



Southern Westchester BOCES Health and Safety Guide for the 2021-2022 school year



Last updated: August 30, 2021

Schools & Locations

Administration Building, Rye Brook, NY

Program Offices, Adult Education and the Lower Hudson Regional Information Center, Harrison, NY

Center for Special Services - K-12

Tappan Hill School, Tarrytown, NY

Valhalla Center, Valhalla, NY

Pocantico Hills School, Tarrytown, NY

Rye Lake Campus, White Plains, NY

St. Matthew's School, White Plains, NY

Irvington High School, Irvington, NY

Career Services Campus - K-12, Valhalla, NY

Center for Adult & Community Services

Sprain Brook Academy, Westchester County Jail, Valhalla, NY - HS and Adult Ed

St. Gabriel's School, New Rochelle, NY - Adult Education

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The following stakeholders were engaged in the Health & Safety Plan development process through meetings, surveys or correspondence and will remain partners throughout its implementation.

SWBOCES Board of Education

Catherine Draper, Board of Education President
John Filiberti, Board of Education Vice President
Sheryl Brady
Lynn Frazer-McBride
Robert Johnson
Valarie D. Williams

SWBOCES Executive Team

Harold A. