

**MSAD 13  
2021-2023 Opening Plan**

*A resource for the school community outlining the district's learning plan for the 2021-2022 school year while addressing COVID-19 and variants.*

**09/12/2023  
Reviewed by Board of Directors**

*This plan is subject to change as conditions change.*

***"With the approval of this document the School Board recognizes the unprecedented times in which schools operate and the fluidity of our public health scenario, thus authorizing the Superintendent to make changes to this document, without Board approval, based upon emerging legal and health guidance.***

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## INTRODUCTION

The year we are about to embark upon may be a difficult journey in which employees will need to be flexible and may need to perform tasks, duties, or be utilized in ways which were not present before the pandemic school experiences. We must consider the work we do for our students as our collective responsibility. With a continued focus on positive relationships, meeting our students' social/emotional needs and the overall wellbeing of the "whole child," we will successfully meet these challenges.

We have been guided by three principles in developing this plan. The overarching principles that we believe should guide our work are as follows:

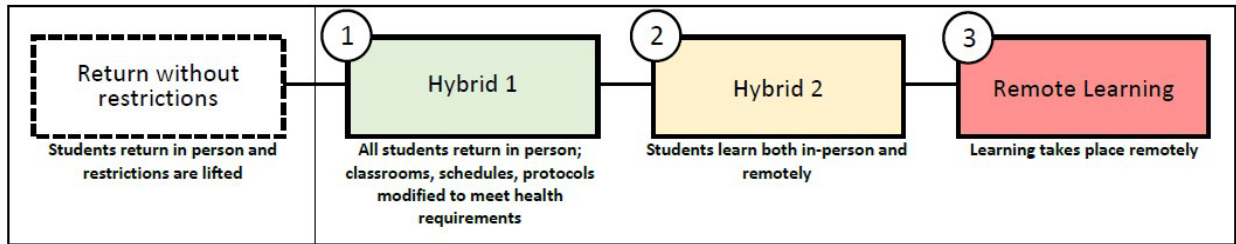
- Safety and well-being of students and staff remains our first priority
- Every student should be in school every day
- Coordination, collaboration, communication between parents, students and staff is essential for a successful school year for all students

There is clear consensus from both education and medical groups: we must keep in mind not only the risks associated with COVID-19 for in-person school programs, but also the known challenges and consequences of keeping students out of school. While our remote learning programming has improved over time, there is no substitute for in-person instruction when it comes to the quality of students' academic learning. In-person school plays an equally important role in our ability to support students' social-emotional needs, including their mental and physical health, and in mitigating the impacts of trauma. We also recognize how disruptive the physical school closures have been to families trying to maintain regular work schedules and manage household needs, including childcare, while also facilitating remote learning.

It is critically important to develop strategies that can be revised and adapted depending on the level of COVID-19 transmission in the school and in the community and done with close communication with local and state public health authorities and recognizing the differences between school districts.

### THREE SCENARIOS

We are required to plan for three scenarios with the intention to implement scenario number “1” in the fall of 2021 given the current state of Coronavirus in our community. The scenario at any point in time will be dependent on local health conditions.



1. **Hybrid 1 (Green):** This is a model with in-person learning with new safety requirements. For the fall, the box in green represents our goal to get our students back into schools for in-person learning—safely. In this model, all students are expected to return in-person to school settings that are appropriately modified to accommodate the health and safety requirements outlined below. Examples of modifications could include altered classroom configurations, setting up additional learning spaces, and schedule changes.

*This corresponds to the state’s designation of “Green”.*

2. **Hybrid 2 (Yellow) -Abbreviated Day or Split Model learning:** This model will be used in the event we are unable to bring all students learning back to school under the health and safety requirements despite our best efforts, or in case of COVID-19 related circumstances. Abbreviated Day means that students will attend fewer hours in-person to allow for remote instruction. For example in-person instruction students would attend a 5 hour day and remote instruction would occur at either the beginning or the end of the day. A split-model means that students may be required to alternate between in-person and remote learning. For instance, students would switch between in-person and remote learning on alternating weeks or days of the week (the alternating schedule would be determined by the district).

