

THE SHERMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

2020-2021 SCHOOL REOPENING PLAN

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“

*Bad companies are destroyed by crisis,
good companies survive them,
great companies are improved by them.*

”

Andy Groves

Author, educator, and former CEO, Intel Corporation



RESPONSIBILITY | COURAGE | HONESTY | RESPECT

July 24, 2020

Dear Sherman School Community,

Andy Groves' insights about organizations are both profound and instructive. How successfully we navigate the challenge of reopening our school in the midst of a global health emergency is in great part a matter of how we will *choose* to respond: Will we allow this crisis to destroy our learning community? Will we merely get by and survive the crisis? Or, will we capitalize on the opportunities that are before us to reimagine and improve the education we provide?

My reference to Groves' quote is meant to show that while we have been in a crisis perpetuated by a pandemic, we are improving our already strong school community. We have the capacity and all of the necessary tools to do *great things*, including a dedicated Board of Education, a supportive school community, sufficient resources to meet our needs, a talented, dedicated and caring faculty and staff, and wonderful students who are eager to learn.

The following 2020-2021 Reopening Plan provides a *safe and educationally sound* solution to this pandemic that leverages both "Blended Learning" (in school learning that combines face-to-face interactions between students and staff with supplemental online learning experiences) and "Remote Learning" (strictly learning from home through the use of robust digital tools and platforms).

Our plan has been designed with input from all stakeholders, vetted by health and medical professionals, and subjected to the careful inspection of a 28 member Reopening Committee consisting of educators, parents, and students.

We hope that this plan will instill confidence in our ability to support your child through this unprecedented time and we thank you for supporting our efforts.

Sincerely,

Jeff Melendez
Superintendent-Principal



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OUR PRIORITIES

Safety

Our greatest priority is and will always be the safety of our students and staff. One of the primary goals of this plan is to detail the newly developed procedures that we will implement to ensure the safest environment possible. As long as public health data continues to support this model, The Sherman School will remain open for all students in preschool through grade 8 every day. By reconfiguring spaces, reassigning personnel, and developing the comprehensive plan that follows, we are confident that we can offer a program for staff and children that is safe and educationally sound.

Social and Emotional Well-Being

Building a caring, safe, and supportive learning environment for all students and adults is foundational to a successful reopening of The Sherman School. Not only have students and adults in our community suffered from trauma and stress due to the months of the pandemic that we have already experienced, but many will continue to manage challenging emotions as we navigate our new normal. We will embed best practices in social-emotional learning in our daily work to support all members of our learning community, and are committed to providing support in any way possible.

An Educationally Sound Learning Environment



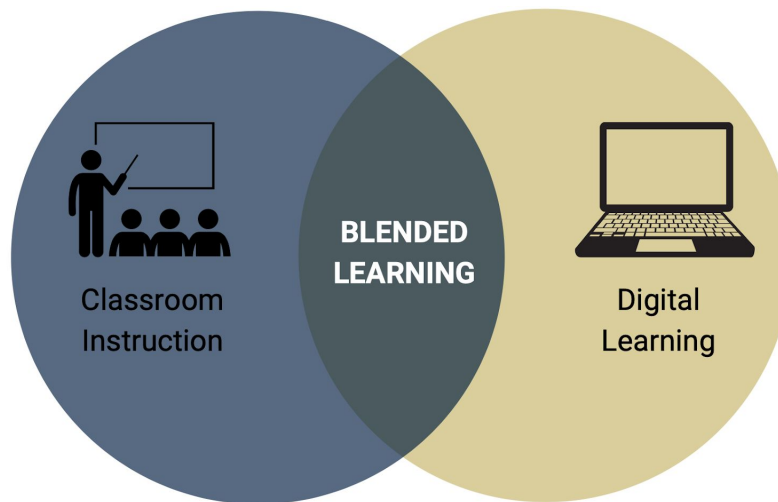
One of the ways we are able to achieve a safe and educationally sound learning environment amidst this crisis is by shifting from a traditional approach for delivering instruction to a blended learning model from day one of the new school year. Should the need arise for some or all of our students to learn remotely once again, we can leverage blended learning strategies to improve the remote learning experience.



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Blended learning is, at least in part, conducted through online learning with some element of student control over time, place, path and/or pace and, at least in part, conducted in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home. The modalities along each student's learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience. Please [click this link](#) if you are interested in reading more about the Blended learning approach.



In order to fully realize the potential of blended learning, the Sherman Faculty has engaged in a series of professional development opportunities and has completed hours of curriculum work over this summer to prioritize standards and units of study. For example:

- Research and study of blended learning through the ASCD Activate platform.
- Introduction to prioritizing curriculum with Dr. Heidi Hayes Jacobs.
- Workshop in blended learning strategies with EdAdvance.
- Curriculum revision sessions with colleagues and the Director of Curriculum.

If and when health data indicates that it is not safe to return to the school building for instruction, we are prepared to transition to remote learning. Fortunately, many of the strategies utilized in blended learning can also be used in remote learning. Teachers will deliver lessons, assignments, and meetings through Zoom, Google Classroom, and Seesaw. Students will attend live lessons and meetings and receive and submit work through the same platforms. Details of our remote learning plan are outlined in the Academics section of this document.



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Ongoing Communication

Effective two-way communication is more critical now than ever. Therefore, we have dedicated an email address (COVID@shermanschool.com) that will be monitored to ensure students, families, and staff members can voice their concerns, and receive answers. We have also redesigned our website (www.shermanschool.com) to ensure that this plan, as well other relevant details, are readily available - front and center. We will also commit to ensuring that:

- Representatives from all stakeholder groups including elected officials, faculty, staff, parents and students were offered the opportunity to provide input on the development of our plan for reopening.
- Families are provided with clear and ongoing communication about what to expect, during and prior to reopening. This includes, but is not limited to, guidance on the school protocols related to health and safety guidelines.
- All constituents receive timely communication regarding changes that may be necessary as we learn more and desire to improve and enhance our plan.
- Communication between teachers, parents, and students will be as streamlined as possible.
- Any family needing translated materials may contact us to ensure needs are met.

Equity

We are committed to ensuring that every student and family in our community has the opportunity to access the tools that are needed to successfully participate in our program. Toward this goal, we have invested in iPads and Chromebooks for every child in grades K-8. We also stand ready to assist any family who, whether because of this pandemic or otherwise, is in need of access to the internet. Please call Jeff Melendez, Superintendent-Principal at 860-355-3793 for a confidential conversation regarding your current or anticipated needs.

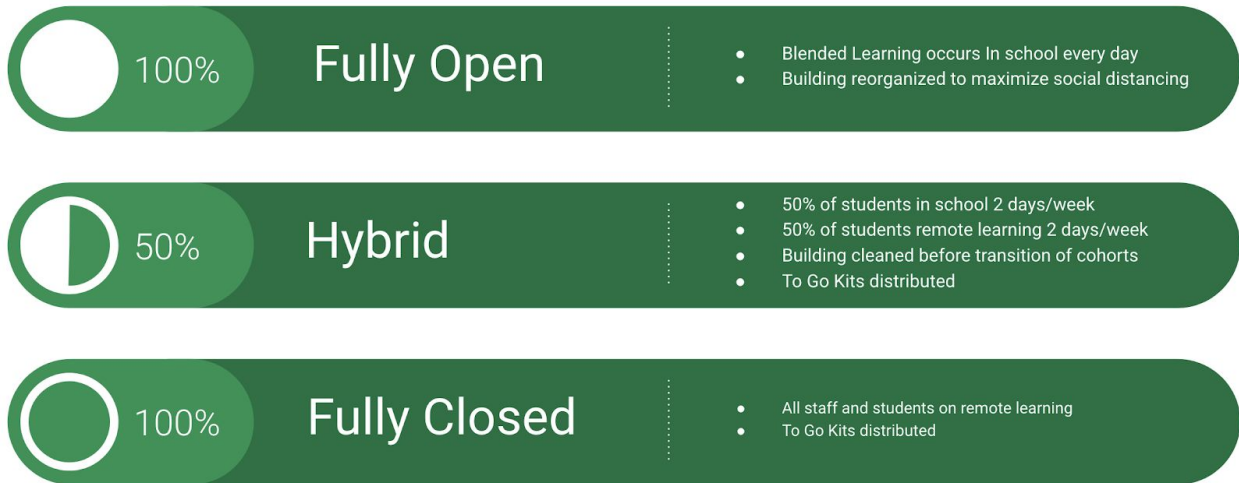
THREE REOPENING MODELS

The state has required that all school districts prepare three reopening models which allows us to respond to health information that may require a partial or full closure. These models form a continuum which ranges from a fully open, blended learning experience, to fully remote learning where all students and staff work from their homes.



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Model #1: Fully Open (Blended Learning)

In this model, all medically able staff and students will return to the school daily for instruction per our adopted calendar. We will implement a blended learning strategy which will allow our teaching staff to interact with students in reconfigured, socially distanced classroom spaces in cohorted groups to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Model #2: Hybrid

In the event that we are forced to reduce our population due to an increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases in the school and/or broader Sherman community, we will transition to a hybrid model which will allow cohorts of approximately 50% capacity to return to the building for blended learning, while the remaining 50% engage in remote learning at home. This model will follow the schedule below.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Cohort A (In-School Learning)	Cohort A (In-School Learning)	Remote Learning for all students; Building thoroughly cleaned and disinfected	Cohort A (Remote Learning)	Cohort A (Remote Learning)
Cohort B (Remote Learning)	Cohort B (Remote Learning)		Cohort B (In-School Learning)	Cohort B (In-School Learning)



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Determining which students and staff will be assigned to each cohort will be determined at a later date. Factors such as contact tracing, transportation and vulnerable populations will need to be considered when determining cohorts.

Model #3: Fully Closed (Remote Learning)

In the event that we are required to close due to health concerns, we will transition to a fully remote learning environment. All staff and students will work from home and will be expected to participate in remote learning. This will include daily participation in live lessons, Zoom meetings and accessing assignments and activities through Google Classroom and Seesaw.

Although further details are outlined in the Academics section of this document, the following is a sample daily schedule that a student might follow during remote learning:

Sample Remote Learning Schedule	
9:00 - 9:45	Live reading lesson followed by independent practice of reading and submission of written or recorded assignment.
10:00 - 10:45	Live writing lesson followed by a small group meeting with the teacher to share and receive feedback about writing.
11:00 - 11:45	Live or recorded math lesson followed by independent practice. A small group or individual meeting with the teacher for re-teaching or feedback.
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch break
1:00 - 1:45	Live lesson in one special area class followed up by independent practice and submission of written or recorded assignment.
2:00 - 2:45	Live or recorded STEAM or social studies lesson followed by independent work and/or small group or individual meetings for re-teaching or feedback.



