



**Vernon Township School District  
Executive Summary  
Reopening Plan**

**Prepared for the Vernon Township Board of Education  
and the  
New Jersey Department of Education, Sussex County**

**REVISED 8/7/2020**

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***Executive Summary***  
***Reopening Plan***

**Reopening Committee**

Justin Annunziata, *Board President*  
Scott Berge, *VTEA Past President*  
Mary Ellen Cleary, *Teacher*  
Karen D'Avino, *Superintendent*  
William Foley, *Athletic Director*  
Vincent Gagliostro, *Director of Arts & Humanities*  
Kristin Gudenkauf, *Supervisor of Guidance*  
Adam Kendler, *Special Education Supervisor*  
Steve Kepnes, *Business Administrator*  
Bethany Konopinski, *School Psychologist*  
Katrine Lally, *Parent*  
Charles McKay, *Assistant Superintendent*  
Deb Merrill, *Director of Special Services*  
Michael Peek, *Board Vice President*  
Maureen Remner, *Sodexo Food Services Manager*  
Russel Rogers, *Director of Math and Science*  
Matt Shea, *Chief Technology Officer*  
Vicky Smith, *VTEA President*  
Maureen Sweeney, *Teacher*  
Cathy Toth, *Nurse/Nurse Coordinator*  
Jamie Van Gilst, *Transportation Coordinator*  
Jackie Van Orden, *Vice Principal, VTHS*  
Cheryl von Salzen, *Supervisor, Special Services*  
Scott Waleck, *Director of Security*

The district reopening committee met five times in May and June under the direction of Assistant Superintendent, Dr. McKay. A proposed plan with six scenarios was provided to the Board of Education in June prior to the Governor releasing his Restart Plan for Schools in New Jersey.

After the release of the Governor's plan, the following meetings occurred:

June 26, 2020	Governor Issues Guidelines for schools to reopen.
June 29, 2020	Meeting with Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Business Administrator, and Directors to begin discussion related to virtual learning and school operations.
July 6, 2020	Articulation meeting with the VTEA leadership and VTSD Central Office.
July 6, 2020	Meeting with Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Business Administrator, to set the Framework that will be discussed with the Administrative Team.
July 7, 2020	Meeting with the Administrative Team to inform them of the Framework that will make up each of their school plans.
July 8, 2020	Meeting with the District Reopening Committee to discuss guidance provided by the State DOE.
July 13, 2020	Meeting with Admin. Team to review their initial plans to reopen. Review of stakeholder input, via surveys to staff and families, consideration of phase-in approach.
July 14, 2020	Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Business Administrator continue planning while creating the presentation for Thursday's Board Meeting.
July 15, 2020	Karen, Chuck, Steve continue planning while creating the presentation for Thursday's Board Meeting. Presentation e-mailed to the full Board.
July 16, 2020	Presented Framework for reopening to the Board of Education.
July 16, 2020	Follow up conversations between Superintendent and VTEA leadership.

July 22, 2020	Administrative Meeting to review Plan for the Board meeting on July 23, 2020.
July 23, 2020	Draft District Reopening Plan presented to the Board of Education.
July 28, 2020	Administrative Meeting to review Plan for the Board meeting on July 30, 2020.
July 30, 2020	Board of Education meeting

\*Ongoing regular meetings will occur to adjust any necessary portions of the reopening plan

\*County Restart meetings were held on July 1, 18, 15, 22, 29 - Vernon represented by Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent - information provided by NJDOE and NJDOH weekly.

Highlights of the Reopening Plan for Vernon:

- Families may opt in to Exclusively Virtual learning. This means that they will not be attending school “live” and will be taught by district faculty in a virtual setting.
- For the first two phases (through the end of September) all students who have not opted in to Exclusively Virtual learning will be on an alternating Blue/Gold schedule, called Hybrid Learning. This means that students will attend school live two days per week and have virtual instruction the remaining three days per week.
- Students in some of our specialized special education programs will be offered live learning four days per week to accommodate their learning needs.
- Trauma Informed Coordinators will be utilized at the district and school level to assist with trauma and social emotional needs of students.
- Wednesdays (during phases 1 & 2) will be virtual learning days for the district where additional cleaning/sanitizing measures will occur.

