



VERNON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON
INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY
OF SERVICES PLAN
2021-2022

I. REOPENING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

We would like to thank the Health and Safety Team for volunteering their time to assist the district in preparation of the “*Vernon Public Schools Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan*”. Their feedback in this process has been critical to district administration in the preparation of this plan.

School Administration

Dr. Joseph Macary, Superintendent of Schools
Robert Testa, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Michael Santogatta, Interim Director of Business and Finance
Jason Magao, Principal, Rockville High School
Daniel Pichette, Assistant Principal, Rockville High School
Allayne Sundt, Assistant Principal, Rockville High School
Jeff Farrell, Athletic Director, Rockville High School
David Caruso, Principal, Vernon Center Middle School
Tasonn Haynes, Assistant Principal, Vernon Center Middle School
Melissa Luke, Assistant Principal, Vernon Center Middle School
Jennifer Miller, Principal, Center Road School
Tracy Duenzl, Principal, Lake Street School
Joshua Egan, Maple Street School
Dr. Brenda Greene, Principal, Northeast School
Bryan Kerachsky, Principal, Skinner Road School
Andy Rockett, Director of Adult Education

Health Advisor

Dr. Ellen Marmer

School Climate Specialists

Michael Delillo, RHS
Marcus Burrus, VCMS
Robert Ames, CRS
Alec Lung, LSS
Robert Lovett, NES
Adam Tuller, Sub

Teachers

Elizabeth Trosell, Chemical Hygiene Officer, RHS
Peter Borofsky, VEA Representative
David Jedidian, VEA CTEA Representative
Michael Savignano, Instructional Coach

Central Office Staff

Cindy Schnell, HR Specialist
Barbara Borecky, HR Specialist
Elizabeth Fisher, Director of Food and Nutrition
Melissa Iles, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Melissa Trantolo, Director of Teaching and Learning (Elementary)
Dominique Fox, Director of Teaching and Learning (Secondary)
Jacqueline Middleton, Supervisor of Special Ed (Secondary)

William Peluso, Supervisor of School Facilities
Steve Langlais, Supervisor of Logistics and Safety
Cynthia Zingler, Director of FSCP Center
Michelle Harlow, RN Supervisor
Diane Ritchotte, Administrative Assistant to Mr. Santogatta
Trish Buchanan, Executive Assistant to Dr. Macary
Jaime Markham, Executive Assistant to Mr. Testa

Town of Vernon

Daniel Champagne, Mayor
Michael Purcaro, Town Administrator
Dawn Maselek, Assistant Town Administrator
David Woodruff, HR Investigator
Robert Sigan, Director of Information Technology
Marty Sitler, Director of Parks and Recreation
James Kenny, Vernon PD
Steve Eppler, Vernon FD
Robert Grasis, Water Pollution Control

CIRMA

Joey Barbera, Risk Manager
Ian Havens

HD SEGUR

Scott Sundberg, Partner
Daniel Anderson, Account Executive

II. BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Mark Kalina, Vice-chair
Patricia Buxton, Treasurer
Stephen Linton, Secretary
Kevin Brown
Jennifer Buckler
Deborah Rodriguez
Mason Thrall
Kristiana Wintress

III. DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Joseph Macary, Superintendent of Schools
Robert Testa, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Melissa Iles, Director of Pupil Services
Michael Santogatta, Interim Director of Business and Finance
Melissa Trantolo, Director of Teaching and Learning, Elementary
Dominique Fox, Director of Teaching and Learning, Secondary
Jackie Middleton, Special Education Supervisor (Secondary)
Melissa Ross, Special Education Supervisor, (Elementary)

Bill Peluso, Director of Facilities
Elizabeth Fisher, Director of Food and Nutrition
Cynthia Zingler, Director of Family School Community Partnership Office

IV. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Rockville High School

Jason Magao, Principal
Daniel Pichette, Assistant Principal
Allayne Sundt, Assistant Principal

Northeast School

Dr. Brenda Greene, Principal

Vernon Center Middle School

David Caruso, Principal
Tasonn Haynes, Assistant Principal
Melissa Luke, Assistant Principal