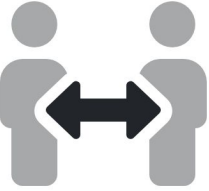

RISK MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Guidance from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), The Center for Disease Control (CDC), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) acknowledges that we cannot stop the spread of COVID-19, we can only mitigate the risk of exposure. In addition to direct instruction for students regarding using these strategies, the following graphic (or similar) will be placed throughout the building to reinforce the associated expectations:



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 <p>COHORTING means keeping groups away from other groups as much as possible. This is an effective strategy to mitigate the spread of germs.</p>	 <p>FACE COVERINGS should be worn by everyone when they are in the building and/or when they are near others. Masks can be removed at certain times.</p>
 <p>SOCIAL DISTANCING of at least 6 feet should be maintained when possible to reduce the likelihood that germs will be spread through air or contact.</p>	 <p>PERSONAL HYGIENE such as washing or sanitizing hands and avoiding contact with one's face, eyes and mouth are effective strategies for reducing infection.</p>

Of course, perhaps the most important and effective strategy for mitigating the transmission of COVID-19 to others in a school setting is to keep your child home if he or she is demonstrating any of the known symptoms. It is important to be very cautious at this time in deciding whether or not your child is well enough to come to school. According to the CDC, these symptoms include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting

Please be sure to keep your child home and contact the school nurse and your physician immediately if anyone in your household exhibits these symptoms.



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Further Details: Cohorting

Connecticut's Adapt, Advance, Achieve plan has recommended that we establish stable cohorts within the school population, when feasible, by placing students into groups and teams. On the basis of this recommendation, we have taken the following steps to minimize interactions between small groups:

- Subdivide classes in grades PS-8 to minimize class size. Decisions about placement will be made by the administration in consultation with teachers when time allows.
- Recreate the master schedule so that specials are delivered for a full trimester rather than on a daily rotation to minimize exposure to different teachers.
- Restructure the environment so that lunches can be eaten in classrooms, or in single grade cohorts in the cafeteria with students socially distanced.
- Reconfigure teams of teachers to work with students to minimize contact.
- Encourage families to drive children to and from school rather than relying on bus transportation. When bus transportation is necessary, assign seats to children.
- Provide notification of the cohorts to families so they can use this information when scheduling activities, carpooling, and engaging in other activities outside of school.
- Closely monitor students when they cannot be in cohorts to ensure the proper use of facial coverings and other precautions are in place.
- Allow teachers to rotate through classrooms (rather than students) in the middle school, and wherever else possible.
- Assign cohorts to use specific bathrooms, entry and exit points, and other spaces.
- Provide ongoing education to staff, students and families regarding the importance of cohorting and the associated health benefits.

Further Details: Social Distancing

We realize that students are naturally curious and social. Therefore, any effort to keep children apart will be a challenge. However, guidance from the medical field indicates that social distancing of 6 feet is an effective strategy to reduce the spread of germs and COVID-19. Therefore, we will take the following steps to ensure this strategy is in place:

- Place desks and tables in measured distances from others.
- Require that teachers (rather than students) rotate to classrooms when possible to reduce the likelihood of transitions in hallways where students would come into contact with other non-cohorted students.
- Ensure that hallways are clearly marked to allow unidirectional movement of students when feasible.



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- Mark spaces in front of the classroom so that teachers can easily access teaching tools such as whiteboards, smartboards, chart paper, or large interactive displays, that are a safe distance from students.
- Provide ongoing education to staff, students and families regarding the importance of social distancing and the associated health benefits.

Further Details: Face Coverings

Educators and parents agree that requiring the donning of facial coverings for students and staff will be a legitimate challenge, and likely a source of daily frustration. Classrooms will be seasonally warm, the ability to communicate nonverbally will be limited, and the novelty of our new practices will wear off very soon. However, guidance from health professionals indicates that consistently wearing face coverings will greatly mitigate the transmission of COVID-19. Therefore, we will implement the following strategies to ensure compliance:

- Require that families supply cloth face masks for their child and be sure to wash them daily. Cloth masks are typically more comfortable and they can be personalized by students which may aid in motivation to wear them. In the event that a child forgets his or her facial covering, a disposable surgical mask will be provided and will be expected to be worn during appropriate times. See chart below.
- We understand that mask breaks are going to be a necessary part of the school day. Teachers will provide students with opportunities to remove their masks at appropriate times and under appropriate conditions. While students and staff may choose to wear their face coverings at all times, as this the safest thing to do, students will be permitted to remove their face coverings during teacher-directed breaks when they are socially distanced and while eating or drinking.
- We understand that some students and staff may be unable to wear face coverings due to certain medical conditions. Families must contact us at COVID@shermanschool.com to determine if special accommodations are needed.

Face Coverings On	Face Coverings Off
School-provided transportation (AM and PM)	Family-provided transportation (AM and PM)
Classroom instruction	Lunch / Outdoor Recess
Transitions in the school building	Physical Education (provided daily in K-5)
While using the lavatory	Breaks provided throughout the day



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Further Details: Personal Hygiene

Although this is a broad category, it is imperative that students and staff follow the outlined procedures to mitigate the transmission of germs. These practices are time-tested and should apply even after this pandemic has subsided. Please review the CDC's guidance [here](#).

- Clean hands often
- Avoid close contact
- Use a face covering when around others
- Cover coughs and sneezes

Please note that we will adjust these expectations as new information from the Department of Health and/or CDC are confirmed.

FACILITIES

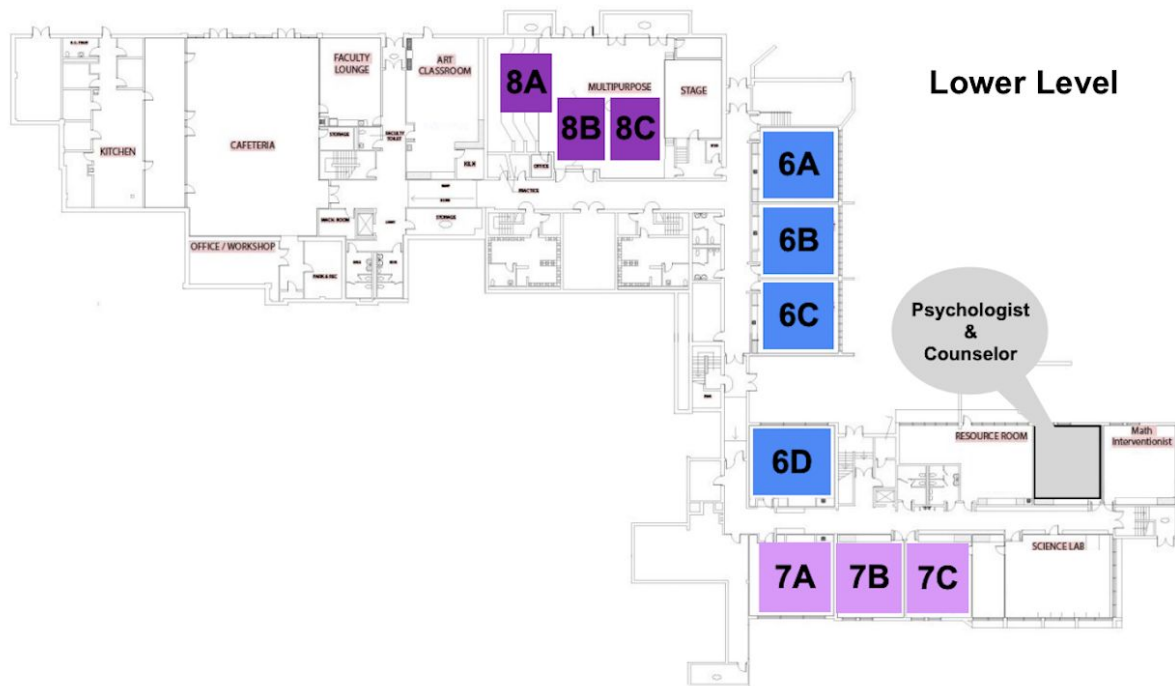
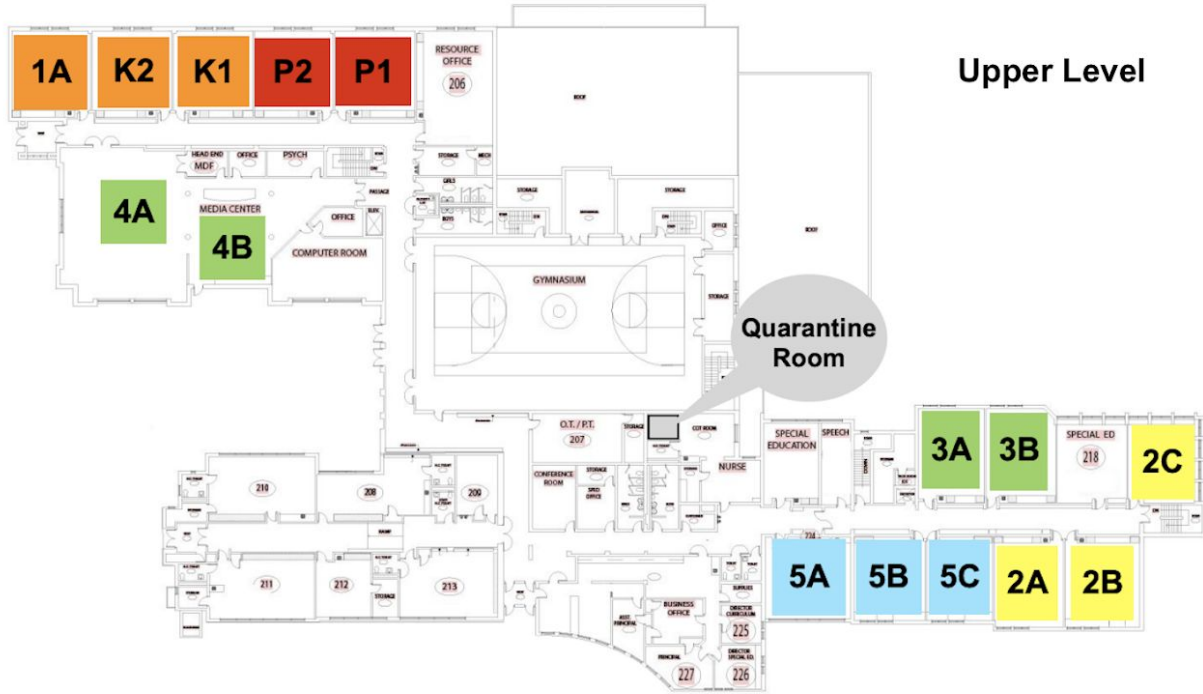
In an effort to ensure the smallest group sizes possible to promote social distancing, and to minimize contact in large groups, we have completely reconfigured our school spaces.

