

## GEA Definitions for Safe & Ready Schools and Requirements for Building Occupancy

### 1. Community Health

- a. COVID-19 Community-Level Data Map will be posted publicly weekly. Directions for how to access this data should be provided to all stakeholders.
- b. Benchmarks as listed below--both benchmarks must be met before requiring initial building occupancy. "Active cases" are defined as the current number of positive or presumed positive cases in an area, and are considered active for 10 days after symptom onset or positive test. Cases are no longer considered active after 10 days of symptom onset/test date, AND 3 days without fever and near resolution of other symptoms.
  - i. School Community: Daily active cases among students, staff, contracted employees, and families of all over two week average are less than 5
  - ii. Community: Daily new cases in Gardner over two week average are less than 4 per 100,000. Refer to COVID-19 Community-Level Data Map released each Wednesday (should be in unshaded or green on map).
- c. "Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios" document, above benchmarks, state transmission rate, school community data collected by School Nurse Leader, and District Safety Committee will drive discussions regarding changing learning models (e.g. hybrid to remote, remote to fully remote for all).

### 2. Training

- a. Pre-Entry Training
  - i. Deliver to students, families, and staff
  - ii. Develop training that includes what COVID-19 is, how it is spread, preventative measures and how these measures will change the way schools operate, and how to determine if these measures have been met.
    1. Training should be age appropriate and differentiated based on target audience
- b. PPE Training
  - i. All staff should be trained on proper use of provided PPE. Training should include all PPE that corresponds with their risk level.
- c. Cleaning & Disinfectant Training
  - i. All staff should be trained on proper cleaning and disinfecting protocols and materials.
- d. Handwashing/Hand Sanitizer Training
  - i. Provided to staff and students
  - ii. Training should be age appropriate and differentiated based on target audience

### 3. Air Quality

- a. Must prove that HVAC systems are capable and air quality is healthy and safe, as defined in 3.d.
- b. The person in charge of the day to day operation of the heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) system in each building, (usually the Building Principal and/or Facilities Manager) shall be available to discuss the operating status of the HVAC system upon the request of the Association's Health and Safety Committee representative or building occupant. Concerns, problems, etc. should be directed to the building administrator, who will forward them to facilities. For example: If an employee has a problem, the problem will be assessed, and the problem will be fixed. The affected employee will receive verbal updates regularly. A summary of the issue and resolution will be provided in writing. Information provided will include what service is needed, the status of parts, what needs to be done to make the system work more effectively, Plans and Specifications shall be available for review, and when filters were last changed.
- c. HVAC Testing
  - i. Should be completed by an independent professional, and a copy of the report should be provided to the GEA.

