Hot Topics in Education

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What topics would you like to discuss?
Some Topics

• Reopening Plans and Guidance
• Update on Diplomas and Superintendent’s Determination
• Special Education
• Mental Health and Social Emotional Learning
• Family Engagement
Reopening Update

- Plans for reopening due July 31 – some controversy with extension of date
- Stakeholder input – your school district should have included parents/families in the process
- See NYS PTA COVID19 Page here: https://nyspta.org/home/covid-19/
DOH Reopening Guidance Highlights


“Face Coverings: Responsible Parties must maintain protocols and procedures for students, faculty, staff, and other individuals to ensure appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is used to protect against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus when on school grounds and in school facilities. Specifically, appropriate PPE means, at least, an acceptable face covering, which is strongly recommended to be worn by all individuals at all times but is required to be worn any time or place that individuals cannot maintain appropriate social distancing. However, if face coverings are to be worn by all individuals at all times, Responsible Parties should allow students to remove their face covering during meals, instruction, and for short breaks so long as they maintain appropriate social distance. Acceptable face coverings include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings (e.g., homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana), and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose.”
DOH Reopening Guidance Highlights

“Social Distancing: Responsible Parties must maintain protocols and procedures for students, faculty, and staff to ensure appropriate social distancing to protect against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus when on school grounds and in school facilities. Specifically, appropriate social distancing means six feet of space in all directions between individuals or use of appropriate physical barriers between individuals that do not adversely affect air flow, heating, cooling, or ventilation, or otherwise present a health or safety risk. If used, physical barriers must be put in place in accordance with United States Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines, and may include strip curtains, cubicle walls, plexiglass or similar materials, or other impermeable divider or partition.”

“Spaces: To reduce social density, Responsible Parties should consider and assess additional and/or alternate indoor space(s) that may be repurposed for instruction or other required purposes in support of in-person instruction within the school facility, school grounds, municipal facilities, municipal grounds, or community (e.g., community centers), as well as outdoor space(s) where health and safety conditions (e.g., allergies, asthma) allow for such potential usage.”
“In-Person Instruction:” To ensure equity in education, Responsible Parties should prioritize efforts to return all students to in-person instruction at this time. However, based on the dynamic nature of local community transmission of the COVID-19 virus, a phased-in approach or hybrid model combining in-person instruction and remote/distance learning may be necessary at various times through the 2020-2021 school year. In planning for these approaches and models, school plans should indicate if certain students will be prioritized to return to in-person instruction first or more frequently based on educational or other needs (e.g., early grades, students with disabilities, English language learners), given requirements for equity, capacity, social distancing, PPE, feasibility, and learning considerations.

“Transportation:” Consistent with State-issued public transit guidance, Responsible Parties must develop protocols and procedures, which include that individuals must wear acceptable face coverings at all times on school buses (e.g., entering, exiting, and seated), and that individuals should maintain appropriate social distancing, unless they are members of the same household. Responsible Parties should encourage parents/legal guardians to drop off or walk students to school to reduce density on buses.”
DOH Reopening Guidance Highlights

“Vulnerable Populations: Policies regarding vulnerable populations, including students, faculty and staff who are at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness, and individuals who may not feel comfortable returning to an in-person educational environment, to allow them to safely participate in educational activities and, where appropriate, accommodate their specific circumstances. These accommodations may include but are not limited to remote learning or telework, modified educational or work settings, or providing additional PPE to individuals with underlying health conditions. Responsible Parties must also identify and describe any modifications to social distancing or PPE that may be necessary for certain student or staff populations, including individuals who have hearing impairment or loss, students receiving language services, and young students in early education programs, ensuring that any modifications minimize COVID-19 exposure risk for students, faculty, and staff, to the greatest extent possible;”

• Cohorts
• Food service
• Ventilation
• Tracing/Closure/Return to School
SED Reopening Guidance Highlights

Q. Do students and staff have to maintain a 6-foot distance from others at all times?
A. Pursuant to NYSDOH Guidance, schools must ensure that appropriate social distancing (i.e. 6 feet/barriers) is maintained between individuals while in school facilities and on school grounds (inclusive of students, faculty, and staff), unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance. Schools must maintain protocols and procedures for students, faculty, and staff to ensure appropriate social distancing to protect against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus when on school grounds and in school facilities, including the responsibility to configure spaces so individuals can maintain social distancing. As a baseline, face coverings are required to be worn any time or place that individuals cannot maintain appropriate social distancing. Further, face coverings are “strongly recommended” by the New York Department of Health at all times, except for meals and instruction with appropriate social distancing. However, schools can require face coverings at all times, even during instruction; and it is strongly recommended in areas with higher rates of COVID-19 community infection.

• SED Reopening Guidance:
SED Reopening Guidance Highlights

Student Cohorts
Q. Do student cohorts have to maintain a 6-foot distance from each other at all times (NYSED Guidance p. 29)?
A. Please see response to Q. 1 regarding social distancing.

People at Increased Risk of Severe Illness
Q. Will the list of persons at increased risk of severe illness if contracting COVID-19 change (NYSED Guidance p.30)?
A. Since this is a new virus, the information is still evolving. Therefore, schools should check the CDC’s People Who Are at Increased Risk for Severe Illness site frequently.

Face Masks/Coverings
Q. Are cloth face masks acceptable face coverings (NYSED Guidance p.36)?
A. Per the NYSDOH Guidance, p. 2, Acceptable face coverings include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings (e.g. homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana) and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose.
SED Reopening Guidance Highlights

Return to School After Illness
Q. What is required in order for students and staff who had symptoms of COVID-19 to return to school (NYSED Guidance p. 40)?
A. Schools must establish policies in consultation with the local health department(s) about the requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screen positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment. This returning to learning protocol must include at a minimum, documentation of evaluation by a healthcare provider (healthcare provider note clearing a person to return to school), negative COVID-19 testing, and symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation as required by DOH and NYSED Guidance p. 40.

Meals Consumed Onsite
Q. Are students required to be socially distant while consuming meals in the cafeteria or classroom (NYSED Guidance p. 58)?
A. Students must be 6 feet apart or be separated by a barrier while consuming meals.
SED Reopening Guidance Highlights

Social Distancing and Mask Requirements on Bus
Q. Are students required to wear masks and social distance on a school bus?
A. All students are required to wear a mask and should maintain appropriate social distancing. The only exception to the mask requirement is that students whose physical or mental health would be impaired by wearing a mask are not required to do so, but must maintain social distancing of 6 feet from other individuals on the bus. (See page 62 of NYSED Reopening Guidance).

Health Screening
Q. Are parents required to ensure that their child or children do not show symptoms of COVID-19 or a fever before boarding a bus each day?
A. School districts are required to have a protocol in place to perform temperature and health screenings for COVID symptoms. Screenings by the parent/guardian prior to school are preferred. (See page 22 and 62 of NYSED Reopening Guidance).
Possible Exit Exam Changes – Delayed

• 60% of states do not require an exit exam to graduate high school

• Of 20 states with high school graduation exit exams, more than half require 3 or fewer exams

• Established a Blue Ribbon Commission on NY State’s Diploma

• Create a working stakeholder group with overlap to commission membership including: current or recent parents, students, educators, researchers, advocates, higher education and business leaders.

• PTA, Big 5, NYSCOSS, NYSSBA, NYSUT, SAANYS, UFT and others

• Originally work to be near complete now

• Plan was pushed out at least a year
Original timeline, Now pushed one year

Draft Timeline of the Blue Ribbon Commission’s Work

- **September 2019** – Establish the commission’s membership and draft meeting schedule.
- **October 2019** – 1st meeting - The commission sets its vision.
- **December 2019** – 2nd meeting – The commission identifies priority areas, “Big Questions” and recommendation framework. Assign sub-groups for priority areas.
- **January – March 2020** – Sub-groups meet.
- **April 2020** – Sub-groups report to the commission on proposed recommendations.
- **Summer 2020** – The commission finalizes recommendations and report is prepared with a focus on the impact to current requirements.
- **Fall 2020** – The commission’s final report is presented to the Board of Regents for its consideration.
Diploma Requirements

General Education and Diploma Requirements
http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/general-education-and-diploma-requirements

Safety Net and Superintendents Diploma Options
NYS Pathway Options

Four Required NYS Regents Examinations

English  Science
Math    Social Studies

+1

CDOS  CTE  STEM  Humanities  Arts  LOTE

http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/multiple-pathways
Superintendent’s Determination