- We are hiring Pandemic Response Assistants who will be wiping down door knobs, handles, and other high contact areas daily in each school and classroom to assist in mitigating the spread of germs or viruses.
- When children arrive at school, temperatures will be taken prior to entering the school buildings. This is being done out of an abundance of caution and is subject to change as we progress through the phases of reopening.
- During subsequent phases, parents may be asked to take the temperature of their children before school. A health protocol will be released prior to the beginning of the school year. Should children be exhibiting any of the symptoms our nurses have identified, we ask that parents keep their child home from school that day.
- We ask parents to encourage social distancing at the bus stops.
- Our school nurses will have appropriate quarantine and/or isolation areas for students who may demonstrate symptoms of COVID-19 while they await parent pick-up.
- Children will not be changing for physical education during the first two phases which go through the end of September.
- Virtual instruction is being enhanced this summer. Teachers will be trained on blended learning techniques, emphasizing small group work, independent work and instructional design approaches that best fit the content area, developmental grade level of the student, and delivery through virtual platforms.
- All staff will be required to screen themselves before coming to work each day, according to protocols established by our school nurses in conjunction with our school physician.
- For specific questions regarding special education, please contact your child's case manager.
- All staff will be wearing masks or face coverings.
- No visitors will have access to the buildings but will be able to drop items at the entry of schools where our door monitors can safely limit visitors due to concerns about COVID-19.
- All students are required to wear masks when social distancing cannot be maintained. This means that teachers (or administrators/school personnel) will have the ability, when children are socially distanced from one another, to provide mask breaks for students.

- All proposed live days during the first marking period will be early dismissal days as we continue to work on appropriate ways to serve traditional style lunches. Students will be offered a “grab and go” meal in the interim and may bring snacks to school.
- We encourage families to reinforce washing hands frequently and to discourage the touching of the face, nose, or mouth.
- While wearing masks has become a necessity to go into local businesses in Vernon, we realize that children (and some adults) are not used to wearing masks for extended periods of time. Therefore, we ask parents to work with children on building “mask endurance.”

The Reopening Plan for the Vernon Township School District encompasses the following areas:

## **10 Critical Areas of Operation**

### **General Health and Safety Guidelines**

- All school personnel are required to wear a face covering.
- All students are required to wear a face covering when social distancing is not achievable except where medical conditions prohibit the wearing of a face covering.
- All persons entering the building will have a temperature check and complete a daily health screening.
- No visitors are permitted for meetings during the school day. All meetings will be virtual.
- All field trips are suspended until further notice.
- Signs will be posted to remind people to maintain social distancing, to wash hands, and to wear a face covering.
- Monitored restroom entry for students.
- Respectful quarantine of anyone who is symptomatic or may be demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19 based on the health protocol established by our school nurses in cooperation with our school physician.

### **Classrooms, Testing, and Therapy Rooms**

- Daily instructional schedule will accommodate a reduced student population (where possible) for in-person instruction. The remainder of students not in the building will take part in classes remotely.
- While in classrooms all students and staff are required by the district to wear facial coverings where social distancing cannot be achieved or unless medically unable to. Mask breaks will be provided by the teacher.
- Related services will be offered both in person and remotely following social distancing

and/or safety guidelines.

- If social distancing is not possible due to the requirements of the assessment, safety procedures will be followed.
- Shared workspaces, labs and other shared equipment will be sanitized/cleaned.

### **Transportation**

- The district will work cooperatively with contracted transportation providers to adhere to state and federal guidelines for student transportation. Buses will adhere to social distancing guidelines (where applicable) during Blue/Gold schedules. Students on buses will be required to wear face coverings. Social distancing is encouraged at bus stops. Windows will be open (weather permitting) to maintain fresh air.