- ii. Results should be done on all classrooms and other occupied areas. Results should be listed by individual room/area and publicly posted.
- d. HVAC Benchmarks--Follow ASHRAE's Position Document on Infectious Aerosols
  - i. Dampers in ventilation systems should remain open 100%, when indoor and outdoor conditions allow. If only provided while the building is occupied, then the system must be purged two hours before and two hours after the building is occupied. Purging requires supplying 100% outdoor air equal to three air changes (when combining both pre-occupancy and post-occupancy periods). Fresh air and exhaust shall be operating 24/7 in the bathrooms, the nurses office, in the isolation room(s) and other areas subject to potentially elevated levels of COVID-19 transmission.
  - ii. Maintain relative humidity levels between 40% and 60%, when outdoor conditions allow.
  - iii. Thermostats shall be operating accurately and properly and set to the correct temperatures. Indoor temperatures should reach a minimum of 66-68 degrees Fahrenheit from September 15 through May 15, per MGL. Ch 149, Sect 113. Rooms occupied by students shall be maintained at not less than sixty-eight degrees Fahrenheit at zero Fahrenheit outside and at not more than the outside temperature when the outside temperature is above eighty degrees Fahrenheit (measured at two feet from the outside walls and twenty inches above floor level, per 603 CMR 18.00.
  - iv. Occupied spaces should have CO<sub>2</sub> levels at a preferred 600 ppm (to a maximum of 800 ppm) (MA DPH). Spaces can be tested upon staff request.
  - v. The system should provide adequate fresh air according to ASHRAE Standard 62.1-2019.
  - vi. Install MERV 13 filters or greater to capture infectious aerosols where recirculation is required. GEA understands that the majority of the ventilation systems and univents can only handle MERV 8 filters, however MERV 13 filters should be installed wherever possible.
  - vii. Install portable UVGI/HEPA filtration units in each classroom where building HVAC systems are nonfunctional to the guidelines above and cannot be upgraded in a timely manner. District will compile list of rooms/offices/work spaces that do not have windows or ventilation and purchase HEPA/UVGI/Bipolar Ionization filtration units for all small rooms and offices that do not have univents.
  - viii. Windows should operate properly.
  - ix. The system fans shall be set to "On" or "Circulate" at the thermostat if the HVAC system does not provide a constant airflow at all times people are present and during the purge sequence.
  - x. All supply and return grilles and registers shall be open and operating properly so that fresh air is flowing through them when the system's fan is on.
  - xi. OA intakes shall be clean, open and not blocked by bushes, defective louvers, etc.
  - xii. Develop protocol for fan use to ensure that when using free-standing fan (e.g., pedestal fans, floor fans, wall fans, desk fans) to cool a person or to help mix the air in the space, the fan will not blow from one person directly past to another.
  - xiii. There shall be no water leaks or standing water in the building or HVAC system, e.g., in OA inlet plenums and return air plenums above ceilings. If leaks are discovered, they will be repaired immediately or that day if possible.
  - xiv. The HVAC system shall comply with local and state codes, standards and guidelines.
  - xv. Exhaust fans in all spaces shall be operating at least three hours prior to occupation of the building and continuously while the building is occupied. In nurses' offices, medical waiting rooms, changing rooms, and other areas where transmission of SARS-CoV-2 aerosols are likely, exhaust and supply fans shall operate 24/7. Airflow shall be exhausted to the outside of the building. The intake and exhaust source shall be inspected to ensure that exhausted air is not leaking into the outdoor airstream.

- xvi. Kitchen exhaust hood ventilation systems shall be operating properly and exhausting air to the outside. (There may be air recirculation in some kitchen exhaust systems that will require a minimum MERV 13 filters)
- xvii. If odors are present in a space or in the building as a whole, facility management or a consultant shall check into it. Typical odor sources might include: garbage or trash, rodents or insect nests, stagnant water collected somewhere ( e.g., in a wet carpet), rotting plants, spoiled food, mold growths in carpets or walls, dirty ductwork, and dirty kitchens or break rooms. Remove the sources of the odors.
- xviii. If odors are detected in or coming from a space or room where chemicals are stored, the odor source shall be identified (e.g., a leaking storage container) and the problem corrected.
- xix. In the first few weeks after opening, building administrators shall regularly check with occupants of the space to see if they feel comfortable with the environment and are not feeling ill in any way. Any concerns will be relayed to facilities management before the end of the day. They shall follow up on any complaints or reported feelings of being ill or irritated while present in the building in writing to the employee with a copy to the Association. District will develop a process to keep and collect feedback.

#### **4. Testing & Contact Tracing**

- a. COVID-19 testing must be easily accessible and free to all students and staff. Greater Gardner Community Health Center does not require appointments or charge those without insurance. To find additional testing sites, utilize the “COVID-19 Test Site Locator” on [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov)
- b. Work in conjunction with local health department to communicate testing results.
- c. In the event of notification of a COVID-19 positive case, ensure that all areas that the individual entered were disinfected, test and quarantine individuals (14 days) with whom the infected person came into contact within the 2 days prior to testing date or symptom onset.
  - i. Contact in schools is defined as being within 6 feet of an infected individual for a total of at least 15 minutes within a 24 hour period.
- d. Contact tracing
  - i. Develop protocol for tracing and notifying all contacts an infected/exposed person may have had in the 2 days prior to testing date/exposure or symptom onset.
  - ii. Share this protocol publicly with all stakeholders
- e. Develop protocol for “soft” notification of all other students and staff who shared the same space with the infected individual, but close contact as defined above did not occur.