*The only difference between Hybrid 1 and 2 is that the district would limit the number of students in-person as an added safety measure if needed in this model. This situation would correspond to the state’s “Yellow” designation.*

3. **Remote Learning (Red):** All districts and schools are required to have a plan for operating a remote learning program. This model will be used for all students in the event of future classroom or physical school closures due to COVID-19. State guidelines will be followed.
4. **Plan for special populations:** Finally, across each of these models, all schools will have a plan for how special populations, including students with disabilities and English learners, will receive necessary services and accommodations. Our intention is to prioritize special populations’ attendance as “in-person”.

## **CURRENT PLAN - HYBRID 1**

After weeks of discussion with stakeholders, including public health experts, we plan to start our school year with our students returning to in-person settings - safely. We will have to implement safety protocols and come together as a community to successfully open our schools in the fall. What may be desired by an individual may not be best for the common good, and we are asking that everyone act according to the best interest of the common good.

Our goal for the fall is to have the safe return of our students to in-person school settings to address learning and our students' holistic needs. To help accomplish that goal, we have set forth the following expectations for teachers and students:

- Classes will follow a schedule (may be adjusted from past years) and curriculum, instruction, and assessment will be similar to the past, with some modification as needed.

With the safety measures we have in place, we feel students will benefit most by attending school **in person**.

## **SAFETY MEASURES THAT WILL BE IN PLACE AT SCHOOL**

Most of us are now quite familiar with the critical health and safety practices that reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. These include vaccination, rigorous hygiene and handwashing, use of masks/face coverings, physical distancing, reducing interactions between groups, staying home when sick, protecting those most vulnerable to the disease, and expanding testing and tracing capabilities, among others.

However, what can often get lost in the long list of practices is that it is not one strategy, but a combination of all these strategies taken together that will substantially reduce the risk of transmission. In other words, establishing a culture of health and safety in our schools that focus on regularly teaching and modeling these important practices is more important than any one measure.

The following safety protocols will be in place in our schools as follows:

1. Daily Health Screening
  - a. All staff and students (under the supervision of a parent or guardian) will conduct a health checklist protocol each morning (timing noted below) before school (or before boarding buses if applicable) that will determine whether students/staff can attend school/work that day.
    - Student screening check should be done by 7:00 am each morning, unless the student boards a bus sooner than 7:00 am. In that situation, the check should be done prior to boarding the bus.
    - Staff screening check should be done before reporting for work each day. See Appendix A.
  - b. Students and staff who answer "Yes" to any question on the screening should stay home. Any student or staff showing symptoms must notify their school/supervisor and stay home.
  - c. Anyone with a fever of 100.4 or above or other signs of illness should stay home or go home. (See Appendix D)

- d. Everyone (parents, delivery personnel, outside service providers, contractors, other visitors, etc.) will complete a self-check before entering any of our buildings and may be required to wear a mask (if required by CDC and/or DOE).
2. Hygiene
    - a. Incorporate increased opportunities for handwashing or sanitizing by students, staff and visitors upon arrival throughout the day
    - b. Practice good hand hygiene
    - c. Teach and reinforce handwashing/sanitization
    - d. Additional key times to wash hands include:
      - i. After blowing one's nose, coughing or sneezing
      - ii. After using the restroom
      - iii. Before eating or preparing food
      - iv. After contact with animals or pets
      - v. After handling a shared object (pens, pencils, books, etc)
    - e. Place posters and graphics that show and explain good hygiene practices throughout the buildings.
3. Quarantine
    - a. Parents will be called to transport their child/ren when exhibiting symptoms of COVID 19 and/or variants.
4. Masks/Face Coverings (will only be worn if required by CDC and/or DOE)
    - a. If students and staff are required to wear a face covering it must cover their nose and mouth while inside the building, with the following exceptions:
      - While eating breakfast and lunch.
      - Teachers will schedule regular "face mask breaks". When they do so, students and staff will remain 6 feet apart (based on CDC guidelines) from one another.
      - Mask coverings and distancing for students and staff that have been vaccinated will be based on CDC and/or DOE guidance.
    - b. Students who are able to social distance at least 6 feet outdoors do not need to wear face coverings.
    - c. Face shields for those students with medical, behavioral, or other challenges who are unable to wear face coverings or for students that prefer a face shield. Face shields must cover the mouth and nose and wrap around the face back towards the ears. Exceptions will be made for those for whom it is not possible due to medical conditions, disability impact, or health or safety factors.
    - d. Face shields may be an option for staff who cannot wear a face covering due to medical or other health reasons.
    - e. Face shields worn in place of a face covering must extend below the chin and back to the ears.
    - f. Masks/face coverings and face shields if applicable should be provided by the student/family, but extra masks will be made available by the school for students who need them. Cloth masks should be washed daily.



10. Size of Gatherings in any one space
  - a. Groups in any one area, room, or classroom will be based on CDC and/or DOE recommendations when possible.

Based on the rate of transmission in our schools during the 2020-2021 school year we believe that our schools are providing a safe and healthy environment for our students and staff. We plan to continue in the fall to follow the CDC and DOE guidelines. We encourage staff and eligible students to consider the option of vaccination. Students, educators, and other staff who are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 will want to consult with their health care providers about whether vaccination against COVID is an option for them. Families, in consultation with their medical providers, will ultimately make the decision as to whether their child(ren) will be vaccinated.

### **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS & EXPECTATIONS FOR USE**

- The following will be the primary software platforms to deliver asynchronous and/or synchronous learning at each school:
  - a. Moscow Elementary - DOJO and TEAMS
  - b. Valley Jr High School - TEAMS
  - c. Valley Sr High School -TEAMS
- The district will provide 1:1 devices for all students.
- Students and staff will follow technology best practices. See Appendix C.

### **FAMILY ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Help your children manage their remote learning by encouraging them to attend all classes and finish all assignments.
- Create a comfortable, distraction-free place for your children to work and attend online classes.
- Do not join your children's online classes or be visible on your children's screens during classes.
- Encourage your children to incorporate physical activity and healthy breaks while they are learning remotely.

### **ADDITIONAL DETAILS**

#### **1. ARRIVAL**

Before entering the building, all students may be required to put on a face covering if required by CDC and/or DOE. This may occur during outbreaks or for unvaccinated students and staff. Schools will determine where students will go upon arrival. Students should NOT arrive before 7:40

#### **Morning Drop Off: (between 7:45-8:00 am)**

- Parent traffic will flow single file to the designated drop off.
- Designated drop off zone to allow for one car at a time with student(s) exiting and entering the building to maintained social distancing. The spacing will be marked.
- Staff members will greet cars that need to unload and parents will remain in the vehicle.
- Students will enter through the main entrance



- If parents need to drop off items they will need to schedule an appointment and park in a designated parking spot and the school staff will come out to their vehicle.

**Morning Walk-in:7:45-8:00 am**

- To ensure a safe social distancing for all, only students and staff will be allowed to enter the schools.

**Buses** will be met by staff members and students will enter the building through the designated doors. Students will head directly to their classroom.

**2. DISMISSAL**

**Moscow**

- A. **Parent/Guardian pickup** will take place at the Main Entrance beginning at 2:00
- Please stay in line and remain in your vehicle:
    - Your children will be called down in order of vehicles
  - Students will be matched with their parent/guardian at the Main Entrance by a staff member.
  -
- B. **Bus riders** will be released from classrooms as buses arrive.
- Students will access the buses using various exits from the building.
  - Students will be dismissed one bus at a time.

**Valley Jr High School**

Students will be dismissed from their final class in a staggered fashion as necessary to facilitate adherence to CDC and DOE social distancing guidelines.

**Valley Sr High School**

- Students who drive will be dismissed from their last classes prior to jr. high and other high school students to minimize congestion in hallways and parking lot
- Students will be dismissed from their final classes in a staggered fashion as necessary to facilitate adherence to CDC and DOE social distancing guidelines

**3. Food Service Staff**

- Follow CDC standards for food service.
- Use disposable utensils, containers, etc.
- Wear face coverings if required.

**BREAKFAST (6 foot spacing)**

**Moscow**

Pre-packed breakfasts will be available for students to purchase and take home.

- 4. LUNCH (6 foot spacing)** There will be an online ordering system that families will utilize to order lunch.