The map shown below depicts how new classroom spaces have been developed and accounted for which allows us to use larger spaces such as the Multi-Purpose room and Library Media Center for instructional purposes. We have also converted some offices to classrooms, and have made every effort to keep grade levels adjacent to one another for cohorting.



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Promotion of Healthy Habits

Signage will be prominently posted in classrooms and throughout the building (i.e. entrances, hallways, bathrooms/sinks, break/work rooms) with visuals to increase accessibility and promote the actions that can be taken to stop the spread such as properly washing hands, properly wearing a face covering, and maintaining social distance. Additionally, signs will be placed at entrances indicating traffic flow and identifying assigned bathrooms according to grade level cohorts to minimize exposure.

Training needs of staff related to health and safety protocols will be identified and performed prior to the first day of classes on August 31st. Topics will include, but not be limited to: social distancing; cleaning and disinfecting protocols; and hygiene practices (donning and doffing PPE, handwashing, stopping the spread of germs). This training will be mandatory for all students, staff, and substitutes. This information will be communicated to all families and will be accessible on the school's website for continuity in messaging.

Sherman School staff will promote healthy habits to keep everyone safe while at school. Daily announcements related to staying safe and healthy will be broadcast over the school intercom and will be echoed by school staff throughout the day. Parents can augment the school's efforts by reminding their children to practice safe and healthy habits at home.

Air Quality and HVAC

The school's HVAC system is inspected quarterly and equipment is repaired or replaced as is necessary. An inspection will also take place prior to the reopening of schools. In compliance with the Department of Public Health's (DPH) "Guidance for School Systems for the Operation of Central and Non-Central Ventilation Systems" found [here](#), the school's HVAC system has been reprogrammed to start 2 hours prior to occupancy and 1 hour post occupancy. Bathroom fans were reprogrammed to stay on at all times (24 hours per day, 7 days per week). The importance of not making adjustments to the equipment (i.e. thermostats, fan speeds) and identifying and communicating observed issues with ventilation equipment to appropriate staff as soon as possible will be communicated to all school staff. To the extent possible, fresh air will be vented into classrooms.

Every effort will be made to provide portable air conditioning equipment in spaces where there is excessive heat, giving preference to our youngest students in grades preschool through 4th Grade. Per Sherman School's Excessive Heat Plan, if the heat index is at or above 90 degrees Fahrenheit, it may be decided to dismiss school early. Please understand that early dismissal or school closure due to high heat may be more necessary than in the past due to the extenuating circumstances around COVID-19.



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Water System

The building was maintained by a small crew for the entire duration of the closure. This maintenance included running faucets on a daily basis and filling drain traps. As such, the school's water system is in compliance with current guidance provided by the DPH. Click [here](#) to access the DPH's "Return to Service Guidance for Building Water Systems" release.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

In collaboration with our medical advisor and public health consultant, the school has created a plan to address the DPH's guidance related to the cleaning and disinfecting of schools during COVID-19. The DPH's guidance can be found [here](#). In compliance with these guidelines, the school has identified "high-touch" areas, which refers to hard surfaces indoors that are routinely touched by different individuals, requiring cleaning and disinfecting on a daily or twice daily basis. We have procured state-approved cleaners and disinfectants to ensure the building stays clean and safe.

Before School Opens

Summer cleaning will include a deep cleaning of all areas throughout the building, as well as refinishing of the floors. Additionally, the list of "high-touch" areas (below) will be cleaned and disinfected prior to the first day of school.

List of "high-touch" areas (but not limited to):

- Desks/tables and chairs
- Locker handles
- Copiers/scanners machines
- Computer equipment
- Shared break room appliances
- Handrails, door knobs, push bars and light switches
- All entrance doors/glass in and out
- Nurse's room
- Main office work room hallway doors/glass
- Stairway doors and railings
- All bathroom doors, toilet levers, soap dispensers, sink levers, etc.
- Office/work counters
- Shared phones - lunch room, work room, nurse, etc.
- Work room - shared laminators, stapler, scissors, pencil sharpeners, etc.
- Conference room - tables, chairs, etc.



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- Parent pickup doors in and out
- Water coolers (work room only)
- Front doorbell button
- Playground equipment
- Educational equipment/toys

After School Opens

To ensure the cleanliness of our building, we will follow cleaning protocols that will take place during the school day, as well as in the evening.

Day Cleaning and Disinfecting

As part of the day cleaning and disinfecting schedule, bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected twice daily between approximately 10-11 a.m. and 1:30-2:30 p.m. The following priority “high-touch” areas will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day:

- Copiers/scanners machines
- Shared break room appliances
- Accessible handrails, door knobs, push bars and light switches
- Main entrance doors/glass in and out
- Main office workroom hallway doors/glass
- Office/work counters
- Shared phones - lunch room, work room, nurse, etc.
- Work room - shared laminators, stapler, scissors, pencil sharpeners
- Water coolers (work room only)
- Front doorbell button

Evening Cleaning and Disinfecting

As part of the evening cleaning and disinfecting schedule, all bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected a third time. Classrooms will be routinely cleaned, including floor sweeping and trash removal. “High-touch” areas will also be cleaned and disinfected an additional time. Per DPH guidance, outdoor areas such as benches, tables, railings, and playground equipment will be cleaned on a daily basis.



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Cleaners and Disinfectants

The school has identified and procured appropriate cleaning and disinfection products to combat the potential spread in the building. In compliance with the DPH's guidance, all cleaning products adhere to Connecticut's School Green Cleaning Law (Sec. 10-231g). To access that law, click [here](#). Similarly, all disinfectants to be used in the school can be found on the Environmental Protection Agency's List N approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19. That list can be found [here](#). Staff will be trained in how to use cleaning and disinfection products safely and effectively.

Bathrooms

To minimize exposure, bathrooms will be assigned to grade level cohorts. To the extent possible, bathroom assignments will be made in consideration of a cohort's proximity to the facility, as well as the ages of the students that will be using it. Bathrooms will be cleaned and disinfected twice daily in compliance with DPH guidance. Bathrooms will be labeled to remind students of their assignments. Signs reminding students to stay socially distant (i.e. 6 feet apart) and safe (i.e. masks must remain on, wash hands) while in the restroom will be posted in all bathrooms.

Emergency Evacuation Protocols

In the event of an emergency evacuation, we will do our best to exit the building in a safe and orderly manner, following essentially the same procedures with which students are already familiar. Two minor adjustments will be communicated in advance: masks must be worn at all times and cohorts will be socially distanced from one another once safely outside the building. New evacuation routes and procedures will be shared with students as part of their orientation at the beginning of the school year.

Classroom Spaces

In order to maximize space between the teacher and students, each classroom was assessed to determine the number of desks that could safely occupy that space. The image below, depicts a typical classroom with 14 desks (our largest class size) with desks arranged 6 feet apart. This configuration allows for plenty of distance between the teacher and the first row of students to enable demonstrations at the board in the front of the classroom in the event that a mask cannot be worn. This model conforms to CDC guidelines found [here](#). A combination of face coverings and physical barriers will be used when 6 feet of social distance is not feasible. Where health and safety conditions and physical space allow, outdoor instruction will be considered.



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Small Group Instruction

There may be times where teachers and their students need to be in close proximity for instructional purposes, and when facial coverings are not feasible such as during speech and language instruction. In those cases, we have 36"x24" plexiglass dividers that can be utilized as a physical barrier. We will also make every effort to clean the plexiglass barrier between student sessions. This precaution, in addition to the wearing of clear face shields (and/or face coverings) by both students and staff are strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.





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CLASS SIZES AND COHORTS

In accordance with state and CDC guidance, we have reconfigured our staff and student groups to create the smallest class sizes and cohorts possible.

As you can see in the table below, by maximizing all of the available spaces throughout The Sherman School, we are able to achieve class sizes that range from 9-14 students, with an average class size of 12 students.

In addition, we have established larger cohorts (typically by grade level) where students will interact with one another during recess and for other specially planned activities. These cohorts are color coded below. Cohorts range from 18-46 students with an average cohort size of 32 students.

The numbers represented in the table below anticipate that 100% of our students will return to The Sherman School in the fall. Class sizes and cohorts may be lower if some families choose to engage exclusively in remote learning.

Preschool	Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade
Class #1 (9)	Class #1 (13)	Class #1 (10)	Class #1 (9)	Class #1 (9)
Class #2 (9)	Class #2 (13)		Class #2 (9)	Class #2 (9)
			Class #3 (9)	
4th Grade	5th Grade	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
Class #1 (14)	Class #1 (10)	Class #1 (10)	Class #1 (10)	Class #1 (10)
Class #2 (14)	Class #2 (9)	Class #2 (10)	Class #2 (10)	Class #2 (10)
	Class #3 (9)	Class #3 (10)	Class #3 (9)	Class #3 (10)
		Class #4 (10)		



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HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Handwashing and Hand Sanitizing

According to the CDC, maintaining clean hands is one of the most effective strategies to stop the spread of germs and stay healthy. As such, students must engage in frequent handwashing. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, hand sanitizer may be used. Staff will teach and regularly remind students to be sure to wash their hands upon arrival, before and after meals, after recess and physical education, after bathroom use, and after coughing or sneezing. School staff will also teach and regularly remind students of proper handwashing strategies, including washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Each classroom cohort will have access to a handwashing station or hand sanitizer dispenser with at least 60% alcohol in their classrooms.

Touchless Soap and Towel Dispensers

In an effort to reduce the possible transmission of germs, we will replace all soap and towel dispensers with contactless models.



Temperature Checks

Because of the opportunity for false positives, in accordance with health guidance, The Sherman School will not require temperature checks of students and staff. Instead, we will require that all faculty and staff monitor their own health, and we request that families also monitor their children's health before sending them to school.



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Containment Plan

In accordance with the state's requirements, we have identified a separate area (approximately 100 square feet) in the back portion of the nurse's office as a quarantine space in the event that a student needs to be isolated due to the demonstration of symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19. This space is intended to only serve the purpose of temporarily separating the potentially infected student until he or she can be picked up by a parent or guardian.

We will follow all DPH guidelines pertaining to the proper cleaning and disinfection of the containment area when students or staff have been required to utilize this space.

Water

Because of the potential to spread germs through the refilling of water bottles, we have removed water stations for student use. Bottled water coolers will be available for use by staff only in common work areas. Families are required to provide each child with sufficient water for the duration of the school day. Individual bottles of water will be provided in emergency situations.

Attendance Monitoring

We recognize that a primary strategy for mitigating the spread of COVID-19 will require that families keep their children home if they are demonstrating symptoms consistent with the coronavirus. We have implemented the following strategies to address this matter:

- There will be no "perfect attendance" award given in the 2020-2021 school year to avoid the sense of urgency regarding attending school.
- In accordance with HIPPA, we will actively monitor and maintain a log of staff and student illnesses for the purposes of contact tracing.
- We will adjust our attendance policy to account for families who may be keeping their children home for school due to COVID-19 related symptoms and illnesses.
- We will comply with all DPH guidance and ensure that families are advised of relevant strategies regarding travel, quarantine, etc.