#### **5. Personal Protective Equipment**

- a. Follow and enforce the law protecting public employees (OSHA 1920.132).
- b. Districts and campuses must provide PPE to students and staff and make its use obligatory for all students of all ages.
- c. Provide appropriate PPE (additional protective gear) to employees at high risk of infection. This includes nurse/health staff, custodial staff, and staff that are unable to socially distance while working (sub separate programs, those working with students in crisis, etc).
- d. Evaluate each position to determine if any additional positions are high risk. These results should be shared with the GEA. Develop inquiry/application process for staff who feel N95 respirators, extra PPE, etc are necessary for their position or health status. If N95 masks are requested, staff will need to provide the district with “OSHA Medical Respirator Evaluation Questionnaire”. This process would be facilitated, reviewed, and granted by the School Nurse Leader and/or District Safety Committee.

#### **6. Cleaning and Disinfecting**

- a. Follow and enforce the law protecting public employees on cleaning protocols (OSHA 1920.132), biohazards (OSHA 1910.1030), and on communicating hazards (OSHA 1910.1200)
- b. Ensure that protocols for cleaning and disinfecting are followed regularly, especially regarding frequently touched surfaces.

- c. The law requires all employees using disinfectants to be trained in proper usage, as some products may contain hazardous ingredients.
- d. Develop protocol outlining what cleaning is expected to be completed by staff, and frequency of cleaning.
  - i. Train all staff in this protocol.
  - ii. Provide all materials necessary to carry out this protocol.
- e. Hand sanitizer needs to be available in each classroom and office with at least 60% ethyl alcohol or ethanol.
- f. Develop protocol for cleaning bathrooms. Include frequency in protocol. Consider general bathrooms, staff bathrooms, and bathrooms in classrooms.
- g. All sinks need to be in working condition, have automatic soap dispensers, and touchless paper towel dispensers. At this time, bathrooms will not have touchless soap and paper towel dispensers, but the district will continue to monitor guidance and will install these should guidance change. All bathrooms will have sufficient signage in bathrooms to encourage proper handwashing techniques and preventative measures.
- h. In the event of notification of a COVID-19 positive case, ensure that all areas that the individual entered were disinfected.

## **7. Preventative Measures**

- a. Social Distancing
  - i. Train students and staff in how to socially distance.
  - ii. Include the training protocol in the student safety reference guide, vetted by local safety committees.
  - iii. Maintain 6 feet of social distance and related class size limits.
  - iv. Cancel large gatherings.
  - v. Create safe student cohort protocols.
  - vi. Design routines for maintaining the social distance in all settings and include logistically viable, properly staffed contingency plans for when it isn't achieved.
  - vii. Bathrooms to be monitored at all times, and will be closed during all transition times. During the remote learning period, bathrooms will be single use only. During the hybrid model, bathroom occupancy and use protocols specific to each building will be developed by the School Nurse Leader, Head of Facilities, and administration and will be included in building plans.
- b. Masks
  - i. Obligatory use for all ages, both staff, students, and visitors.
  - ii. Masks must be worn by all staff, students, and visitors according to the district protocol entitled "Face Mask/Face Covering Protocol for Staff and Students".
  - iii. Exceptions to masks must be accompanied with a medical note
    - 1. Additional precautions should be offered to those that share a room with students or staff who do not wear a mask (face shields, additional distancing, etc)
  - iv. Acceptable masks are N95 style masks, surgical style masks, cotton masks, and disposable masks. Bandanas, gaiter style masks, and masks with external vents are not permitted, as they are not effective at lessening the output of respiratory droplets into shared spaces.
  - v. Include the protocol in the student safety reference guide, vetted by local safety committees.
  - vi. Consider heat index (temperature and humidity) in protocol and considerations for safe occupancy of buildings
- c. Hand Washing & Hand Sanitizing
  - i. Train students and staff in proper techniques and frequency
  - ii. Include the training protocol in the student safety reference guide, vetted by local safety committees.

- d. Develop policy for screening students who may not be able to accurately self report symptoms, or who cannot wear a mask. This screening should include temperature checks before entering the building, as well as a midday temperature checks. Work with staff to identify these students.
- e. Develop policy on addressing noncompliance for all above areas and share policy publicly with all stakeholders. Include policy in the student safety reference guide.
- f. Provide whistleblower protections for all above areas.

#### **8. Accommodations**

- a. Address health conditions that place an educator or their family at increased risk by immediately creating and implementing reasonable accommodations when possible.
- b. Address childcare concerns of staff by creating and implementing alternative learning/teaching/work plans when possible.
- c. Require a nurse in every building. Gardner Academy will have a nurse while students are in the building.

