

Worcester Central School District

COVID 19 REOPENING PLAN

(updated September, 2023)*



**This document will be updated as new information becomes available.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

At the Worcester Central School District (WCSD) the physical, social and emotional safety of our students and staff are paramount. We recognize that students cannot learn unless they feel they are in a safe and nurturing school environment. As a result, this document is meant to serve as a guide to the reopening of our school district during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is understood that due to the ever changing nature of this world wide crisis, portions of this framework may have to be altered and adjusted to meet future safety needs and requirements. However, as of the publishing of this document the contents herein either meet or exceed the current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH), and the NYS Governor's executive order guidelines and requirements. The WCSD Reopening Task Force will continue to work diligently to update this plan as necessary in order to maintain the safest learning and working environment at the Worcester Central School District.

Our team utilized the following guiding principles to create this document:

- Prioritize the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff.
- Adhere to state-level and CDC guidelines.
- Prioritize in-person instruction to the extent possible and maximize instructional and learning opportunities for all students.
- Plan with flexibility in mind knowing we will likely need to adjust due to changing conditions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

II.COMMUNICATION and ENGAGEMENT

To help in the creation of our reopening plans, the Worcester Central School District sought feedback and input from various stakeholders. As the plan continues to be a working document and as the COVID 19 situation changes we will continue working with administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents of students, local health department officials and health care providers, employee unions and community partners. We remain committed to communicate all elements and any updates to this reopening plan to students, parents, staff and visitors.

The plan is available to all stakeholders via the district website <https://www.worcestercs.org/Reopening.aspx> and will be updated throughout, as necessary, to respond to local, regional and national circumstances. Efforts have been made to ensure that the plan is accessible to all individuals in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A/AA.

Future Communications

- As part of planning for the reopening of school and the new academic year, WCSD has developed a plan for communicating all necessary information to district students, parents, faculty, staff, visitors, education partners and vendors.
- We are committed to establishing and maintaining regular channels of communication and have determined which methods have proven to be the most effective in communications with the various groups in our school community.
- The district will use its existing communication platforms to communicate news, requirements and updates related to reopening and in-person instruction, including social distancing requirements, proper wearing of face coverings and proper hand and respiratory hygiene.
- The information shared will be based on state guidance and recommendations from the district's reopening task force.

Means of Communication

- **SchoolMessenger** to call, text message families, faculty and staff.
- **PowerSchool** will assist in communicating student academic progress and student attendance.
- **Email** for student, staff, faculty, parent and community partner communication.
- **Home mailings** to assist in families without internet access.
- **Signage and training** to support the dissemination of consistent messaging regarding new protocols and procedures, expectations, requirements and options related to school operations throughout the pandemic.
- **Zoom and Google Meet** to provide larger audience presentations for students, families and community partners.
- **Translation Services** will be provided to families as needed.

School Closures

WCSD is preparing for situations in which we would need to close due to student(s) or staff member(s) testing positive for COVID-19 or a considerable regional increase in COVID-19 cases. We will communicate any closure or modification to the school day as soon as possible.

The district participates in regular meetings with the Otsego County Department of Health. These calls are used to provide communication and updates between the district, other schools in the county, and county officials.

WCSD will also monitor student absenteeism in an effort to identify potential concerns. Furthermore, our school nurse has well-established and reliable communication channels with the New York State and Otsego County DOH.

WCSD may choose to modify operations prior to closing to help mitigate a rise in cases. The district will consult with the local health department, co-directors of nursing, and/or the district's medical doctor when making such decisions.

Administration will regularly monitor student and staff attendance. If absentee rates impact the ability to safely operate school we will initiate protocols to communicate a school closure.

III.HEALTH, SAFETY and FACILITY OPERATIONS

The WCSD plan is created to ensure the health of students, faculty, staff and essential visitors.

Safety Protocols and Procedures:

Screenings

- Parents will be responsible for completing a daily health screening of their child. Faculty and staff will be responsible for completing their own daily health screenings. Individuals should remain home if symptomatic.
- Outside visitors will be screened and logged when entering and exiting the campus.
- Any student or staff member with suspected signs of COVID-19 will be assessed by the school nurse and will be sent home for follow-up with a health care provider; a separate location will be provided for potentially ill students while they await pick-up.