### **Student Flow, Entry, Exit, and Common Areas**

- Social distancing will be maintained during class changes by having students walk six feet apart on one side of the hallway, as directed by administration.
- Directional guides for passing time will be marked for students
- Anyone with a temperature of 100.0 or above will have their temperature checked again 10 minutes later. They may be sent home, dependent on the second temperature read and other symptoms as determined by our school nurses and district physician.
- Social distance will be maintained by the Blue/Gold schedule during the first three phases of reopening.
- Students will be dismissed as designated by the Administration to maintain social distancing.

### **Screening, PPE, and Response to Student and Staff Presenting Symptoms**

- No visitors are permitted in the building.
- All deliveries will be dropped off at loading dock areas and delivery people will not access the building.
- Additional cleaning will occur in all vestibules between visits from outside persons.
- Temperature checks for students will be done by using contactless thermometers.
- Individuals with a temperature of 100 degrees or above will be checked again 10 minutes later. They may be quarantined and/or and sent home.
- Quarantined students will be escorted to an isolation space until parent contact is made and transportation home is arranged. This space will be supervised by district health personnel.
- District personnel working in the COVID isolation space will be equipped with a face covering, gown, and protective gloves.
- PPE equipment such as face coverings have been ordered for distribution to faculty and staff.

- Anyone who has tested positive for COVID may not return to school until they are cleared by a physician and have quarantined for the appropriate amount of time as per the guidelines of the NJDOH.

### **Contact Tracing**

- All school district administrators, school safety specialists, counselors, and any other staff deemed appropriate by the school district, will be provided with information regarding the role of contact tracing in keeping school communities safe from the contagious disease.
- All contract tracing will adhere to NJDOH guidelines.
- The Vernon Township School District will collaborate with the Sussex County Health Department and engage their school nurses to develop contact tracing procedures, as well.
- The Sussex County Health Department will conduct contact tracing.
- In the event that a staff member or student contracts COVID-19, the Vernon Township School District will follow all recommended practices for contract tracing by the NJDOH.

### **Facilities Cleaning Practices**

- Restroom use will be restricted.
- Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Additional staff (Pandemic Response Assistants) have been hired to disinfect classrooms, restrooms, hallways, doorknobs, handrails, offices and high contact areas.
- Sports equipment will be sanitized (or not shared) as per the guidelines of the NJSIAA.

### **Meals**

- Meals will be provided as a “grab and go” option for students.
- During in-person instructional days food orders will be placed using the Sodexo app.
- Lunches will be provided at kiosks for “to go” pick up by students just prior to dismissal.
- During at-home virtual instruction, students who qualify for free and reduced lunch will receive breakfast and lunch from Sodexo Food Services who have agreed to use their van to deliver lunches.

### **Physical Education**

- Locker rooms and team rooms will be closed until further notice.
- Students participating in physical education classes should come to school wearing attire that is appropriate for physical activity.
- Teachers will ensure lessons are planned around the available space for instruction.

### **Extracurricular Activities and Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours**

- The Vernon Township School District will follow the NJSIAA guidelines for all/any phases of the athletic restart plan.
- Athletics will follow the schedule as determined by the NJSIAA for fall sports.
- Interscholastic sports at Glen Meadow Middle School and other co-curricular clubs/activities (K-8) are on hold for the first two phases of the reopening plan.