School Supplies, Materials and Equipment

In order to mitigate the transmission of germs, the district has purchased and will provide each preschool through 5th grade student with his or her own school supplies to be used while in school. School supplies cannot be shared between students. In addition, we will ensure that



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materials and equipment that might be used by more than one student will be sanitized before being used again to the greatest extent possible.

REPORTING ILLNESS

In order to obtain important medical information, reporting illnesses will follow a new procedure during the 2020-2021 school year. In order to report an absence, call (860) 355-3793 x 9. In reporting your child's absence, please provide the following information in your voice message:

- Your child's name
- Your child's classroom cohort teacher
- Your child's bus number (if applicable)
- Any specific symptoms your child is experiencing
- Any additional school programs in which your child has participated
- If your child is experiencing symptoms that are consistent with COVID, please provide the date of your child's doctor appointment, as well as the anticipated timeline for receiving test results.

In addition to leaving a voice message, if your child has been diagnosed with COVID, please also call Lorraine Spinetti, Sherman School Nurse directly at (860) 355-3793 x 9.

We are also mindful of students who have pre-existing health conditions and might require accommodations during this time. School staff will reach out to all families of students who have known health conditions and are more vulnerable to COVID-19. This might include students with heart conditions, severe (acute) asthma, and allergies. Individual plans will be developed for each of these students taking their health and educational needs into account. If you have a specific health concern about your child, including having a high-risk adult living in your home, please reach out to Lorriane Spinetti at (860) 355-3793 x 9 in advance of the reopening so that school team members can plan accordingly.

DECISIONS TO CLOSE AND REOPEN SCHOOL

The decision to close and reopen school in response to COVID-19 will be made in consultation with health professionals, and guided by the CSDE and DPH in response to available public health data.

We are currently awaiting guidance from the Department of Health. Once provided, those details will be included in this section.



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To Go Kits

In the event that a student or group of students will need to transition from blended learning (in school) to remote learning (at home), we have developed “To Go Kits” which contain all of the necessary materials and supplies that students and families will need to participate in high-quality learning from home. Each grade level has curated its own specific materials based on the curriculum as well as what is needed to continue instruction and learning in special areas like STEAM, physical education, music and art. See samples from kindergarten and 5th grade below.



Contents from Kindergarten



Contents from 5th Grade

In each *To Go Kit*, students or teachers will also include an electronic device such as an iPad (for all students in grades K-2) or a Chromebook (for all students in grades 3-8). It is expected that each student will take great care of the materials provided and will keep them organized as they will need to be returned to the school once the student returns to blended learning.

ACADEMICS

In an effort to provide a safe and educationally sound learning environment, The Sherman School District will implement a blended learning instructional model while students are in school and a remote learning model if students are learning from home. Sherman students attending local high schools will follow their school’s plans for reopening.



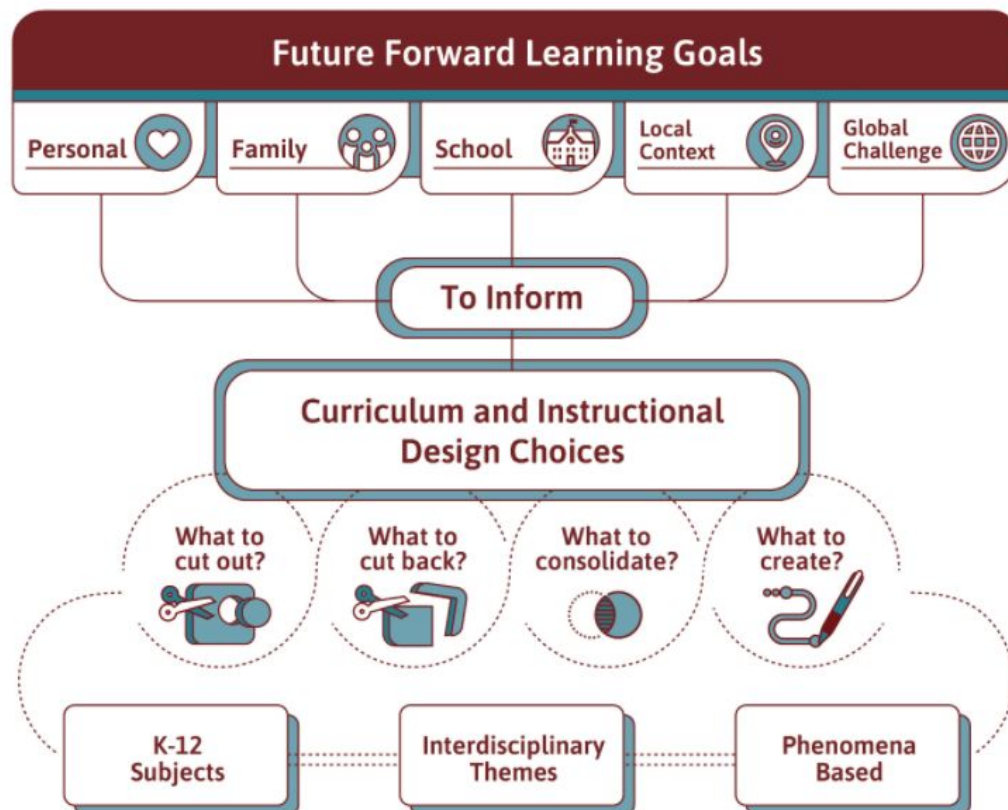
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Blended Learning (In-School Learning)

Students in grades preschool through grade 8 will work with a consistent team of teachers and paraeducators to participate in their core content as well as special area classes through a blended learning model. This model will include both in-person and online instruction while students are in school and can adjust to a remote teaching model including live instruction and interaction should we need to close in the future. From the first day of school, students will use digital devices and tools for learning, communicating, and submitting work.

Teachers have already engaged in several professional development and workshop sessions to prepare for this work. Given the time constraints and disruptions we will be facing next school year, we need to make sure that our focus in teaching and learning will be on the most important content for our students. Dr. Heidi Hayes Jacobs met with our entire faculty to lay out a plan for determining which curricular units to cut, keep, consolidate, or create. A description of her guidance can be found [here](#).





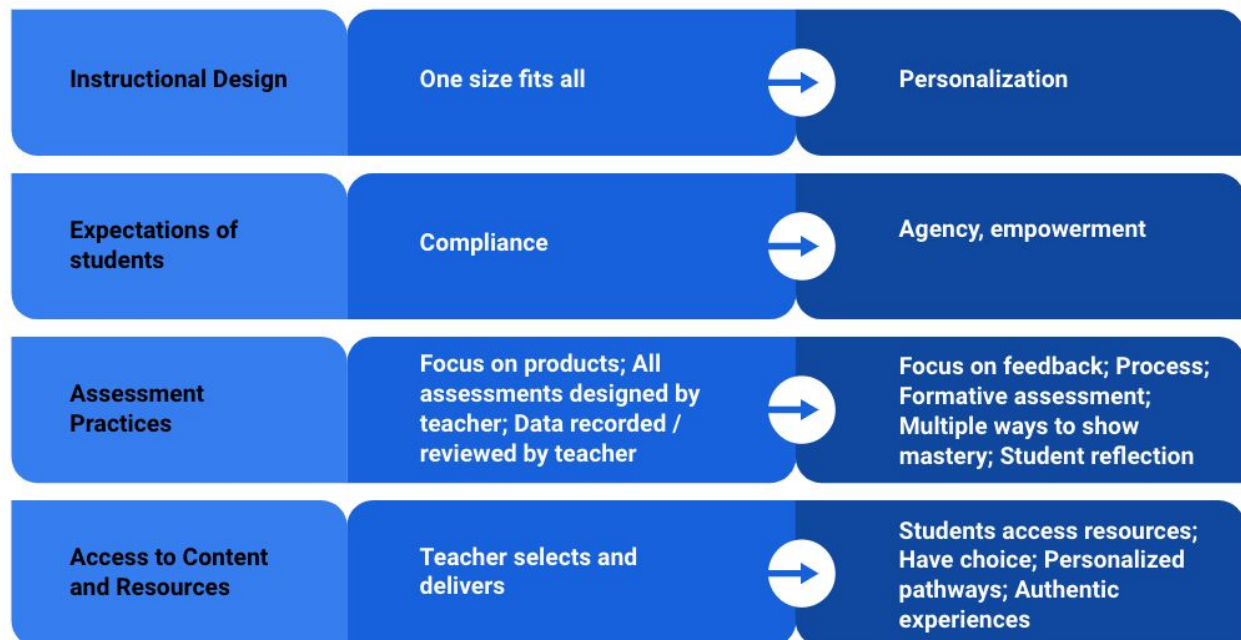
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Using Dr. Jacobs' model, teachers met in grade level and content area teams to consider each unit of study to determine the extent to which it aligns with our vision and addresses priority standards. Using these criteria, teachers determined which units are the most important for our students for next year, and which units could be cut back or consolidated. These decisions will remain a part of our ongoing grade level, department, and faculty meetings next year as we welcome our students back and assess their needs.

In addition to determining what to teach, we have also considered how to teach. To be able to teach students in smaller cohorts, some of whom may be learning from home, teachers will be using a blended learning model of instruction. To prepare for this shift, teachers engaged in several hours of research on this topic through a virtual professional development platform from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and participated in a two-hour workshop with a professional developer from EdAdvance. Blended learning is a more student-centered approach to instruction that empowers students through shifts in roles and strategies.

Reimagining Roles in a Blended Learning Environment



Students will still participate in live lessons as much as possible whether they are in school or home, but they will also use digital tools to engage in independent learning and practice when their teacher cannot be with them. The Sherman School teachers are looking forward to the opportunities afforded by this model of instruction as they know it will foster student self-direction, critical thinking, and perseverance. In addition, many of the strategies that would



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be used in a blended learning environment could also be used for remote teaching and learning should that become necessary. Students will have a less challenging transition to remote learning if they have had experience with the digital tools and devices they will be using at home.

Remote Learning (In-Home Learning)

Our remote learning plan draws many of its details from *The Sherman School Distance Learning Plan 2.0*. It has been refined and improved based on feedback provided by faculty and families as well as the State of Connecticut, Department of Education's *Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together* and the resources shared within that document. We are pleased to be able to present a plan that will allow us to provide our students with high-quality, continuous learning even when we are not in a shared physical space.

As outlined in other sections of this document, students will each be given a device such as an iPad or Chromebook and a To Go Kit to take with them should our school engage in remote learning. These tools will allow students to participate fully in the assignments and activities that teachers design.

