](#)
- [Edutopia Blog](#)

Child Study Team. The Child Study Team (CST) is a multidisciplinary group of professionals employed by the Board of Education to provide a wide range of educational supports and special education programs to address the needs of

students with disabilities. Services span preschool through grade 12 and include consultation, evaluation, and intervention services. The CST consists of a School Psychologist, a Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant (LDTC), School Social Worker and a Speech-Language Therapist as well as Occupational and Physical Therapists. Additional information in regards to the roles and responsibilities of the CST is included in the Continuity of Learning section of the Plan. The Child Study Team provides support and guidance for faculty, staff, students, and parents/guardians and it is appropriate to include in this section to address the needs of the special education student population as well as necessary social-emotional, psychological, and learning supports related to COVID-19 and the Plan.

Intervention & Referral Services. Intervention & Referral Services (I&RS) is an interdisciplinary team of professionals within the school environment who come together throughout the school year to formulate coordinated services and team delivery systems to address the full range of student learning, behavior, social, and health problems in the general education program as well as for students determined to be in need of special education programs and services. According to N.J.A.C 6A:16-8.1.,8.2 the goal of the committee is to see measurable student improvement in the identified targeted areas. Staff members refer students to the I&RS Committee through the building principal, who then advises the parents of the referral. The I&RS Committee develops an Action Plan containing goals, interventions, and a timeline for the plan's duration.

The I & RS committee follows a multidisciplinary approach with a well-articulated system of supportive activities and services for staff who have identified student difficulties and those who will be involved in the amelioration of the identified educational concerns. The I & RS committee provides guidance for faculty, staff, students and parents/guardians and is appropriate to include in this section as it relates to social-emotional and learning support as they relate to COVID-19 and the Plan.

Additional Areas Under SEL. Individual student support will be put in place so that staff-student relationships are made for each of our students. Training topics may include and are not limited to impacts on bias, prejudice & stigma, bullying behavior, cyber bullying and [Common Sense Media](#), fear & anxiety, grief, loss, & trauma, mental health & supportive behaviors, and preparedness, hope, & resilience. The District is committed to educating, promoting, and supporting a culture of care for faculty, staff, students, and parents/guardians. Mental, emotional, and physical health will be reinforced through positive promotion and prevention strategies.

The Health and Safety section of the NJDOE Guidance provides for "additional considerations" to assist school officials in considering ways to adhere to the anticipated minimum standards. These provisions are also consistent with the Board's general obligation to ensure the health and safety of its students and staff pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:40-6 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.1. District officials will abide by the advice of local health officials to determine the safest course of action based on local circumstances, which will change as the public health landscape evolves. The health and safety of students and staff is the number one priority and has guided all decisions of the Audubon Public School District's Safe Return to School Plan.

In all stages and phases of pandemic response and recovery, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that:

Schools ensure that staff and students that are at a higher risk for severe illness are protected and supported. The APSD will review and consider reasonable accommodations for faculty, staff, and students at a higher risk for severe illness. These accommodations will include but are not limited to promoting behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19, e.g. social distancing, frequent hand washing, and the use of face covering. Additional accommodations may include the scheduling of high risk employees and students in alternate or adapted locations (e.g. individually, smaller classes, telework and virtual learning). The CDC includes older adults (aged 65 years and older and individuals with disabilities or serious underlying medical conditions (e.g. Chronic lung disease or asthma (moderate to severe); Serious heart conditions; Immunocompromised; Severe obesity (body mass index, or BMI, of 40 or higher); Diabetes; Chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis; Liver disease; Medically fragile students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs); Students with complex disabilities with IEPs; or Students who require accommodations under a Plan in accordance with the Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (504 Plan)) as being at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. The APSD will provide reasonable accommodations for faculty, staff, and students at a higher risk for severe illness.

Accommodations from faculty, staff, and students/families will be considered with formal notice and supporting documentation from a physician and confirmation from a District assigned official(s) (i.e. School Physician). Staff accommodations will follow the negotiated agreements (Audubon Administrator's Association and Audubon Education Association), Audubon Public School District Board of Education Policy & Regulations, Federal Code

([Family Medical Leave Act](#) and any future Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employee Paid Leave Rights), and may include recommendations by the Superintendent of Schools to be considered by the Board (e.g. off-site work completion, sabbaticals, etc.).

- c) The District food services provided over 70,000 meals over the course of the 2020-2021 school year. Breakfast and lunch meals will be provided as in the past and will include ‘grab and go’ options. The District will apply for the 2021-2022 waiver for the free meal option as a participant in the National School Lunch Program.

2. Public Comment and Involvement

The initial draft of this plan includes information from the Restart and Reopening Plan IIb and input from the Pandemic Response Committee. The Board of Education Members will be able to provide individual comments. The public will be notified upon posting of the Safe Return to School Plan on the [District Website](#) and an on-line survey will be opened. Additional opportunities for public comment will be provided throughout the summer of 2021 prior to posting of Version II in August.

3. Understandable and Uniform Format

The Audubon Public School District Safe Return to School Plan Draft I is posted on the school district website which is ADA compliant and accessible. The information may be translated into many different languages. Our ESL teacher will reach out to our ELL population in order to assure their understanding of the plan. Additional translation services will be provided upon request.

4. Professional Learning and Technical Assistance

In an effort to better equip leaders, staff, substitutes, students, and parents/caregivers to adapt to altered educational environments and experiences, the district will provide initial and continued professional learning and support throughout the school year. In order to have a safe opening and continue learning, training will be offered for all stakeholders to promote and support safety guidelines and to support social-emotional, and academic growth. The targeted areas for professional learning include:

- Instructional Technology (Annotate, Ed Puzzle, Go Formative, Google Classroom, Learning A-Z, and various parent/guardian related trainings)
- Social Emotional Learning (Trauma-informed practices, non-verbal communication (express with their eyes and words))
- Safety Protocols (Digital citizenship, Entering / Exiting the building, Hygiene guidelines, Potential Exposure, Social Distancing, and Screening protocols)

The aforementioned learning opportunities, although comprehensive, are not all inclusive. The training needs for stakeholders not unlike the current educational environment are evolving and ever-changing. In order to continue to provide support, other areas of focus include:

- Addressing real-world issues,
- Investigating platforms to increase student engagement,
- Maximize cross-curricular connections and standardized expectations,
- Research into assessment platforms and tools, including use of said data, and
- Minimizing learning loss for impacted students.

Professional development and learning sessions are integral in the maintenance and growth of any system, especially schools.

Family Supports

As was available in the Stakeholder Needs section of the Restart and Reopening PPlan IIb, the pandemic has affected and impacted the Audubon school community in a myriad of ways. Unemployment, food insecurity, illness, loss of loved ones, and social isolation is taking a toll on all Americans. Our education system and the traditional delivery model(s) have changed abruptly. These changes have impacted our families. Although resilient, parents and caregivers need support. To that end, the District will be providing additional assistance as follows:

❖ Back to School, Open House, and Conferences.

❖ **Training Sessions.** The district and building administration as well as grade level and content area teams will be providing additional training sessions and support. How To's and informational information will be provided through letters, PowerPoints or Google Slides, and videos. These items will be shared through emails and postings on the website. Some items may also be shared through learning portals such as Annotate and Google Classroom.

❖ **Social Media Platforms.** District instagram, Facebook, and Twitter accounts will be used not only to celebrate student and staff accomplishments, but will be used to disseminate information.

This Audubon Public School District Safe Return to In-Person Plan is still in draft form and will be updated throughout the Summer of 2021 and every six months as required. The final plan will be prepared and presented on or prior to the August Board of Education meeting.