### **Continuity of Learning Delivery of Special Education**

- Students in the self-contained Preschool Disabled, Primary LLD, BD and ABA programs will be invited to in-person instruction four days per week during phases one and two (through the end of September).
- Students in primary self-contained classrooms who push-in to less restrictive settings will do so only with a single cohort (blue or gold) to ensure safety.
- CST Team will continually monitor students on their caseloads to ensure IEP goals and objectives are being followed to the greatest extent possible.
- Classroom aides will be utilized when necessary to meet students IEP needs.
- Related services that are in the IEP will be provided
- CST evaluations will be completed only through in-person testing, unless a waiver is granted by the State of New Jersey.
- Students with transition plans in their IEP's will be provided with services whether in person or virtually, and the case managers will ensure that the graduating seniors are transitioned in accordance with their plans, and that students who are age 21 by June 30th of the school year have been provided with opportunities for transition, to the greatest extent reasonable and possible.
- Students will continue to work on their post secondary plans either in-person or virtually, and will ensure that graduating seniors or those students turning 21 will be properly transitioned, or other opportunities that exist for these students
- Procedures will be developed to address students who are in need of interventions and will be followed as necessary
- Students who are Exclusively Virtual may request to have some of their services in person, which will be accommodated to the extent reasonable and possible.

### **Technology and Connectivity**

- Students have district provided devices (Chromebooks) for use during remote education.
- Mobile hotspots have been deployed to assist those without internet access.
- Students and parents have access to our technology department who will assist with problems that may arise.

- The technology department will continue to provide troubleshooting, Chromebook repair, and assistance.
- All district provided devices are CIPA compliant and are filtered (via a cloud-based service) allowing district staff to monitor acceptable use, classroom management, filtering and monitoring.
- The Vernon Township School District has purchased laptop computers for teacher use.
- The Vernon Township School District has replaced batteries/upgraded staff devices used for remote instruction.
- Training has been continually offered for teachers and staff for new and existing technologies that support both in-person and online instruction.

### **Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, SEL**

- All VTSD students have equitable access to remote learning technologies as well as in-person instructional resources regardless of grade or content area.
- VTSD has continually monitored its learning model through direct supervision by district administration. Assessments and plans are reviewed weekly and data on grading is reported back to the staff. There is regular communication between teachers, counselors, and families to keep them informed of student progress. Staff, students, and families have been surveyed.
- To provide a comprehensive support system, the Vernon Township School District utilizes CST members, Student Assistance Counselor and Guidance Departments.
- Changes to the delivery of instruction are being addressed by curriculum committees this summer in preparation for reopening with a heavy focus on blended learning strategies.
- Training will be provided before schools reopen in September.
- Consistency in content areas is achieved by providing common planning times, common assessments, and supervisor coordination.

### **Virtual and Hybrid Learning Environment - Curriculum**

- Linkit diagnostic software will be used as a tool to identify gaps in content knowledge.
- Supplemental instruction will be based on the results of these assessments and used to maximize efficiency of classroom instruction.
- Customized assessments will provide analytical data to address critical content knowledge gaps needing remediation.
- Administrators and interventionists will determine the appropriate amount of time allocated to remediate content knowledge gaps.
- Ongoing grade analysis and student progress will be monitored using lesson and unit plans as well as assessment data reporting.

## **Instruction**

- An alternating Blue/Gold daily schedule will be implemented that engages classroom instruction either in-person or remotely.
- With a hybrid instructional design, learning expectations can remain consistent, yet provide flexibility for instruction and learning outcomes.
- Assessments are created collaboratively within each department to best determine the mastery of learning standards.
- Hybrid instructional design will allow time for individualized student contact during "office hours" with teachers and counselors.
- Exclusively Virtual learning will be offered to all students/families.

## **Assessment**

- Pre-assessments will be used as a diagnostic tool to determine knowledge gaps in course content as needed.
- Formative assessments are continually ongoing and documented by teachers.
- Teachers will receive additional support/training regarding the assessment of blended learning lessons prior to the start of school in September.

## **Social Emotional Learning Needs**

- The Vernon Township School District is utilizing one district Trauma Informed Coordinator and a Coordinator per school to assist with trauma, training and social emotional needs of students.
- Trauma Informed Coordinators have completed specific training and will both support students and train trainers in the trauma informed approach.