#### **9. Building Closures**

- a. Refer to “Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios” when discussing whether it is appropriate to close buildings in response to COVID-19 cases.
- b. Develop protocol of actions necessary to reopen buildings/systems after they have been closed.
- c. Develop protocol that ensures staff members will be compensated and/or permitted to work from home if they had close contact to positive cases or have infection of COVID-19, in accordance with city travel policy.
- d. Individuals identified as close contacts to positive cases should remain out of the building for a minimum of 14 calendar days after exposure, regardless of test results.
- e. Infected individuals should remain out of the building for a minimum of 10 calendar days after test date or symptom onset, AND after 3 days without fever and near resolution of symptoms. If individuals wish to have a test done, the optimal time is 4 days after exposure.

#### **10. Meal Protocols**

- a. Develop protocol for students who will be eating breakfast and/or lunch in the building. The majority of this protocol is already present in the district mask protocol, but clean up and disposal of materials is not clear.
  - i. Protocol should include handwashing (preferred) or hand sanitizing, remaining in seat, and maintaining a minimum of 6 feet of distance.
  - ii. Include protocol in the student safety reference guide.
  - iii. Provide handwashing stations in subseparate and preschool classrooms that do not have an operational sink.
- b. Develop protocol for cleaning up after meals and proper disposal of leftover materials

#### **11. Students in Crisis**

- a. Develop protocol for any changes made to CPI practices and training with regard to COVID-19.
  - i. Include specific use of PPE in protocol.
- b. Develop protocol for use of safe rooms/calm down rooms with regard to COVID-19.
  - i. Include cleaning of safe rooms/calm down rooms in protocol.
- c. Develop protocol for evacuation of classrooms/shared spaces with regard to COVID-19.

#### **12. Building Security**

- a. Develop protocol for the safe entry of DCF workers, outside counselors, and any other outside providers or visitors. Maintain a log of entry/exit of all outside providers and visitors that the School Nurse Leader has access to for contact tracing. Encourage visits to be virtual or outside of the school setting when possible.
- b. Develop protocols for the safe movement of school counselors, SACs, PTs, OTs, SLPs and any other service providers that have multiple students on their caseloads as well as multiple staff members that they need to work with. When possible, these providers will need to follow a specific, regular schedule that the School Nurse Leader has access to for contact tracing.
- c. Each classroom will have a sign in/sign out log that all staff (including facilities/maintenance, secretaries, nurses, custodians, etc) will be required to use whenever entering a classroom

during the school day. These logs will track dates as well as time of entry and exit. It is the responsibility of the visiting staff member to fill out the log. The classroom teacher will collect and keep the logs in a safe location. The School Nurse Leader will need to access these logs for contact tracing.

- d. Develop protocol for fire drills, ALICE drills, and any other evacuation/safety drills to ensure preventative measures are in place at all times.
- e. Develop protocol for safe arrival and dismissal of students who will receive in-person instruction.

### **13. Technology**

- a. Policy for ensuring that students and families do not record synchronous lessons
- b. Infrastructure test to determine whether Zoom meetings and Google Meet meetings can be run simultaneously without a significant loss of quality
- c. Webcams (or chromebooks with webcams) for each teacher providing live instruction
  - i. 480p or Higher
  - ii. Free Standing / Portable to move around classroom (to show whiteboard and other resources)
- d. Microphones for each teacher providing live instruction
- e. Digital Worksheet Platform Training
  - i. Google Classrooms
  - ii. Seesaw Worksheets
- f. Training for use of microphones, cameras, and all other necessary equipment

### **14. Communication & Transparency**

- a. Compile a reference guide with all protocols and policies for staff. Reference guide should be accessible under "Staff Resources" on district website.
- b. Compile a student safety reference guide that students and parents/guardians need to sign off on before returning to in-person learning. Sign off on student safety reference guide will be incorporated as part of process to sign off on student handbook receipt. Student safety reference guide will also be posted on district website under COVID-19 Closure/Re-Opening Resources.
- c. Maintain daily compliance logs of all cleaning and disinfecting, and all HVAC readings/statuses. These logs should be available for viewing upon staff request.
- d. The District Safety Committee will meet regularly as indicated to develop and provide weekly reports on incidents of infection by school.