### **Moscow**

Students will eat lunch in their homerooms. Pre-packaged meals will be available for purchase and will be delivered to each homeroom.

### **Jr and Sr High School**

- Valley students may be able to eat lunch in the gymnasium except during outbreaks.
- In the event of an outbreak, students will remain in their classrooms and meals will be packaged and delivered to classrooms

## **5. RECESS**

### **Moscow**

- We will start the year with the expectation that students do not need to wear face masks on the playground.

## **6. EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES and EVENTS**

- After school activities will continue to follow CDC and/or DOE guidelines.

## **7. SPORTS – Valley Jr/Sr High School**

- Sports will follow the MPA guidelines.
- At this time, at a minimum, we plan to have our normal slate of FALL sports teams that will practice regularly and have competitions. Encourage student athletes and coaching staff to consider being vaccinated as they will be traveling throughout the state.
- We will reassess the situation to make a final determination on exactly what our fall sports season will look like later in the summer, and then reassess at an appropriate time for the winter and spring sports seasons.

## **8. SUBJECT SPECIFIC ADJUSTMENTS**

- Band, Chorus, Music, Art, Library, and PE will be different in the following ways:
  - Band/Chorus will be conducted in-person in a more traditional way than last year. String and percussion instruments may be able continue in person. Please check in with the teacher or principal for more specifics as we get closer to school.
  - PE will be held outdoors whenever possible throughout the year. PE activities will be adjusted to support limited equipment and physical contact. Care will be taken to clean equipment that is used between class periods.
  - Art may be adjusted to limit the sharing of materials.
  - Music classes may be able to have in-person singing.
  - The librarian will continue to provide resources and classes in the classrooms. Students will also be able to visit the library this year.

## **9. TRANSPORTATION** will follow CDC and/or DOE guidelines.

We will have the windows cracked open for as long as possible into the colder season for ventilation.

## **10. CLASSROOM SETUP**

Strategies we will continue to use in the classroom to help prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- We will limit the sharing of materials by students as much as possible.
- Seats will be assigned so students will be sitting at the same desk in a particular classroom when feasible. This will assist us with contact tracing when an outbreak occurs.
- Each room will have a hand sanitizer unit that students will have access to.

## **11. CLASSROOM SUPPLIES**

We are trying to avoid sharing basic school supplies. Valley High School students should plan to bring their own school supplies, pens, pencils, calculators, etc. Schools will send specific lists prior to school opening and will help families who may not be able to provide this on their own.

The district will supply Moscow and Valley Jr High School students with the basic supplies they need, and these will be stored at school in marked, individual containers.

## **12. SAFETY TRAINING**

The workshops at the beginning of the year will focus on:

- Hygiene protocols
- Self-monitoring
- Protocols for when someone demonstrates symptoms.

## **13. HEALTH PROTOCOLS – See Appendix D**

What happens if there is a Case of COVID in the school community population?

What happens if there is a related illness at school?

When is it safe to return to work/school?

## **14. ONLINE ASYNCHRONOUS/SYNCHRONOUS CLASSES**

If a teacher is unable to return to a school building, and it is feasible for the teacher to conduct instruction remotely, the teacher will offer synchronous online courses. If synchronous classes are not feasible then asynchronous classes maybe an option. Students enrolled in these courses will work with their school counselor to determine how and where the course might fit into their schedule - within or outside the school day.

## OTHER SCENARIOS

We will nimbly move between the three schooling models based on the following DOE School Health Advisory System:

To support and inform local SAU decisions about whether, and how, to bring students back into the classroom, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and the Maine CDC have developed a three-tiered health advisory system.

This new tiered system, which will be based on a holistic assessment of quantitative and qualitative information that includes but is not limited to recent data on case rates, positivity rates, and syndromic data, will break down into three-color based categorizations by county: red, yellow, and green.

- Categorization as “**red**” suggests that the county has a high risk of COVID-19 spread and that in-person instruction should not be conducted.
- Categorization as “**yellow**” suggests that the county has an elevated risk of COVID-19 spread and that hybrid instruction models should be adopted.
- Categorization as “**green**” suggests that the county has a relatively low COVID-19 risk and that in-person instruction can be adopted, although an SAU may opt for hybrid instruction if its buildings or readiness make adhering to baseline requirements a challenge.