## **Professional Learning**

- Professional development will be offered on a voluntary basis during the months of July and August to strengthen the delivery of blended learning models.
- Professional development will be provided to all teachers prior to starting school in September to strengthen the delivery of blended learning models.
- The Vernon Township School District will follow the mentoring program.

## **Hybrid Instructional Schedule**

- Students will attend school on alternating Blue/Gold days to maintain social distancing during phases one, two and three (through the end of September/October).
- Students have the opportunity to opt-in to full time Exclusively Virtual learning.
- Phase four may include additional students for in-person instruction. This will be based on the number of COVID cases in Vernon Schools as well as guidance from the NJDOE,

NJDOH and the Governor's Office.

Phases and dates are as follows:

September 1-14	Phase 1	Alternating Blue/Gold schedule, early dismissal days, Wednesday, virtually learning day for cleaning (B, G, W, B, G)
September 17 - October 5	Phase 2	Alternating Blue/Gold schedule, early dismissal days, Wednesday, virtually learning day for cleaning (B, B, G, G)
October 8 - November 9	Phase 3	Alternating Blue/Gold schedule, early dismissal days, Wednesday virtual/cleaning day eliminated (B, B,B, G, G) (G,G,G, B, B)
November 10 on	Phase 4	All students in school, all day (Exclusively Virtual option still available for all families)

**Pandemic Response Team**

- Dr. Pauline F. Anderson, *Principal*
- Mr. James Conte, *Coordinating Custodian*
- Mr. Nicholas Demsak, *Assistant Principal*
- Ms. Jeanette Emmerich, *Special Education Teacher*
- Mr. Kelsey Falkowski, *Social Studies Teacher*
- Mr. William Foley, *Athletic Director*
- Ms. Kristin Gudenkauf, *Supervisor of Guidance*
- Ms. Joanne Ploch, *Athletic Trainer*
- Ms. Kristy Riegler, *Special Education Teacher/VTEA Representative*
- Mr. Darren Siegel, *Child Study Team*
- Ms. Cathy Toth, *Coordinating Nurse*
- Ms. Jacquelyn Van Orden, *Assistant Principal*
- Mr. Scott Waleck, *Director of Safety and Security*
- Stephanie Ash, *School Nurse*
- Mike Chastain, *Coordinating Custodian*
- MaryEllen Cleary, *Teacher & Member of District Committee*
- Janet Gola, *Administrative Assistant to Assistant Principal*
- Chris Jensen, *Teacher & Building Rep/VTEA Vice President*

- Bethany Konopinski, *CST & Member of District Committee*
- Eric Kosek, *GMMS Assistant Principal*
- Nancy Regan, *School Counselor*
- Barbara Rodriguez, *Administrative Assistant to Principal*
- Jessica Rostami, *Teacher & K-8 RTI Coordinator, ELA*
- Cheryl von Salzen, *Supervisor Special Services 6-12*
- Tom Zabriskie, *GMMS RPO*
- Diane Alfonso, *Secretary*
- Lisa Riedl, *Secretary*
- Sue Wefer, *Secretary*
- Laura Scovell, *Building Coordinator*
- Kelly Benz, *Guidance Counselor*
- Christina Weiss, *VTEA Building Rep*
- Allison Pringle, *CST*
- Ashley Bellis, *CST*
- Jen Gallant, *Nurse*
- Kim Muller, *Nurse*
- George Leone, *Head Custodian*
- Tom Eilinger, *RPO*

- Committee will meet at least twice a year or as needed.
- Committee members will be informed of a meeting by email.
- Committee meeting minutes will be presented to the Superintendent of Schools.
- The District Wide Reopening Committee will meet as needed under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent of Schools.
- Any new school health and safety protocols determined by the Pandemic Response Teams will be shared with the school community via a School Messenger blast.

## **TOTAL CLOSURE SCHEDULE**

In the event that a total closure is required and the Vernon Township School District has to instruct in a remote setting, there will be an expectation of four hours of instruction per day. The remote learning days due to a school closure will count toward our 180 days of instruction.