Similar to the teaching and learning that took place this spring, teachers and students will interact using digital devices and tools for teaching and learning. Students are expected to participate fully in remote learning and will earn grades for the work they submit. To increase a student's ability to complete all assigned work, students will participate in only one or two special area classes at a time. Special area and core content teachers will work together to integrate lessons and assignments to the extent possible. Expectations for students, teachers, families, paraeducators, and administrators during remote learning can be found in Appendix A.

- Should a local or state level decision be made to reduce capacity or close schools for the short term (2-5 days) or for a longer term (2 weeks), all students and teachers will be prepared to shift to remote learning either partially or completely depending on the level of closure.
- The school will be ready to communicate a schedule of classes as well as more detailed plans regarding either of the two scenarios within 24-48 hours.
- A 24-48 hour time period may be needed to make the shift if families will need time to retrieve necessary materials from school such as devices and To Go Kits.
- Teachers will ensure students are familiar and comfortable with online learning tools and platforms from the beginning of the school year including assigning and requiring submission of work through Seesaw and Google Classroom.



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- Teachers have engaged in professional development in blended learning models as well as revised curriculum, and will implement both in the fall in anticipation of time constraints that may be caused by health disruptions.
- The Director of Curriculum will use input from students, staff, and families as well as resources from the State including *Reimagining CT Classrooms for Continuous Learning* found [here](#) and the CT Learning Hub found [here](#), to continually improve our blended and remote learning plans.
- The Sherman School will engage in continued efforts to gather feedback from all constituents, as well as to professionally develop our staff in best practices in blended and remote learning.

SPECIAL AREAS (Fine & Performing Arts, PE, Health, and EdTech)

The Sherman School recognizes the importance of enriching students through the fine and performing arts, physical education, health and educational technology as we endeavor to provide a well-rounded experience and foster the talents and interests of our students. Therefore, our intention is to maintain access to these courses for all students, although they may be scheduled in more focused ways to reduce the number of adults with which students interact in a given period of time. For example, a cohort of students may focus on art instruction one trimester, education technology instruction the next trimester, and music instruction the final trimester.

Physical Education and Health

- We anticipate students will be provided with daily physical education in grades K-5.
- Our health education curriculum will be modified to include instruction about mitigation strategies to keep students and staff safe.
- The Sherman School will follow all CDC, state, and local guidelines related to social distancing and disinfecting areas and equipment used for physical education and physical activity, including recess.
- Physical education will be provided through a combination of in-classroom, outdoor, and gymnasium activities. Masks will be worn during PE if social distance is unable to be maintained.
- Physical education will focus on activities, exercises, and sports that are teacher-led, but performed individually using marked off areas, stations, or staggered participation to ensure separation of students.
- To maintain hydration, students will be required to use individual water bottles.



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Fine Arts

- Students will have access to their own personal materials for creative expression.

Performing Arts (Music)

- The Sherman School will follow the National Association for Music Education's COVID-19 Instrument Cleaning Guidelines, which can be found [here](#).
- Students will maintain proper spacing of at least 12 feet when they are singing or performing with wind or brass instruments by utilizing outdoor spaces or large spaces for lessons and rehearsals, such as the cafeteria or gymnasium.
- Students will rehearse and perform in small groups rather than large ensembles and/or utilize virtual tools to organize performances.

Educational Technology

- Because the Library Media Center is being repurposed for classroom teaching space, we will modify our system for book checkout to ensure safety.

Pertaining to All Specials

- Art, Music, Health and EdTech instruction will take place in student classrooms to minimize transitions of students.
- Students in each cohort will have assigned materials to the extent possible. When sharing of materials is necessary, proper cleaning strategies will be implemented.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

The Sherman School will put health and safety, including social and emotional wellness, for staff and students as our highest priority by establishing a positive and supportive learning environment. In order for our students to return to school successfully, we will need to use resources we have found from such organizations as CASEL, The Committee for Children, EdAdvance, and the State of Connecticut Department of Education to anticipate needs, assess well-being, and implement interventions as necessary. Ensuring a safe and positive return to school is essential for our students.



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- Faculty and staff will participate in professional development as available in social-emotional learning (SEL) and trauma-informed teaching, especially as these topics relate specifically to COVID-19.
- The Sherman School will implement the Second Step program and utilization of resources for educators in SEL and trauma-informed teaching.
- When they are made available, the Director of Curriculum will consider implementing RESC developed re-entry units with a focus on rebuilding the learning community and assessing SEL needs as well as practicing use of the health protocols in place such as social distancing and wearing masks. Faculty and staff will address the needs of identified students (ie. students requiring extra support during Distance Learning).
- The Sherman School will create a communication process for families to share experiences that are relevant to SEL needs of students and connect with families who express a need.
- The Director of Curriculum will engage staff and students in reflecting on their learning during spring 2020 and how that might impact teaching and learning as we reopen school.
- The Director of Curriculum will help teachers plan for and support students who were impacted by recent national issues related to social justice and how to address these issues when we return to school.

ASSESSMENTS AND GRADING

The Sherman School will base assessment practices for the 2020-2021 school year on the model provided by the CT Department of Education documents *Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together* found [here](#) and *Sensible Assessment Practices in 2020-21 and Beyond* found [here](#).

- These documents guide us to use what we already know about students from our time with them in 2019-2020 to determine starting points for instruction.
- In addition, The Sherman School will plan our initial units of study of the 2020-2021 school year to focus on re-establishing the learning community, welcoming our students back to our wonderful school, supporting our students' social-emotional needs, and using brief formative assessments in focused academic areas to guide our work with students.
- After our initial units of study have accomplished the goal of starting off the school year in a positive way, we will launch our revised, grade-level units of study within each content area and continue to use formative assessments to guide our work with students and help us determine needed academic and social-emotional supports.



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- Finally, we will work toward administering summative assessments in specific content areas, including benchmark assessments such as STAR, when we feel our students are academically, socially, and emotionally ready to perform at their best to deliver useful information to teachers about student achievement levels.
- At the end of the year, the State of Connecticut anticipates administering on-grade summative assessments including the Smarter Balanced Assessment for students in Grades 3–8 and the Next Generation Science Standards Assessment for students in grades 5 and 8 to evaluate overall achievement on the state standards.

Based on guidance from the State of Connecticut Department of Education, moving forward, students will earn grades for the work they submit whether they are in-person or learning remotely. It will be very important for students to remain current with their assignments and due dates, check for feedback from their teachers, and take opportunities to improve their work through final submission. Teachers will communicate expectations for earning grades or scores on assignments and share those grades or scores through Seesaw, Google Classroom, PowerSchool, or other means as is appropriate for the grade level and content area. Final grades for each trimester will be shared on report cards through PowerSchool.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

As was the case for Distance Learning in the Spring of 2020, many of the decisions regarding special education will be made on an individual basis. The purpose of the bullets below is to provide information for special education students as a whole and, as a result, the guidance is more general. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Director of Special Education, David Dudics (dudicsd@shermanschool.com) or your child's case manager if you have any questions about re-entry and/or your child's special education program during in school or distance learning instruction.

- Sherman will plan for Fall programming with the understanding that there has been no waiver of requirements under the IDEA for provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). During the spring 2020 COVID-19 school closure, Sherman was required to provide FAPE consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students, as well as those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students. Sherman may not have been able to provide all services in the same manner that they are typically provided. Federal disability law allows for flexibility in determining how to meet the individualized needs of students receiving special education services. This information is referenced in the CSDE plan [here](#).



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- The Sherman School will treat students eligible for special education and other special populations as general education students first. Guidance and policies related to school reopening plans apply to all students, including students with special needs who qualify for individual education programs under the IDEA and accommodation plans for eligible students under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If students with disabilities are unable to access the reopening plan as designed, The Sherman School will facilitate individualized and alternative means of re-entry based upon student need, present levels of functioning, developmental levels, and student/parent input. At this point the Sherman School will consider blended learning schedules if needed. This information is referenced in the CSDE plan [here](#).
- Sherman will not make programming decisions based on a student's disability category. However, the nature and/or severity of a student's disability may require unique considerations. In the case of a unique consideration, Sherman will develop protocols to consider the student's developmental level and skills. This information is referenced in the CSDE plan [here](#).
- Special education teachers and related service providers will provide continued instruction in teaching students how to put on and wear masks.
- The Special Education team will determine if specific students require re-entry plans and develop and implement those plans accordingly.
- Special education case managers and related service providers will communicate directly with families regarding service times and resources for each of the special education students they work with.
- PPTs will continue to be held virtually, even if students are able to attend school in person. Families will receive invites and links prior to the PPT and utilize the Zoom platform for these meetings.
- Progress Reports will continue to be completed per the PPT determination.
- Collaboration between general education and special education/related services will continue (virtually or in person) based on what is recommended in the student's IEP.
- The CSDE will be providing further guidance regarding special education students who voluntarily opt into remote learning.
- Homebound and hospitalization instruction will continue if the PPT team determines it as the least restrictive environment for a student.

ENGLISH LEARNERS

The Sherman School will ensure that communications regarding the reopening plan and future remote learning will be delivered in each of our family's home languages, and commit to supporting EL students through our Scientific Research-Based Intervention model.



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Please contact Keri Snowden, Director of Curriculum at snowdenk@shermanschool.com if you require any translated materials or have questions regarding qualifications.

LEARNING PLATFORMS AND DIGITAL TOOLS

Based on the feedback from last year's distance learning, we have identified the following platforms and digital tools that we will utilize in our blended learning and remote learning.



Zoom (K-8)

Zoom is a powerful and secure web-based platform that allows for remote meetings. The teacher (or meeting host) has the ability to control speakers, video cameras, chat, and can even enable generic backgrounds for increased privacy.

Seesaw (K-3)

Seesaw is a user-friendly digital platform that promotes student engagement and independence. At The Sherman School, we will be using Seesaw in grades kindergarten through three. A teacher creates a Seesaw classroom and provides a code to students and families to join. The teacher then finds or creates activities to share with students through his or her Seesaw classroom. Students use creative tools to take pictures, draw, record videos and more to capture learning in a portfolio in response to the teacher's assignments. Families can only see their child's work and, if permitted, can leave comments and encouragement.

Google Classroom (4-8)

Google Classroom makes teaching and learning more productive and meaningful by streamlining assignments, boosting collaboration, promoting independence, and fostering communication. At The Sherman School, we will be using Google Classroom in grades four



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through eight. A teacher creates a Google Classroom and provides a code to students to join. Educators can distribute assignments, send feedback, and see everything in one place. Students use Google tools such as docs, slides, spreadsheets, drawings, and more to create their responses. Once their work is submitted, students can receive feedback from their teacher and, if appropriate, see a score or grade for their submission.