These recommendations are intended to be advisory in nature and pertain only to the unique circumstances of schools. Given the large and varied nature of counties in Maine, SAUs within a county or spread across multiple counties may adopt an opening policy that differs from this county-based categorization of COVID-19 risk. Maine DHHS and Maine CDC will not review SAU specific plans.

The health advisory system is posted on the Department of Education website.

## HYBRID 2

This model will be used in the event we are unable to bring all students’ learning back to school under the health and safety requirements despite our best efforts, or in case of COVID-19 related circumstances.

Abbreviated Day means that students will attend fewer hours in-person to allow for remote instruction. For example, in-person instruction students would attend a 5 hour day and remote instruction may occur at either the beginning or the end of the day. A split-model means that students may be required to alternate between in-person and remote learning. For instance, students would switch between in-person and remote learning on alternating weeks or days of the week (the alternating schedule would be determined by the district).

*The only difference between Hybrid 1 and 2 is that the district would limit the number of students in-person as an added safety measure if needed in this model. This situation would correspond to the state’s “Yellow” designation.*

In this scenario, we would reconsider all extra-curricular offerings, including athletics, and high needs students would be prioritized for **full-time** in person learning.

## **REMOTE LEARNING**

If the entire school needs to shift to remote learning for any period of time, students will continue school remotely following an abbreviated synchronous and/or asynchronous schedule. We learned a lot about what did and did not work for students in the Spring of 2020 and throughout the 2020-2021 school year and will incorporate these lessons to improve remote instruction in the future when it is needed. We are prepared to transition to remote learning without missing any days of school.

## Sample Schedules

<b>VALLEY SR HIGH SCHOOL REMOTE SCHOOL DAY SCHEDULE</b>	
9:00 - 9:10	Homeroom
9:10 - 9:15	5 min transition
9:15 - 10:00	Period 1
10:00 - 10:15	Break
10:15 - 11:00 .	Period 2
11:00 - 11:30	Office Hours
11:30 - 12:15	Lunch
12:15- 1:00 .	Period 3
1:00 - 1:15	Break
1:15 -2:00	Period 4
2:00 - 2:05	5 min transition
2:05 - 2:35	

<b>VALLEY JR HIGH SCHOOL REMOTE SCHOOL DAY SCHEDULE</b>	
9:00 - 9:15	Homeroom
9:15 - 9:25	10 min transition
9:25 - 10:10	Period 1
10:10 - 10:25	Break
10:25 - 11:10	Period 2
11:10 - 11:40	Office Hours
11:40 - 12:25	Lunch
12:25- 1:10	Period 3
1:10 - 1:25	Break
1:25 -2:10	Period 4
2:10 - 2:35	Office Hours

A remote day schedule for Moscow Elementary will be sent directly to parents as it varies for each grade level.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

**Cold/flu season.** Flu season is another critical factor that could pose significant challenges for schools and students. Not only do flu symptoms closely mirror COVID-19 symptoms, but managing both a bad flu season and ongoing presence of COVID-19 could be highly disruptive for our educational institutions and healthcare system. Health providers strongly recommend as many children and adults as possible receive the flu vaccine and COVID vaccinations. Please also remember that your child should be up to date on all of their immunizations.

**Snow Days.** Something we realized with remote schooling during COVID-19 is that we can do school remotely, and now we are more prepared than ever for that. Therefore, it is possible that we will explore remote school days instead of snow days if allowed by DOE.

**Heat Days.** There may be days this fall or next spring when the temperature rises to a level that is too uncomfortable to be in our buildings. In these situations, it is our intention to have a half day. We will alert parents to this situation via the district communication system (email, text, and phone.)

## **APPENDIX A: Daily Health Check**

This is one of the main safety features of our return to in-person learning in our district, the daily health self-check. It is critical that all members of our school community conduct this health check every morning before entering the building. This self-check may be available via an app that the district will provide to all families and staff at a later date.