Skinner Road School

Bryan Kerachsky, Principal

Center Road School

Jennifer Miller, Principal
Taylor Parker, Assistant Principal

Lake Street School

Tracy Duenzl, Principal

Maple Street School

Joshua Egan, Principal

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1 Fall Reopening Model

Vernon Public Schools will provide in-person learning during the 2021-2022 school year. Vernon Public Schools plans to have all students return to school for full-time instruction at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year as long as public health data continues to support this model. This reopening plan was created with guidance from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan template. This plan may need to be modified as we move forward if the public health data changes. Decisions will be made based on the best available information and in coordination with the North Central District Health Department, CSDE, and Department of Public Health (DPH) and in accordance with state statutes, executive orders from the Governor, and recommendations from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

2 Health and Safety Strategies

The school nurse at each school shall be designated as the COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison. The designated person is responsible for engaging with students, parents, faculty, staff, and administrators to answer questions or concerns about health and safety requirements regarding COVID-19 concerns.

Location	Name	Email	Phone
District	Michelle Harlow	michelle.harlow@vernonct.org	860-896-4668
Center Road School	Michelle Pawlina	michelle.paulina@vernonct.org	860-870-6307
Lake Street School	Maria Valentino	maria.valentino@vernonct.org	860-870-6088
Maple Street School	Emily Perez	emily.perez@vernonct.org	860-870-6177
Northeast School	Kerry Caldwell	kerry.caldwell@vernonct.org	860-870-6082
Skinner Road School	Lindsay Arnold	lindsay.arnold@vernonct.org	860-870-6185
Vernon Center Middle School	Amanda Babcock	amanda.babcock@vernonct.org	860-870-6077
Rockville High School	Jasmine Flores	jasmine.flores@vernonct.org	860-896-4035

- The district will communicate all updated policies and protocols related to health and safety requirements to staff, students, and families on a regular basis.
- Communication plans will be made available in relevant language of families in the Vernon community and will also be accessible to those with visual and/or hearing impairments.
- The Vernon Public Schools Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan will be made accessible on the district main page and all school websites.
- The school community will be notified of all changes in a timely manner. Information will be communicated through the VPS district website, Twitter, Facebook and/or Blackboard Connect.

	Mitigation Strategy	LEA Response
<input type="checkbox"/>	Universal and correct wearing of masks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All grade Pre-K to 5 students will wear a protective face covering or mask that covers the mouth and nose while in a district space (buildings, grounds, buses, etc.) • All grade 6-12 students have the option of wearing a face covering or mask that covers the mouth and nose while in a district space (buildings, grounds, buses, etc.) • When worn properly, wearing a mask helps reduce the spread of the coronavirus by reducing droplet transmission between people. • All decisions will be made in accordance with Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH), and the State Department of Education (SDE), • Signs that include, "Masks must be worn at all times" will be posted in all grade Pre-K to 5 buildings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social distance will be practiced in accordance with Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. • Each elementary school will establish grade level cohorts within their school population. • Due to the schedule and number of classes at the middle and high school, students will not be assigned to cohorts. • Individual teachers will determine their classroom layout. • During passing time, students will follow physical guides on the floors, sidewalks, and walls, to ensure social distance is maintained in all hallways. • In order to avoid congregation in the hallways, students will gather materials from the assigned lockers 1-2 times per day. • Markings/Decals will be installed to illustrate social distancing. • Students should maintain distance from others to the extent possible and avoid large groups. • Each principal will assess the space in their respective building to determine if other space may be repurposed for instruction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent signage issued by the CDC that references common health guidelines will be posted in all school buildings in areas such as classrooms, cafeteria, entrances, and hallways as well as at central office. • Clean and disinfect touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops,