Digital Tools

In an effort to ensure we offer a robust learning environment for students, we have invested in a number of digital tools that can be accessed on a variety of devices both within the school and at home if remote learning is necessary. The table below illustrates the website subscriptions that we have purchased for our students to utilize this year:

Digital Tool	Grade	Digital Tool	Grade
Lexia	1-3	Newsela	4-8
abcya	PS-3	Bandlab	5-8
Freckle	K-8	Bloxels	4-5
Bookflix	K-3	BrainPop	PS-8
Classcraft	4-8	CommonLit	6-8
CoSpacesEDU	4-8	Dash Dot Pack	1-4
Math Exemplars	K	Flipgrid	3-8
Gamestar Mechanic	4-5	Makers Empire	2-4
Mosa Mack	6-8	Mystery Science	PS-5
Noteflight	6-8	Pixton EDU	2-5
RAZ Kids Plus	K-5	Rocket Lit	6-8
SmartMusic	4-8	Teacher Gaming	3-8
Teaching Garage	2-3	Typing Quest	K-8
VMath	3-7	WeVideo	4-8
ExtraMath	4		



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TECHNOLOGY

Our shift to blended learning and our preparation for the possibility of future remote learning required that we make investments in both classroom and home based technology. We have purchased Viewsonic 75" Interactive Displays as teaching stations in the Library Media Center (which is now the location of the 4th grade classrooms), the Multi Purpose Room (which are now 8th grade classrooms), and for all of the middle school classrooms to allow for continuity.



This cutting-edge technology, which was piloted by one of our teachers through last year's Innovation Fund, are superior to traditional smartboards and projectors because they:

- Allow flexibility of location and seamless interaction between the students and board.
- Permit teachers and students to share multiple screens at once.
- Can be utilized with Zoom to allow for students who are remote learning to participate.
- Have built-in software that contains a number of additional features and benefits.

Chromebooks and iPads

In the Spring of 2020, we purchased enough iPads for every student in grades K-2 and Chromebooks for every student in grades 3-8 to support our Distance Learning Plan. Our 2020-2021 Reopening Plan will utilize these devices in both our blended learning (in school) and remote learning (at home) models. All students will use their devices upon our return to school in August for receiving and submitting assignments. Teachers will help students learn and navigate the digital tools starting in the first week of school.



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MASTER SCHEDULE

We are in the process of remodeling our master schedule in response to our blended learning priorities and to keep children in smaller, cohorted groups. We will finalize and share the schedule as soon as it is available. We have established the following priorities for our master schedule:

- Physical education for K-5 students
- Focused study in special area classes
- Minimize transitions between classrooms
- Additional lunch & recess waves

Exploration Period (XP) and Enrichment

We know how much students enjoy our XP and Enrichment program, however, due to the cohorting restrictions we have determined that it is in the best interests of our students' health and safety that we cancel XP for this 2020-2021 school year. We will resume our XP and Enrichment programs in the fall of 2021. Until requirements for cohorting students are revised, there will be no XP program offered.

ATHLETICS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The school district will adhere to CIAC (Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference) guidelines for interscholastic sports. The school's participation in these activities will be reliant on public health trends, participants' levels of comfort, and surrounding schools' participation.

After school clubs, activities, and events will be approved in advance by the Superintendent-Principal based on the ability to meet health and safety guidelines. Details of programming options will be communicated with students and families on a case by case basis providing time for families to determine participation.

STAFFING AND PERSONNEL

The Sherman School will maximize opportunities for social distancing and cohorting by assigning faculty and staff thoughtfully in support of our students. Although appropriately certified teachers will be planning instruction and assessing students, there will be times when adults will work in supervisory roles outside of their typical responsibilities. During this



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pandemic, every adult has been called upon to be flexible during the school day and ready to support student learning and well-being wherever and whenever it is needed.

- The Sherman School will comply with legal and regulatory requirements related to personnel, including teacher certification, as we plan for teaching and supervising smaller cohorts of students throughout each school day as required by the Department of Education in *Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together* found [here](#).
- The Sherman School will engage substitutes or may reassign staff to meet student needs.

Training and Professional Development

Professional development will be delivered on designated days, early dismissal days, and during grade level, department, and faculty meetings. To be responsive to the fluid nature of the pandemic as well as the needs of our students which will be assessed continually, ongoing training and professional development will be scheduled as needed and as available. Possible topics include:

Trainings and PD for Faculty and Staff	
Training on Blended Learning Best Practices	Training on the use of Technology Platforms
Training on Remote Learning Best Practices	Training on Identification of Abuse / Neglect
Training on Health and Safety Protocols	Training on Social Emotional Curriculum
Training on Social Distancing Protocols	PD on the Modification of Curriculum
Training on PPE Protocols	PD on the Modification of Units of Instruction

REVISED 2020-2021 CALENDAR

Revised Calendar

On July 14, 2020, the State Board of Education passed a resolution offering flexibility on the 180 day requirement for students, modifying the statute for the 2020-2021 school year to require that students only need to attend for a total of 177 days. This provision allows us to add much needed professional development and training time for teachers before school begins.



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As a result, the first day of school for students has been modified to begin on August 31, 2020. Please note the Board approved school calendar below:

Sherman School – 2020-2021 Calendar		REVISED (July 14, 2020)		
August 21	New Teacher Orientation	1 days	1	
August 24-28	Professional Development Day	5 days	5	
August 31	First Student Day	1 day	1	
September 7	Labor Day (No School)	1 day	1	
September 17	Knight of Excellence (Open House)	1 day	1	
September 18	Professional Development Day (No School)	1 day	1	
September 28	Yom Kippur (No School)	1 day	1	
October 12	Columbus Day (No School)	1 day	1	
October 21	Evening Conferences	1 day	1	
October 22	Early Dismissal 12:30 P.M. (Conferences)	1 day	1	
October 23	Early Dismissal 12:30 P.M. (Conferences)	1 day	1	
November 3	Election Day/Professional Development (No School)	1 day	1	
November 25-27	Thanksgiving Recess	3 days	3	
December 8	Early Dismissal 12:30 P.M. (Prof. Dev.)	1 day	1	
December 23-January 1	Holiday Recess	10 days	10	
January 15	Professional Development Day	1 day	1	
January 18	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday (No School)	1 day	1	
February 15-16	President's Day (No School)	2 days	2	
February 17-19	Early Dismissal 12:30 P.M. (Conferences)	3 days	3	
March 2	Early Dismissal 12:30 P.M. (Prof. Dev.)	1 day	1	
March 16	Early Dismissal 12:30 P.M. (Prof. Dev.)	1 day	1	
April 1	Early Dismissal 12:30 P.M. (Prof. Dev.)	1 day	1	
April 2	School Closed (Good Friday)	1 day	1	
April 12-16	Spring Break	5 days	5	
May 11	Early Dismissal 12:30 P.M. (Prof. Dev.)	1 day	1	
May 31	Memorial Day (No School)	1 day	1	
June 10	Last Student Day (Early Dismissal 12:30 P.M.)	1 day	1	

Month	Days	Total
August 2020	1	1
September 2020	19	20
October 2020	21	41
November 2020	17	58
December 2020	16	74
January 2021	18	92
February 2021	18	110
March 2021	23	133
April 2021	16	149
May 2021	20	169
June 2021	8	177

Any days lost by emergency closing of school will be added to the calendar beginning June 11th through and including June 25, 2021. If needed, additional snow emergency days will be taken from spring recess beginning with April 16, and working backwards.

Graduation date will be set by the BOE at its April meeting
Revised Calendar Pending Board of Education Approval

177 -- Instructional Days for Students 185 -- Days for Teachers

- Early Dismissal
- Teacher work day- no students
- School Closed
- Weather Related Closing

DAILY OPERATIONS

Cohorts

The purpose of cohorting is to limit the number of students who are exposed to or may be diagnosed with COVID-19 to reduce the potential for community transmission in a school. Maintaining stable cohorts helps to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19, and also makes it easier to implement contact tracing.



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A “cohort” is a group or team of students and educators with consistent members that stay together throughout the school day. While not foolproof, cohorting has been identified as one of the most effective strategies to reduce exposure.

Grade level cohorts have been established to minimize their level of exposure to other students and maximize the available space throughout the building. Throughout the day, students will remain in their assigned classrooms as teachers rotate through, on a limited basis, to deliver instruction. Bathrooms will be assigned to various cohorts throughout the building to minimize exposure. Students in each cohort will have assigned seats and their own materials in their classrooms, including writing utensils, texts, art supplies, and PE supplies among others.

Foot Traffic in Hallways

One-way traffic in the corridors was determined not to be logistically feasible. Instead, cones will be placed down the middle of each hallway with signs directing traffic to stay to the right. We anticipate overall foot traffic in the hallways will be greatly reduced under this format. Masks will be worn at all times when in the hallway.

Meal Service

Meal service will continue with a modified menu. Aramark will consider cold offerings, individually wrapped or bagged, to be delivered to classrooms where students will eat with their cohort. When packing a lunch for your child, please remember that we are a peanut and treenut free school. Please also remember that students will not be able to heat or microwave their food, so please plan accordingly.

Recess and Breaks

We recognize the importance of providing recess to all students. In an effort to do this safely, and in consulting the American Academy of Pediatrics guidance found [here](#), we have reduced the number of students that will be together for recess by building an additional lunch and recess wave into the master schedule. When the weather cooperates, students will be outside for recess. Lunch and recess waves will be staggered so that some cohorts will eat lunch while others have recess. Recess locations will also be assigned and alternated to spread cohorts out further. Teachers will be encouraged to provide breaks for their students throughout the day.

Visitors

Under the guidance of the State Department of Education, non-essential visitors are not permitted unless required by law or in the case of an emergency. In addition, use of the school



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building outside of school hours will be reduced to allow for thorough, daily cleaning and disinfecting. Specifically, students, parents, staff, and others are restricted from entering the building if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or if a member of their household has had a positive test for COVID-19.

Parent meetings will continue, although they will be conducted virtually until further notice. Parent meetings include parent team meetings, parent teacher conferences, 504s and PPTs.




In an effort to mitigate the health and safety of our school community, any person (non-staff member, vendor, etc.) who is deemed necessary to enter the building will be required to respond to a health questionnaire when they arrive in the main office. Any person who does not meet the minimum requirements will not be permitted to enter.

Substitute Teachers

We realize that it may be necessary for substitute teachers to enter the building and work with different cohorts of students. In an effort to mitigate the health and safety of our school community, substitutes will be required to complete a personal health questionnaire before they can accept a teaching vacancy. Any substitute who does not meet requirements will not be permitted to work in the school for that day.

TRANSPORTATION

Although we strongly encourage families that have the ability to drive their child to and from school to do so, the CSDE requires that districts work with their transportation providers to plan for three different statuses established by the DPH: Safe, Low, and Moderate. This can be referenced in the CSDE plan [here](#). This tiered system is designed to allow schools the flexibility necessary to respond to trends in public health data. We will communicate any time our status changes.

 <p>Safe Status Bus transportation can operate with no restrictions.</p>	 <p>Low Status Bus transportation can operate up to full status with mask requirements and loading and unloading restrictions.</p>	 <p>Moderate Status Bus transportation can operate with seating and spacing restrictions, mask requirements, and loading and unloading restrictions.</p>
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Safe Status

Where either a vaccine is available or effective treatments for COVID-19 are available, bus transportation can operate as it did prior to the pandemic, with no restrictions.

Low Status

Where there is low transmission risk in the community and some restrictions are in place in schools, buses will be able to operate up to full capacity. Passengers will be required to wear a face mask or cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth before loading, during transit, and while unloading until they are given a mask break by their teachers. Passengers will be assigned seats by grade level and will remain in their seats during transit. Upon arrival at the school, students will unload the bus in a controlled manner from front to back by seat.

High school passengers will load into the bus from the back row to the front (where the first passengers onto the bus sit in the back row) and then unload the bus in a controlled manner upon arrival at the school from front to back by seat. This will reduce the number of passengers that other students will need to walk past as they disembark the bus and will prevent crowding in the center aisle when the bus arrives for unloading.

Moderate Status

If the State of Connecticut and/or DPH determines the transmission risk in the community to be moderate, passenger density should be significantly reduced because schools will be employing remote, blended learning. Passengers should be spaced with family members sitting together and non-family members should be spaced 6 feet apart utilizing alternating, diagonal seating. The same requirements for wearing face masks or cloth face coverings, as well as sitting in assigned seats will be in place. The same loading and unloading requirements will also be in place for high school students as listed above.

Student Drop Off and Pick Up

Details will be forthcoming regarding specific expectations for teachers, students, and parents/guardians for these procedures. Procedures developed will be in compliance with CSDE guidance and will also be informed by survey data indicating families' abilities to provide their own transportation.

High school students are expected to remain in their family's vehicle while waiting for buses in the morning at The Sherman School to prevent congregation. When high school students exit



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their vehicles or transfer buses they are expected to wear a face mask or cloth face covering at all times.

Additional Mitigation Strategies

Transportation to and from school by parents/guardians will be encouraged to keep passenger density and risk of exposure to a minimum.

- A forthcoming survey will be conducted to find out which students will be driven by parents/guardians at the start of the school year.
- The school will plan to safely accommodate new traffic patterns in the event of increased alternate transportation by families, which may include staggering arrival and drop off times to enhance safety protocols in place.
- Sherman School Administration will develop arrival/departure procedures that limit unnecessary entrance of parents/guardians into the building.
- The school will allow for minimal contact of parents/guardians with school personnel and students while dropping off and/or picking up students during the day.
- There is a procedure that allows for student drop off at the start of the day and student pick up at the end of the day without parents/guardians needing to enter the building.

Proper hygiene habits will be practiced on the bus.

- Parents/guardians of younger students will be asked to assist in social distancing at bus stops and during pick-up and drop-off.
- Parents/guardians of younger students will be asked to secure masks on students at bus stops prior to students boarding the bus.
- The school will provide a limited amount of additional masks to each bus as back-ups to ensure all passengers wear face coverings at all times.
- Parents/guardians and teachers will be asked to remind students to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer prior to boarding the bus in the morning and afternoon.
- To maintain stable bus cohorts, students will only be permitted on the bus to which they have been assigned.

Bus drivers must be healthy in order to drive.

- Bus drivers will have their temperatures screened daily before starting their morning runs to ensure temperatures below 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit. They will also passively screen themselves to observe for symptoms outlined by public health officials. Drivers are to stay at home if they are feeling sick, have any symptoms associated with COVID-19, or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Drivers with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater are not permitted to drive. Drivers will be allowed to return 24 hours after a fever has broken, or with a note from their healthcare provider, or with a documented negative COVID-19 test.



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- All drivers will wash or sanitize their hands prior to boarding their buses.
- Bus drivers must wear face masks at all times when children are on the bus.
- Buses will be routinely cleaned and disinfected twice daily; once before the first morning run and again after the last afternoon run. When feasible, drivers will clean and disinfect “high-touch” areas such as handrails and tops of seatbacks, in between runs.

FISCAL AND BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Although the 2020-2021 operating budget was developed prior to this pandemic, we are prepared to transfer funds to cover unanticipated costs that are not otherwise reimbursed through state and federal sources such as the Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund which includes the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Fund, and the Coronavirus Relief Fund, and FEMA.

It is difficult to predict at this time if there will be additional costs associated with COVID-19 that would exceed our operational budget. However, please trust that we are making every effort to comply with all requirements to ensure our applications for these state and federal funding sources are maximized to mitigate the burden on Sherman taxpayers.

FAMILY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In order to provide the safest possible environment for our students and staff, we need straightforward communication and cooperation with the following strategies to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19.

Screening for Symptoms at Home

Every family will receive a magnetized checklist (similar to the one shown below) which highlights the symptoms of COVID-19. We ask that families place this checklist in a prominent location in their home, and refer to it before placing their child on the bus, or driving them to school. If there are questions about your child’s well-being on a given day, please do not allow him or her to come to school, contact our school nurse, and contact your physician for guidance immediately. Please be reminded that the health and well-being of our students and staff is incumbent, in large part, on families’ willingness to keep your child home in the event that they are ill, or possibly showing COVID-19 symptoms.



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Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Know the symptoms of COVID-19, which can include the following:

- Cough
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing*
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Symptoms can range from mild to severe illness, and appear 2-14 days after you are exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

***Seek medical care immediately if someone has emergency warning signs of COVID-19.**

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Face Coverings

Because each child in grades K-8 at The Sherman School will be required to wear a face covering for large portions of the school day, we require that families provide their child with a comfortable, unique and easily identifiable face covering. It is suggested that families purchase several so that a fresh one can be worn each day while the others are being laundered. If a child misplaces his or her face covering, or if it becomes soiled or unusable, a disposable face mask will be provided.

In an effort to ensure your child has the stamina to wear a face covering for potentially long periods of time, we encourage families to have their child practice wearing face coverings at home as much as possible. It is recommended that families begin with several minutes, and work their way up for longer periods of sustained mask wearing.

Water Bottles

Because COVID-19 can be transmitted by refilling water bottles, parents are required to send their child to school with a full, leakproof water bottle that will sustain them throughout the day. If your child drinks a lot of water, please consider sending him or her with more than one bottle if necessary. It is important that your child's water bottle be clearly labeled so that it can be uniquely identified by your child. In the event that a child runs out of water, we will supply individual bottles of water.



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Nutritious Snacks

We anticipate that the procedures we are implementing in school to mitigate the risk of transmitting COVID-19 may deplete the energy of some of our students. To offset this risk, please send your child with multiple nutritious snacks that adhere to our guidelines, which can be found [here](#).

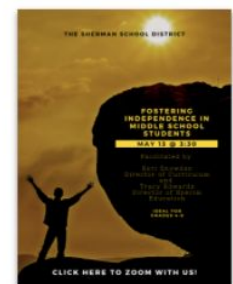
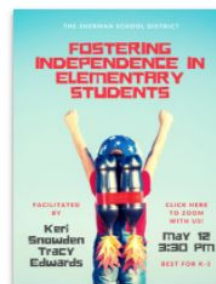
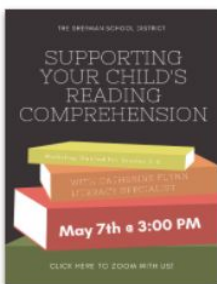
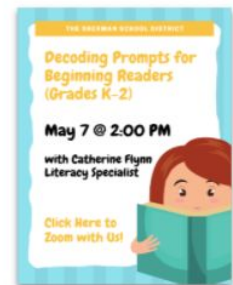
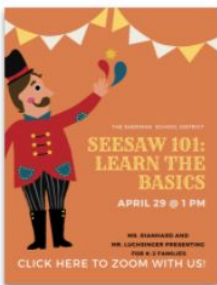
Lightweight, Loose Fitting Clothing

Please be sure to send your child to school every day with appropriate clothing that will allow them to be as comfortable as possible. Doing so will be especially important in the fall as temperatures and humidity can be an issue for some students.

RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

Family Workshops

As part of our spring 2020 Distance Learning 2.0 plan, the faculty and administration developed a series of family workshops below that are designed to assist parents and guardians in supporting their children's learning at home. These presentations were recorded and are available on our website or click below for a direct link:





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CDC Instructional Resources

The CDC has developed a series of resources that are intended to provide instruction on best practices for mitigating the spread of germs, and the transmission of COVID-19. Many of these resources will be shown to students to reinforce expectations. We encourage families to review these videos to support our efforts and provide valuable information about strategies to increase health and safety.

Curated List of Instructional Videos, Posters and Resources	
CDC Communications Resources	CDC COVID Videos
CDC COVID PSAs	CDC COVID Social Media Toolkit
CDC What you Need to Know About Handwashing	CDC COVID Print Resources, Multiple Languages
CDC Child Posters, Multiple Languages	

Tech Help for Families

We recognize that many families will need assistance with the digital tools students and teachers will be using for blended and remote learning. To support these efforts, we have provided a curated list of resources that families may reference in Appendix B.

State of Connecticut COVID Response

Find the most up-to-date information regarding the COVID-19 response in the State of Connecticut, including relevant guidance for residents, by clicking [here](#). In addition, this website also provides details concerning the locations for testing centers in our area.

TEMPORARILY CHOOSING NOT TO PARTICIPATE

The state requires that school districts offer families the option of participating in a fully remote learning environment on a temporary basis during this pandemic. We can appreciate that, in some circumstances, this may be medically necessary for some students. In contrast, we understand that some families may feel that a return to school for their child would jeopardize their health and well-being.

Families who choose to keep their children at home, or who must keep children at home due to illness or quarantine, are required to engage in remote learning or choose to homeschool. In



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addition, participating students will be ready for the future curriculum and prepared for a smooth transition back to school when appropriate. The purpose of this section is to provide families with information that will allow them to make an informed decision, and details regarding the exercise of this temporary option.

Blended Learning (in school)	Remote Learning (at home)
Students will be able to engage with their teachers and peers throughout the day.	Students will engage with teachers through Zoom at times specified by the teacher each day.
Faculty and staff will be able to monitor student work completion.	Parents will monitor student work completion and submission.
Faculty and staff will provide feedback in real time.	Faculty will provide feedback after work is submitted through Seesaw (K-3) or Google Classroom (4-8).
Students are provided breaks throughout the day where they will be able to remove their masks and interact with peers with social distancing.	Student interaction with peers will be scheduled according to student and class availability.

- We will distribute a survey in August to obtain initial information regarding each family's plan to return to school, learn from home, or homeschool their children.
- Students are expected to use their school-owned device for participation in remote learning.
- Teachers will offer daily synchronous learning opportunities that may be live or recorded for later viewing for students learning remotely.
- Parents are required to provide one week notice of a decision to learn from home (when possible) or return to school.