Face Coverings

- The CDC and Otsego County Department of Health has indicated that face masks are no longer required.
- Masks are recommended to be worn for 10 days if someone has been exposed to an individual with COVID-19.
- Masks are required for any individual who has tested positive and is returning from an isolation for days 6-10.



Classrooms, Hallways and Communal Spaces

- When possible, classrooms will be configured to allow three feet of space between students.
- School visitors will be restricted to those required to enter campus for essential school business only. Screenings of essential visitors will occur and visits will be logged when entering and exiting the campus.
- Training on proper hand and respiratory hygiene, symptoms of COVID-19 will be provided.

Cleaning

- WCSD has enhanced its cleaning procedures and increased the frequency of cleaning of areas throughout the campus. Our staff will be cleaning on an intensified schedule.
- Our ventilation system has been examined and will be maintained as scheduled to create the optimal building air flow and circulation as required by code.

Facility and Operations

- In the event a person (student, faculty or staff) becomes sick or is diagnosed with COVID-19, WCSD will follow CDC and NYSDOH guidelines.
- Emergency drills will be conducted according to CDC and NYSDOH guidance.
- Student 'in school' gatherings/assemblies will not exceed NYSDOH guidelines.
- The WCSD building condition survey has been completed as scheduled in 2022.
- The WCSD will conduct Lead-In-Water testing as scheduled and in accordance with NYSDOH regulation 67-4.
- The WCSD has ample toilets and sink fixtures to meet the capacity of the persons in the buildings.
- The WCSD has ample bottle filler stations to meet 1 filler per 100 persons in the school building.

COVID-19 Testing

Students who experience COVID-19 symptoms at school will be taken to an isolation area and a parent/guardian will be called. Students will be referred to a healthcare provider and provided resources on COVID-19 testing. COVID-19 testing of students and/or staff may also result from the contact tracing protocols outlined below, based on the direction of public health authorities.

In the event that large-scale testing needs to be conducted at the school, the administration will work with the district physician (Bassett School-Based Health Center) in conjunction with the state and county health departments and will provide families with at-home tests kits.

Contact Tracing

WCSD will notify the New York State and Otsego County Department of Health immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 test result by an individual within school facilities or on school grounds, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors to the District.

The District will assist in contact contract tracing by:

- Maintaining accurate staff and student attendance records.
- Keeping student, room and building seating charts and schedules up to date.
- Maintaining visitor logs with the date, time and what the locations were visited.
- Fully cooperating with the NYSDO and OCDOH's efforts and sharing of information.
- Maintaining confidentiality as required by federal and state laws and regulations.

Returning to School After Illness

In the event a WCSD student, faculty and staff member has a confirmed case of COVID19 the following protocols will be implemented:

WCSD will follow CDC and Otsego County DOH (OCDOH) guidance for allowing a student, faculty or staff member to return to school after exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. If a person is not diagnosed by a healthcare provider (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) with COVID-19 they can return to school when:

- After receiving the results of a negative COVID-19 PCR test.

or

- Has been diagnosed with another condition and has a healthcare provider written note stating they are clear to return to school.

or

- They have been isolated for 10 days from the start of symptoms.
- Are fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication and all symptoms have improved.