		<p>handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classrooms will be cleaned and disinfected according to guidance for CT DPH. • Classrooms will be supplied with soap, hand sanitizer, towels, tissue. • Students and staff will be encouraged to bring their own water bottles. • Students and staff members can fill water bottles from one of our water fill stations. • Single use drinking cups will be provided as needed. • Bathroom doors will be propped open when consistent with fire code and privacy considerations. • Disposable towels will be used, no air dryers. • No touch trash bins will be used. <p>Frequent hand washing is one of the most important things we can do to stop the spread of germs and stay healthy. Proper Hand Washing techniques will be reviewed with all staff and students at the beginning of the school year, reviewing the five steps to proper hand washing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap. 2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails. 3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice. 4. Rinse hands well under clean, running water. 5. Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol will be available in every classroom and throughout the building that can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer). • Children will be supervised when using hand sanitizer. • Students and staff members must wash hands or use hand sanitizer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ before and after meals ○ before and after recess ○ after using the toilet or assisting a student with toileting ○ after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cough/sneeze into sleeves, preferably into the elbow. When using a tissue, discard it properly and clean/sanitize hands immediately. • Avoid touching the face, particularly eyes, nose, and mouth because these are the entry points for the virus.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional cleaning of high traffic areas will be implemented on a consistent basis. • Increased cleaning and disinfecting of bathrooms throughout the school day. • Air filter replacements and enhanced ventilation maintenance will be conducted in all buildings. • The training needs of staff related to health and safety protocols have been identified, e.g. social distancing; cleaning protocols; and hygiene practices, and will be provided either in-person or online prior to the first day of classes and before students enter the building.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school nurse will have a designated isolation area in the event that a child or a staff member comes to school and presents COVID-19 symptoms. Contact tracing will be used to identify students or staff members who may need to self-quarantine for 14 days. • The school nurse and/or building administrators will instruct students and staff to inform the school nurse if they are sick with COVID-19 related symptoms, or they have had known contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 and have also had contact with the members of the school's population. • Each school nurse will communicate with both the district nursing supervisor and the school's principal regarding confirmed cases of COVID-19. <p>Each school will create a contact tracing binder containing the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class lists with seating chart • Cafeteria seating chart • Bus lists and seating chart • Staff schedules • Student schedules • Students participating in extracurricular activities lists (sports, clubs, etc.) • Binders will be updated monthly <p>Isolation Room</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every school administrator will identify a designated isolation room separate from the nurse's office where students, staff, or individuals with signs or symptoms of COVID-19, or confirmed cases will stay until picked up by parent/guardian. • Log all individuals who enter this room. • Ill students or staff will wear a mask. • Staff supervising the isolation room will wear full PPE. • Assigned staff will be trained in proper donning and doffing of PPE. • Isolation room will be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diagnostic screening and testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before you come to school, check your temperature and assess your symptoms. If you have a fever of 100.4 or higher, or a cough, shortness of breath, or loss of taste or smell, or if you have been in direct contact with someone who has COVID-19, you should stay home, contact the school nurse and your medical provider. • Be aware of any symptoms that develop and stay home or leave school if symptoms develop, whether or not you think they are related to something other than COVID-19. • Get tested if you are experiencing any symptoms or if you have been in contact with anyone with COVID-19 (whether at school or elsewhere) and stay out of school until you get a negative test result back. • The district has established a list of signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and temperature thresholds that require students and staff to stay home. • Prior to the start of the school year, the district and each school will communicate the list of signs and symptoms with students, parents/guardians, and staff through various means.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of April 15, 2021 all educators and other staff have been provided the opportunity to be vaccinated. • The Town of Vernon has offered vaccination clinics for everyone ages 16 and up.

3 Continuity of Services

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies</p>	<p>Vernon Public Schools is committed to providing an instructional model to create learning opportunities for students with disabilities aligned with general education and based on present levels of performance and needs identified in students' Individualized Education plans (IEPs).</p> <p>The District will provide all special education students with a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment while maintaining the health and safety of students, as well as those individuals providing education, specialized instruction and related services. Federal disability law allows for flexibility in determining how to meet the individualized needs of students receiving special education services, and as a result;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Students with disabilities who have similar learning needs may be grouped together.2. Services will be provided per the requirements of your child's IEP, while adhering to state requirements in the CSDE Adapt, Advance, Achievement document dated June 29, 2020 and the OEC Guidance for Childcare Centers dated June 24, 2020. Related service providers (Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, School Psychologists Physical Therapists, Counselors) will try to limit students' movements throughout the building, when feasible.3. Students in self-contained classrooms or alternative programs will continue to access general education classes as outlined in their IEP.4. The district will provide opportunities to explicitly teach and reinforce healthy and safety guidelines set by the CDC and the District by way of visual cues, modeling, signage, social stories, and other appropriate developmental strategies.5. Students participating in community-based transition activities will follow all workplace safety protocols identified by OSHA, CDC and the State of Connecticut.6. English Learners will be provided access to the general education curriculum as well as to supplemental language instruction programs. These programs may consist of a range
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		<p>of services, including bilingual education and English as a Second Language (ESL).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication to parents/guardians that have limited proficiency in English will occur through both translation and interpretation service. • Students may need to be grouped into one classroom per grade level if they require in class support. • Students may possibly receive push-in services in the classroom, or be directed to a self-contained room for pull-out, small group services. Self-contained programming should be set up consistent with small group instruction and PPE should be worn accordingly.
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Vernon Principles for Scientific Research-Based Interventions