Homeschooling

Please note that families who choose not to participate in school and/or remote learning for an extended period of time, including the entire school year, must opt to homeschool their children with no support from school personnel.

Please contact Linda Christie at mainoffice@shermanschool.com for detailed information regarding the steps needed to select this option.



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- Resources for teachers and families for remote learning can be found at the CT Learning Hub [here](#).

DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PLAN

This plan was developed in accordance with the guidance provided through the Connecticut State Department of Education's *Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together* document that was published on June 29, 2020; with reference to health information available through the CTDPH, the CDC; and in consultation with the members of Sherman's Reopening Committee, whose members are listed below:

Bob Ostrosky, Board of Selectmen	Adele Lewis, Sherman Paraeducator
James Neunzig, Board of Education	Louise Hofsdal, Sherman Paraeducator
Susan Seeger, Board of Education	Amanda O'Neill, SPTO Executive
Jeff Melendez, Superintendent-Principal	Matt Vogt, SPTO Executive
Brian Kalkreuth, Assistant Principal	Bernadette Schopfer, Parent
Keri Snowden, Director of Curriculum	Martha Watson, Parent
David Dudics, Director of Special Education	Henry Cooperman, Parent
Carrie DePuy, Director of Finance	Abigail Kopp, Parent
Jim Luchsinger, Director of Technology	Ryan Hatcher, Student
Joe Lombardozi, Facility Supervisor	Avery Peburn, Student
Daniele Shook, Teacher	Nate Setzler, Student
Steven Trinchillo, Teacher	Bryce Schopfer, Student
Jake Butler, Teacher	Isabella Scherner, Student
Lorraine Spinetti, Sherman School Nurse	Tim Simpkins, Director of Health
Dr. Evan Hack, School Medical Advisor	

REFERENCES

Many resources were utilized in the creation of this document. These resources, include, but are not limited to the following:



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Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together. Connecticut State Department of Education, June 29, 2020.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. www.cdc.gov

COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Reentry. American Association of Pediatrics, June 25, 2020.

Reopening our Schools (Draft): Based on Guidelines from the Connecticut Department of Education. East Hampton Public Schools, Fall 2020.

DISCLAIMER

The guidance and plans provided in this document are based on current guidelines and requirements issued by the State Department of Education and the current input of local entities and public health officials. The COVID-19 public health emergency continues to be a rapidly evolving situation, and consequently, the guidelines, requirements and plans described herein may change as the legal and regulatory landscape and the public health trends continue to change.



APPENDIX A - REMOTE LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Expectations for Students

Student Independence and Effort

- Within reason, students are expected to demonstrate as much independence as possible in the completion of work and activities. Doing so will foster the development of important life skills for future learning.
- Teachers will develop lessons that include clear instructions. As appropriate, students should be expected to carefully read all instructions and should be encouraged to re-read instructions, reach out to classmates, or ask the teacher when they are unsure about something. Students and families should also take advantage of teachers' office hours (see Teacher Expectations Below).
- Students are expected to check online learning platforms such as Seesaw (K-3) or Google Classroom (4-8) for new instruction each day, as well as respond to teachers' emails and/or messages, and complete and submit assignments in a timely manner.
- Students are expected to attend as many live lessons and meetings as possible with their teachers. If a student is unable to attend a live session, they should view the recording as soon as possible.

Appropriate Online Behavior

- The same expectations that students and families agreed to under our "Acceptable Use Policy" remain in effect during the school closure.
- Students are expected to conduct themselves in the same manner online as they would if they were physically attending school; remember Sherman's Core Values: Respect, Courage, Responsibility, Honesty.
- When in a live Zoom meeting with a teacher, students should:
 - Only log in using their Sherman Google account
 - Never share the meeting URL with anyone
 - Mute their microphones and cameras unless otherwise directed by the teacher
 - Not share their screens unless otherwise directed by the teacher
 - Only use the chat for class purposes
 - Use school-appropriate language at all times
- To respect everyone's privacy, the teacher is the only person who should ever record a meeting. Teachers will record and share live group instruction, excluding class discussion, for students who are unable to attend.



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Work Completion

- The completion of assignments is the primary way in which student participation will be gauged and as such, work completion is mandatory.
- In order to receive credit for assignments, work must be regularly submitted for teachers to review and provide feedback.
- For information about grading, see the Assessments and Grading section below.

Expectations for Families

Student Participation

- If your child is experiencing difficulty accessing, understanding, or completing lessons or assignments, it is imperative that a parent or guardian communicate this to the teacher in a timely manner so that he/she can provide support. Given that teachers are not taking attendance in the traditional sense, regular communication and work submission are the only means of monitoring student participation and progress under the current setup.
- The process outlined below has been established so that the school ensures students are safe and able to access and meaningfully participate in remote learning opportunities. It is intended to reflect flexibility for diverse and complex family circumstances, as well as the school's obligation to remedy any obstacles families might be experiencing:
 - 1 week with limited or no work submitted and no communication from home:
 - Teacher, special education case manager, or related services provider will attempt to contact the family via email and/or phone call
 - 2 weeks with limited or no work submitted and no communication from home:
 - Administration will attempt to reach out in the same ways listed above, emergency contacts listed may also be engaged
 - Wellness checks may be conducted by town officials
 - A written letter will be mailed to the home address requesting they contact someone from the school
 - 3 weeks with limited or no work submitted and no communication from home:
 - Administration will continue to attempt to reach out in the same ways listed above
 - A DCF referral may be made for educational neglect



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Setting Child Expectations

- In order to ensure your child is successful, we suggest families set clear guidelines for work production.

Monitoring Work Completion

- Your child's teachers will be responsible for monitoring the completion of required work as well as providing feedback to students. If students are not completing and/or submitting work, you will be contacted by the teacher directly. We ask that you partner with us in these cases. Teachers and administrators are committed to supporting families in ensuring that work is completed.

Schedule

- We strongly recommend that each student follow his or her given schedule and attend live lessons and meetings as much as possible. However, we realize that individual circumstances may require flexibility and that families may need to develop their own schedules.

Physical Space

- It is important parents set up a space in their home that is free from distractions like television and toys. If possible, a space that is dedicated only to school work would be ideal.

Technology Access

- Because our remote learning plan is built on technology platforms, we have provided any family in need with a device and/or resources to obtain internet access in their home. However, we need families to ensure that these devices are in working order and to provide technical assistance as needed. Please contact [Jim Luchsinger](#), Director of Technology, with questions or if you need assistance.
- To respect everyone's privacy, when your child is in a live Zoom meeting, the teacher is the only person who should ever record a meeting. Teachers will record and share live group instruction, excluding class discussion, for students who are unable to attend.



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Breaks

- It is unrealistic for students to be expected to work continuously. Therefore, we recommend that routine or as-needed breaks be encouraged.

Feedback

- This is new for all of us, and we want to maintain open dialogue with families to assess what is working and what is not.

Expectations for Teachers

Communication and Office Hours

- Teachers are expected to maintain ongoing communication with students and their families, colleagues, and administration. Although teachers will strive to answer all emails within a 24 hour period, teachers will also be available for a daily office hour for more immediate responses. All faculty will offer one office hour which they will communicate to relevant families.

Providing Instruction, Assignments, and Feedback

- Teachers are expected to provide live, daily instruction which will require work from students Monday-Friday. Every other Friday will be a day when no new assignments are given so that students may have the opportunity to catch up on any missed work and teachers may have time for professional development. Work that is completed by students will be submitted for review. Teachers are expected to provide feedback either individually or as a group to students.
- Teachers are expected to provide opportunities for live instruction and interaction each day. To the extent possible, lessons and meetings will be scheduled according to our in-person school schedule. Only live group instruction, excluding class discussion, will be recorded for viewing by students who are unable to attend.

Modifications and Accommodations for Students

- To the best of their abilities, teachers are expected to provide accommodations and modifications for students according to established IEP and 504 plans.



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Meeting Attendance and Collaboration with Colleagues

- Teachers are expected to attend online meetings at least weekly and to collaborate with colleagues to plan appropriate instruction for students.

Professional Development

- Teachers are expected to use resources available to them to learn about best practices in remote learning such as content selection, lesson delivery, feedback options, etc.

Guidelines for working from home

- To the greatest extent possible, it is important to achieve a balance between work-related requirements and other obligations one has as a parent and caregiver. Here are a number of resources which may be beneficial for families and teachers to review:
 - [Four tips for staying productive](#)
 - [Seven tips for working from home](#)
 - [Three tips to avoid burnout](#)

Expectations for Paraeducators

Interacting with Students

- Paraeducators will work with individual students who may require support with assignment completion and submission through regular check-ins.

Interacting with Teachers

- Paraeducators are expected to stay in regular communication with teachers regarding student progress.

Professional Development

- Paraeducators are expected to engage in training and professional development regarding digital tools in use as well as strategies to support students through online check-ins.



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Expectations for Administrators

Supervision

- Administrators are expected to oversee the work of the teachers to ensure the best possible learning experience for students. In addition, administrators will support teachers in the oversight of student work completion.

Support for Teachers

- Administrators are expected to support the work of teachers and students by providing resources, training, professional development, communication, etc.
- Administrators are available to support teachers with needs as they arise being flexible with meeting dates and times to the greatest extent possible.

Support for Families

- Administrators will also provide ongoing support to parents to address common challenges associated with remote learning. In addition, families are encouraged to contact us at any time when assistance is needed.

Communication

- Administrators are expected to engage in ongoing communication with staff, faculty, students, and families regarding the status of school closure and the remote learning plan.
- Administrators will continue to seek feedback and incorporate that feedback into future versions of the remote learning plan.



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APPENDIX B

Tech Help for Families

Google	
How to use multiple tabs in Google Chrome (watch this first!)	[click here]
Google Classroom	
How to get the Google Classroom app on your tablet or phone	[click here]
How to use Google Classroom for students	[click here]
How to use Google Classroom for parents	[click here]
How to enable/disable email notifications on Google Classroom	[click here]
How to submit student work in Google Classroom (grades 3-8)	[click here]
Seesaw	
How to submit student work (respond to an activity) in Seesaw (grades K-2)	[click here]
How to add multiple children to one family account in Seesaw (grades K-2)	[click here]
Zoom	
How to join a Zoom meeting	Coming Soon
Google Read and Write	
How to use Google Read and Write - for beginners	Coming Soon
How to use Google Read and Write - more advanced	Coming Soon
Google Calendar	
How to manage assignment due dates via Google Calendar for students	[click here]

Individual Tech Assistance

If the issue you are experiencing is not addressed, or if you require specialized assistance, please email Jim Luchsinger, Director of Technology, at luchsingerj@shermanschool.com.



WWW.SHERMANSCHOOL.COM