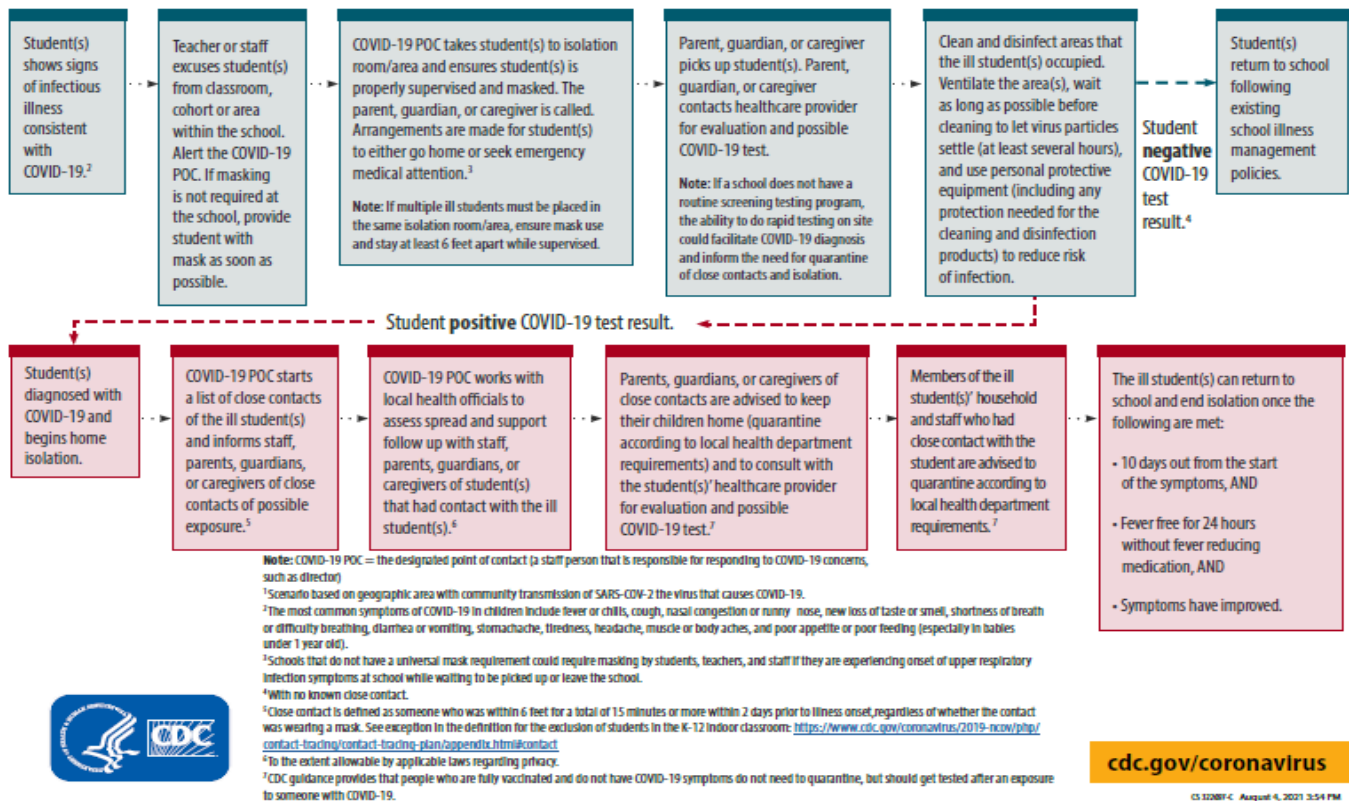
If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider based on a test or their symptoms or does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, they should not be at school and should stay at home until:

- It has been at least 5 days since the individual first had symptoms and wear a mask for days 6-10.
- They are fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication and all symptoms have improved.

The CDC and OCDOH provides specific guidance for individuals who are on home isolation regarding when the isolation may end.

See the following chart to assist in determining when a student should attend school if ill or return to WCS after being ill.

WHAT TO DO IF A STUDENT BECOMES SICK OR REPORTS A NEW COVID-19 DIAGNOSIS AT SCHOOL¹



IV. PROMOTING BEHAVIOR THAT REDUCES THE SPREAD of COVID-19

WCSD's Superintendent is the designated COVID-19 Safety Coordinator who, in conjunction with the Reopening Task Force, will ensure to promote behavior to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by:

- Teaching and reinforcing handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Monitoring and encouraging handwashing to ensure adherence among students, faculty and staff.
- Providing hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol for older students, faculty and staff who can safely use hand sanitizer.
- Instructing students, faculty and staff to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Used tissues will be thrown in the trash, and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Teaching and reinforcing the use of proper face coverings, social distancing and the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

V. STUDENT and STAFF PERSONAL HEALTH

Screening

WCSD is counting on our students, families, faculty and staff to screen themselves prior to going to school. WCSD will continue to additionally screen students, faculty and staff within our school environment when symptoms are present.

In a joint effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our school community, students, faculty and staff should stay home if:

- They are sick.
- They have tested positive for or are showing COVID-19 symptoms.

It is recommended that students, faculty and staff should stay home or mask for 10 days if:

- They have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19.

List of Symptoms

Students and staff may not come to school, or will be sent home if they display any of the following symptoms:

- Fever or chills
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Muscle aches
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Congestion or runny nose
- Cough
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- New loss of taste or smell

This List of Symptoms will be used by all WCSD personnel asked to conduct visual screenings of students. A visual determination by WCSD personnel of any of these symptoms is sufficient to justify further screening or another action to be taken by the school nurse. If the nurse is not available the student will be required to go home and follow up with their healthcare provider.

Students, faculty or staff presenting symptoms of fever or signs of illness will be sent to a dedicated isolation area located near the health office.

We ask that all families screen students for the List of Symptoms every morning. If any symptoms are found, please self-report to the school and keep the student home. Call the main office at (607) 397-8785.

Students will have the opportunity to make up work missed due to symptoms of COVID-19 without penalty.

At WCSD, we will use the following protocols to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

- Upon arrival at school, students will go directly to their locker or elementary hallway, or the cafeteria for breakfast. Students will not be allowed on campus prior to 7:45 a.m.
- Any student with visible COVID-19 symptoms will be taken to the health office.
 - Parents will be contacted to pick up the student suspected to be ill.
- Parents will be contacted to pick up the student suspected to be ill with the following EXCEPTIONS:
 - If the student has a runny nose and the school nurse/health aide observes that there are no other symptoms, the school nurse/health aide will contact the parent/guardian to inquire as to whether the student has had any other symptoms or there have been any COVID-19 exposures in the home and if not, the student may return to class.

- If the student has health information on file that confirms a diagnosis of asthma or other respiratory condition and the school nurse/health aide observes that there are no other symptoms, the school nurse/health aide will contact the parent to inquire as to whether the student has had any other symptoms or there have been any COVID-19 exposures in the home and if not, the student may return to class.

All student health information will be maintained confidentially. The school nurse shall report information that a student has had a positive COVID-19 test or has become sick with a presumptive COVID-19 case to WCSD administration, the Otsego County Department of Health and the NYSDOH.

Classrooms

- Student desks will be positioned as far from one another as possible within the confines of the classroom space available.
- Teachers will use technology to facilitate group work and group learning where appropriate for the age, subject, and capabilities of the students.

Communal Spaces (Bathrooms, Main Office)

Bathrooms

- Faculty and staff will be encouraged to limit the number of students in a bathroom and reminded to maintain social distancing.

Visitors to School

- Visitors will be visually screened using the established screening protocols.

Student Belongings

- All elementary student belongings will be kept in individual desks, bins or cubbies labeled with each student's name.
- If a supply or piece of equipment must be shared by students (i.e., a pencil sharpener), to the extent possible the item will be wiped down with disinfectant.
- There will be academic and athletic lockers for extracurricular sports.
- Students will not have PE lockers or change for PE until further notice.

VI. CHILD NUTRITION

Meals Onsite

- Students do not need to wear face coverings when seated and eating.
- WCSD will ensure social distancing between individuals while eating while they are in their 10 day isolation.
- Meals may also be served in alternate areas for students in their 10 day isolation (e.g. classrooms, conference rooms).
- The sharing of food and beverages (e.g. buffet style meals, snacks) is prohibited, unless individuals are members of the same household.
- Hand sanitizer in accordance with FCNYS 2020 Section 5705.5 will be readily available in common areas, including by the entrance of the cafeteria and any rooms that are used for eating lunch.
- Cleaning and sanitizing of the cafenadium will be done between lunch periods by the building custodial staff.
- The Cafeteria Manager & Cook will ensure compliance with Child Nutrition Program requirements.
- Students will be instructed to wash their hands prior to eating any foods or snacks.

Meals Offsite/Remote

The WCSD understands the importance nutrition plays in the ability to learn. Therefore, we will be offering a meal pick-up option in the event a class(es) or District transitions to remote learning. If you anticipate needing meals during any remote learning days please contact Joe Calleja at jcalleja@worcestercs.org.

VII. TRANSPORTATION

- Students will be required to wear a mask on school buses/vehicles if they are in their 10 day isolation period. Students who do not have a mask when boarding the bus will be provided with one.
- Students will sit in assigned seats.
- Windows and roof hatches will be opened as much as possible for ventilation.
- Attendance will be taken in the morning and afternoon.
- School buses/vehicles will be kept clean from dirt and debris (sweeping and dusting often).
- All buses/vehicles used to transport students and staff will be cleaned and disinfected daily.
- Staff (drivers, monitors, mechanics and cleaners) will be provided with personal protective equipment and trained in the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Any students in specialized programs outside the District will be transported provided their program continues to meet for in person learning.

VIII. TEACHING AND LEARNING-CONTINUITY OF LEARNING-SCHEDULES

In order to maintain the continuity of learning for our students WCSD has created the following remote learning schedules.

1) Remote Learning

The remote learning model will provide learning opportunities for students at their homes or an offsite location of their choice. Teachers will use virtual, electronics, textbooks, novels and other teacher-created resources to instruct students. Students will not attend campus for in person instruction. It is important to note that this model will also be implemented in the event of a COVID-19 school closure of any kind when utilizing either of the hybrid or full in person scenarios.

In remote learning the teachers will provide synchronous and asynchronous learning through Google Meet and Google Classroom. Students who do not have internet access will be provided teacher created resources. These materials will be distributed by the WUSD. Learning, communication, and assessment will be conducted telephonically. In either internet delivered instruction or teacher provided resources, lessons will be aligned to the New York State Learning Standards. Students' completed work whether on-line or via teacher created resources will be assessed to determine a student's mastery of the learning standards.

Elementary Remote Schedule

Grade Level	Time
PreK	- Teachers will communicate individually on a daily basis with all students that do not have access to devices for Google Meet - Teachers will hold daily virtual morning meetings via Google Meet from 8:00-8:30 a.m. for attendance and check-ins regarding paper packet work *Students will be required to check-in for attendance purposes and complete paper packets.
Kindergarten	
1st Grade	
2nd Grade	- Teachers will host daily whole class morning meetings via Google Meet from 8:30-9:00 am to complete attendance and explain Google Classroom assignments for the day - Students will work independently on class assignments (9:00-11:00) - Teachers will be available via Google Meet for open Office Hour from 11:00-12:00 for any students needing help with assignments - Teachers will have a 2nd whole group Google Meet each day for math and ELA lessons from 1:00-2:00 (synchronous learning) *Students will be required to check-in for attendance purposes and complete daily Google Classroom assignments.
3rd Grade	
4th Grade	
5th Grade	- Teachers will host daily whole class morning meetings via Google Meet from 9:00-9:30 am to complete attendance and explain Google Classroom assignments for the day - Students will work independently on class assignments (9:30-11:30) - Teachers will be available via Google Meet for open Office Hour from 10:00-11:00 for any students needing help with assignments - Teachers will have a 2nd whole group Google Meet each day for math and ELA lessons from 11:30-12:30 (synchronous learning) *Students will be required to check-in for attendance purposes and complete daily Google Classroom assignments.
6th Grade	

Secondary Remote Schedule

- Students will have a Google Meet for each of their classes at their current scheduled time during 7:55 a.m. to 2:58 p.m., unless otherwise stated by an individual teacher. (Some teachers may have students use emergency work packets due to connectivity issues.)
- Teachers will take attendance for each class period.
- Students will NOT have Google Meets for lunch or study hall.
- BOCES students will still have in-person instruction and transportation will be provided.

IX. ATTENDANCE and CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Attendance will be collected in a remote schedule in order to report daily teacher student engagement.

- Students in PreK-6 have daily check-ins with teachers.
- Students 7-12 will have daily check-ins with teachers each period.
- Teachers will record attendance daily in PowerSchool.

Students chronically absent

- Teachers will call and email students and parents to inform them of chronic absenteeism.
- If after 3 attempts or student absences do not improve, school administration and counselor will be notified.
- Written notification will be sent via the US Postal Service.
- Administration and/or school counselors will schedule a parent meeting.