- 1. A belief in collective responsibility, accountability and the power of education.** Although there are important individual differences among students, all students are capable of continued learning and progress. Effective educational practices have the power to make an enormous impact on student learning.
- 2. The assumption that scientific research should be used to inform educational practice as much as possible.** An extensive research base exists in numerous domains central to school success, including reading, many aspects of mathematics, oral language and social-emotional development. It makes sense to use this research base to inform educational practice.
- 3. A willingness to be transparent with a relentless focus on continuous improvement.** When using SRBI, student assessment data are analyzed openly and collaboratively by teams of educators. When individual students or groups of students are not doing well, the emphasis is on self- reflection and examination of current curriculums, instruction and learning environments to make improvements, rather than on apportioning blame. Transparent communication and collaboration must extend beyond the four walls of the school.
- 4. A focus on prevention and early intervention.** Prevention and early intervention are concepts that pertain to all grade levels and domains. In all grades and domains, prevention requires high-quality general education curriculums, instruction, a positive and safe school climate, and a comprehensive system of social-emotional learning and behavioral supports. Moreover, this kind of general education system benefits all students, including high as well as low achievers. Prevention also requires actively seeking out students who are at risk for future academic or behavioral problems and providing early intervention to all students who need it. Interventions involve explicit teaching in a student's focus area(s) needing improvement, improving the school climate or directly addressing the function of a student's inappropriate behavior.
- 5. Schoolwide or districtwide high-quality core curriculums, instruction and comprehensive social/behavioral supports.** SRBI are systemic, requiring the leadership of school and district

administrators such as superintendents, principals and supervisors to communicate a clear vision and coherent plan for improved student outcomes. This systemic approach ensures that all teachers are working toward common goals and that all students receive instruction in the same core competencies regardless of which teacher they happen to have.

6. **Monitoring fidelity of implementation.** Fidelity of implementation is crucial both to the success of the core general education program and to the success of interventions. Fidelity of implementation refers to teachers' use and delivery of curriculums, instructional strategies, strategies to foster a positive school climate, social/behavioral supports and interventions in the manner in which they were designed and intended to be used.
7. **Culturally responsive teaching.** Culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994) is important to address the needs of a wide range of students and to enable all students to have the opportunity to succeed. Culturally responsive teachers are conscious of their own culture/racial identity, attitudes and biases, and how they affect teacher-student relationships and influence teaching practices.
8. **A comprehensive assessment plan with universal common assessments and progress monitoring.**
9. **Data analysis.** To be useful, data must be carefully analyzed and used to make improvements at multiple levels, including core curriculums or behavioral systems, school climate, classroom instruction, differentiation of instruction within a classroom, and adjustments to interventions.
10. **Data-driven decision making with clear decision rules.** Decisions about core curriculums, instruction, climate, behavioral systems and interventions are not driven by educational "philosophy" or the opinions of individuals. Rather, these decisions are driven by data, especially by student assessment data, with explicit rules for making decisions.

SRBI Process- Overview

Regardless of the intervention level, Tier I classroom teacher responsibility for core and small group instruction is continuous.