1. Parent submitted written request that their child be considered
2. Has a current IEP & receiving special ed services
3. Student did not meet the graduation requirements through the low pass (55-64) safety net option or the compensatory option
4. Student earned the required course credits and passed all courses required for graduation, including the Regents courses
5. The student:
   • earned a minimum score of 55 on ELA and Math Regents examinations; and/or
   • successfully appealed a score between 52 and 54 on ELA and Mathematics Regents examinations; and/or
   • was unable to achieve a minimum score of 55 or did not initiate an appeal of a score of between 52 and 54 on the ELA and/or Mathematics Regents examinations, but he or she completed the requirements for the Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential (CDOS)
Special Education

Parent Training and Information Centers (PTICs) provide parents and families of children (birth -21) with disabilities assistance, help, and referral services for no cost.

Your county is served by one of many PTICS (for information purposes only, this is not a referral):

**Statewide** (expect for LI and NYC)

*Putnam, Westchester, Dutchess, Orange, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster* Counties

**NYC and its 5 Boroughs**

**Long Island**

*Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Wyoming, Genesee, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, and Allegany* Counties
Special Education

NYS Education Department Office of Special Education Page

NYS Education Department Assistance for Parents Page with information

Pathways to Graduation Options for Students with Disabilities

IEP Facilitation Program that is available to families

You can also seek assistance from a number of Education Department Regional Offices.

Parent to Parent of NYS also has support for parents and families of students with disabilities
Mental Health & SEL

- Mental Health education now mandated

- SEL = Social Emotional Learning
Mental Health & SEL

https://www.mentalhealthnednys.org/

**Fast Facts**

- Half of all chronic mental illnesses begin by age 14
- Half of all lifetime cases of anxiety disorders begin as early as age 8
- 22% of youth experience serious mental illness in a given year
- Youth substance abuse may be an attempt to self-medicate symptoms of undiagnosed mental illness
- Early signs of mental illness are often mistaken for typical characteristics of childhood and adolescent development
- The median delay between the onset of symptoms and treatment is 10 years.
Mental Health & SEL

https://www.mentalhealthednys.org/

What are the effects of untreated mental illness?

- Over 60% of young adults with mental illness were unable to complete high school
- 4 times less likely to go to college/trade school, or obtain employment
- 3 times more likely to be involved in criminal justice activities
- 1 in 12 high school students have attempted suicide

Know When to Ask for HELP

Signs & Symptoms
- Loss of enjoyment and interest in activities
- Lack of energy, feeling fatigue, or unexplained aches and pains
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Changes in appetite, sleep, and/or mood
- Strained or withdrawn relationships
- Feeling of worthlessness, anger, and/or guilt
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Risk Factors
- Family or personal history of mental health disorders
- Trauma or difficulties during childhood
- Significant life change or loss; ongoing stress and anxiety
- Medical condition, hormonal changes, and/or chronic pain
- Use or withdrawal of alcohol or drugs, including prescription medications
- Lack of social supports and coping strategies

There is HOPE for Recovery

Recovery is a self-defined process of change through which an individual improves health and wellness, lives a self-directed life, and strives to reach full potential. It’s important to remember that recovery is possible. 60 to 90% of people who receive treatment experience positive outcomes.

Protective factors to consider when addressing mental health concerns - social supports, healthy lifestyle choices, avoiding drugs and alcohol, positive coping skills, good problem solving skills, and early intervention.
Family Engagement

A National PTA® Initiative

The Center for Family Engagement®
Family Engagement

4 Principles of Transformative Family Engagement

**INCLUSIVE**
Embracing and valuing diverse perspectives.

**INDIVIDUALIZED**
Meeting the unique needs of every family and child.

**INTEGRATED**
Connecting and aligning with the educational system.

**IMPACTFUL**
Empowering families to support their child’s success.
Family Engagement

ESSA requires a written family engagement plan, drafted in collaboration with parents and families

SED Resources:

COVID-19 Resources for Families and Communities
Bilingual Education & English as a New Language - Parent Engagement
Early Learning - Parent Resources
Educational Technology for Families
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
   English Language Learners / Multilingual Learners (ELLs / MLLs)
   Equitable Services for Nonpublic Schools
Fact Sheets
New York State ESSA Plan
New York State's new school accountability system
Parent Dashboard
School Accountability Designations
School Climate / Educating the Whole Child
Supporting Students with Disabilities
Video
Special Education- Assistance for Parents
Student Support Services
Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It’s not.

—Dr. Seuss, The Lorax
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