X. TECHNOLOGY and CONNECTIVITY

Internet and Devices

- The WCSD conducted surveys of students, families and teachers to determine internet and device capabilities.
- Teachers and students in grades 2-12 have been provided devices such as Chromebooks to conduct remote learning.
- The district is purchasing cellular 'mifi' devices to assist teachers and families who do not have internet capabilities.
- The WiFi on the school campus will remain open so that students can access the internet from the school parking lot.
- During remote learning teachers will conduct classes from the school and access the school's high speed internet.

XI. SOCIAL EMOTIONAL

The WCSD maintains a counseling plan that frequently monitors to address current and anticipated needs of students. The plan is developed and maintained by a team consisting of counselors, the student support service coordinator, a staff development consultant, teachers, administrators, board members and parents.

- Faculty and school counselors have and will continue to provide digital resources, teacher/counselor created materials via US mail or WCSD delivery.
- Counselors will maintain contact with students in person when/if students are in school and via google meet, telephone, email, and US mail.
- The WCSD will continue to utilize a referral process to address mental health, behavioral, and emotional support services and programs.
- System of Care counselors will also assist students and families with community level resources.
- Teachers and staff will receive professional development opportunities through Public SchoolWorks and faculty meetings on how to talk with and support students during and after the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency.
- The district will provide support for developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty, and staff.

XII. ATHLETICS/EXTRACURRICULARS

- As interscholastic sports and extracurricular activities are an important aspect of student life and the school community, it is our priority to maintain as many offerings as we can.
- Extracurricular activities may be conducted virtually if necessary.
- WCSD will follow current state and local DoH guidance when determining Athletic protocols. Each season information will be provided to players and spectators that reflect the most recent guidance and instructions.

XIII. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Special Education services provided in person, remote, and/or through a hybrid model, will address the provision of free appropriate public education (FAPE) consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those providing special education and services.

- Students in self-contained, special education programs (K-12) may, at times, be onsite during remote learning.
- Students receiving special services (Special Education, Speech, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, etc.) will continue to receive those services either in person or remotely.
- Special Education Teachers will plan with regular education teachers to create learning activities tailored to meet the needs of individual students IEP and 504 plans to the extent possible.
- Special Education Teachers, in remote or hybrid situations, will remain in communication with their students and families via email, phone and Google Meet. Translation services will be provided as necessary.
- Each student will be provided access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to the extent possible to meet the needs of individual IEP and 504 plans.
- CPSE and CSE meetings will continue virtually via Google Meet or conference call.
- CPSE and CSE committees will continue to meet to monitor student progress and determine the needs and recommendations of students ensuring the understanding of the provisions of services consistent with a students Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- Related service providers (AIS, OT, PT, SLP, etc.) will continue to provide services to students either in person or remote.

Vulnerable Populations/Accommodations

We recognize that some students, faculty, and staff members are at an increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness, or live with a person who is at an increased risk. It is our goal that these individuals are able to safely participate in educational

activities. For students requesting accommodations, please contact your child's principal, Mrs. Sill grades PreK-6 or Mrs. Leonard grades 7-12 at (607) 397-8785. For staff members, please contact the Superintendent.

XIV. BILINGUAL EDUCATION and WORLD LANGUAGES

Currently the WCSD does not have students identified as ELL. However, any new student who qualifies while the school is in person or hybrid will complete the ELL identification process within the required 10 school days of initial enrollment as required by Commissioner's Regulations Part 154.

- The District will provide instructional Units of Study to all newly identified ELLs based on their most recently measured English language proficiency level during in-person or hybrid instruction.
- The WCSD will maintain regular communication with parents/guardians of ELLs to ensure that they are engaged in their children's education.
- The WCSD will provide all communications for parents/guardians of ELLs in their preferred language and mode of communication.

XV. EVALUATIONS and CERTIFICATIONS

Teacher and Principal Evaluation System

- All teachers and principals will continue to be evaluated pursuant to the district's approved APPR plan.

Certification, Incidental Teaching and Substitute Teaching

- All teachers will hold valid and appropriate certificates for teaching assignment, except where otherwise allowable under the Commissioner's regulations (e.g., incidental teaching) or education law.