Component	Tier I	Tier II	Tier III
Setting	-general education classroom	-general education classroom and/or support service environment	-general education classroom and/or support service environment
Person(s) responsible	-general education teacher -grade-level team -collaborative teams -interdisciplinary teams	-general education teacher -support personnel (i.e. specialists or other trained interventionists)	-general education teacher -support personnel (i.e. specialists or other trained interventionists) -specialized teacher
Students	-all students	-students who did not respond to Tier I instruction	-students who did not respond to Tier I or Tier II

		and who are not making appropriate progress	instruction and who are not making appropriate progress
Instruction	-research-based instruction -core classroom curriculum for all students -flexible groupings -differentiation	-homogenous small group -supplemental research-based instruction -differentiation	-homogenous small group -supplemental research-based instruction -differentiation
Assessments/ Data Collection	-ongoing classroom formative assessments -universal screening assessments & benchmarks -observations -student work samples -exit slips	-frequent progress monitoring (minimum bi-weekly)	-frequent progress monitoring (minimum weekly)
Timeline	-throughout the school year, small group teaching, individual instruction, and feedback is based on student need and goals	-additional support (recommended 30 minutes 3-4 times per week) -Elementary 6-8 weeks cycles -VCMS trimester cycle -RHS 20 week cycle - every other day	-additional support (recommended 30-45 minutes 4-5 times per week) -Elementary 6-8 weeks cycles -VCMS trimester cycle -RHS 20 week cycle every other day

Roles and Responsibilities

District Administration SRBI Team

- Provide vision, guidance and oversight for implementing SRBI
- Develop systems and structures for SRBI
- Develop systemic approaches to curriculum, assessment and instruction
- Develop systemic approaches to social-emotional functioning
- Analysis of district resources, reallocation resources if necessary and development of resources
- Establish priorities and goals for the implementation of various aspects of SRBI
- Provide feedback
- Provide professional development

School-Based Administration

- Communicate the vision, beliefs and attitudes required for SRBI to school and families
- Provide support and feedback to teachers
- Participate actively in SRBI meetings
- Serve as a liaison between teachers and central office
- Act as an Instructional Leader
- Ensure infrastructures are in place to support SRBI instruction and teacher collaboration

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide time for SRBI team to meet on a regular basis ● Ensure fidelity of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III instruction ● Ensure students move appropriately through academic, social/emotional, and behavioral tiers of instruction 	
School-Based SRBI Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meet regularly to analyze data in order to determine placement and goals ● Schedule and facilitate SRBI meetings ● Monitor student growth to assess whether exit criteria has been met ● Ensure fidelity of SRBI process 	
Classroom Teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement district curriculum with fidelity ● Provide positive classroom climate ● Implement and document social-emotional learning and behavior supports ● Implement effective teaching strategies ● Administer common assessments and analyze results to pinpoint and share strengths and areas of growth ● Provide differentiation which includes targeted small group instruction ● Work collaboratively with interventionist, specialist, grade-level team and families ● Prepares relevant data and student work samples for SRBI meetings 	Interventionist/Specialist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Select, implement, and evaluate interventions ● Conduct progress monitoring on a regular basis ● Analyze data and utilize data to advance student growth ● Provide positive classroom climate ● Implement social-emotional learning and behavior supports ● Work collaboratively with classroom teacher, specialist, grade-level team and families ● Liaison between grade level teams and Director of Teaching and Learning ● Support Tier I implementation ● Prepares relevant data and student work samples for SRBI meetings
Families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attend parent/teacher conferences ● Monitor student grades ● Communicate with school ● Limit screen time ● Encourage reading for enjoyment and math application in everyday life 	

4 Public Comment

The Vernon Public Schools will address concerns such as:

- Learning loss
- Cleaning of high-touch areas
- Modified use of lockers
- Remote learning
- Mask requirements and social distancing

Additional thoughts and comments on the plan should be emailed to Assistant Superintendent Robert Testa at rtesta@vernon-ct.gov

5 Periodic Review Process

The Vernon Public Schools will review and, as appropriate, revise their Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan at least every six months through September 2023. Each review will include seeking public comment on the plan and developing the plan after taking into account the public comment. Vernon Public Schools will submit a refreshed or updated plan to CSDE via eGMS.

Review/Revisit Dates:

- June 23, 2021
- December 23, 2021
- June 23, 2022
- December 23, 2022
- June 23, 2023

6 Understandable and Uniform Format

Vernon Public Schools' plan will be in an understandable and uniform format, to the extent practicable and is written in a language that parents can understand.