Each student (or parent on behalf of student) and staff member should go through this Daily Check List before coming to school/work in order to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

**1. Today or in the past 24 hours have you had any of the following:**

- a. Fever
- b. Cough
- c. Runny Nose
- d. Sneezing
- e. Sore throat
- f. Headache
- g. Muscle aches
- h. Felt unwell
- i. Chills
- j. Fatigue
- k. Chest pain
- l. Shortness of breath
- m. Difficulty breathing
- n. Inability to keep liquids down because of vomiting
- o. Diarrhea
- p. Loss of taste and/or smell

**2. Do you have a sick family member at home with any of the above symptoms?**

**Report any yes responses to the above questions to your building administrator, supervisor, or coach, who may ask for clarification of your answers**



## **APPENDIX B: Ventilation Systems**

Proper ventilation in our facilities is a key component of our return to in school learning. We understand that folks want to know the ventilation strategies applied in our schools that will provide the safest and best practices in these times. Those strategies and best practices are what follow.

### **Valley Jr/Sr High School:**

New windows have been installed in the building. The HVAC system was upgraded to allow the majority of learning spaces to be programmed for outside air (OA) ventilation. The gymnasium's air handler has been upgraded.

### **Moscow Elementary:**

The eleven windows that did not open have been replaced and now allow for outside air to be brought in. Moscow's HVAC system should be upgraded by the start of school to allow the majority of the learning spaces to be programmed for outside air (OA) ventilation and a new boiler installed by late fall.

## APPENDIX C Technology Best Practices and Resources

**Creating a virtual classroom community** The strength of a physical learning space is that it fosters connection, but it can also *limit* effective instruction. Teachers need to make deliberate decisions about how students will feel belonging in a classroom community in a space without walls, see themselves reflected in the virtual space, feel both independence and belonging, and share power dynamics intentionally.

### **Intentionally plan how to:**

- Nurture connections and build relationships with students.
- Leave space and time for students to connect and socialize with peers.
- Invite students to share something from where they are currently located in the virtual classroom space.
- Manage time for individual check-ins and for giving feedback.
- Circulate and observe student learning.
- Translate physical supports, like bulletin boards that celebrate student work, to a virtual space.

### **Encourage autonomy and engagement by making decisions that:**

- Set up different learning pathways. Is it helpful to watch a video to give students background knowledge before they start reading? Or do they want to read first and then watch the video? Maximize the face to face time.
- Provide a variety of materials that allow students to make choices that align with their interests and what they have access to at home.
- Scaffold time management. Timers and schedules provide this structure in a physical classroom and can still be used in a virtual space.
- Get students to reflect on what they need as a learner, not what their peers may be doing or interested in.
- Ask students for feedback — teachers don't have to have all the answers. Students are a great resource for technology tips and suggestions about learning that is truly important.
- Remember that there are only three levers you can use or combine to adjust the student task and each task structure has different opportunities for engagement:
  1. Task structures: Are students learning with peers or independently or receiving direct instruction? lesson or assignment.
  2. Help resources: Are students required to get help and from what sources?
  3. Choices offered: Do they choose the topic? The materials? Are they selecting from a series of teacher-vetted options?

## APPENDIX D Health Protocols

### **Protocol 1: If a staff member or student is at school presenting symptoms**

Nursing staff will isolate the individual from all other members of the school community and notify parents/staff member's contact to have the individual sent home. They will be advised to contact their primary care physician.

### **Protocol 2: Return to School Strategy**

After a person has been out of school for a suspected COVID related absences - a time-based return to school strategy is determined based on a person's health status. Decisions about "return to school" for persons with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 and variants should be made in the context of local circumstances (community transmission, resource needs, etc.)

- **Symptomatic persons** with confirmed COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 can return to school after:
  - Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND**
  - improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **AND**,
  - At least 5 days have passed since symptoms first appeared
  
- **Asymptomatic persons** with confirmed COVID-19 can return to school after:
  - At least 5 days have passed since the positive laboratory test and the person remains asymptomatic. Note, asymptomatic persons who test positive and later develop symptoms should follow the guidance for symptomatic persons above
  
- **Asymptomatic persons** who have a known exposure to a person with COVID-19 without appropriate PPE can return to school. If the person develops symptoms such as cough, fever, or shortness of breath, they need to contact their healthcare provider for guidance on what to do. Follow guidance above of symptomatic persons with confirmed COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19.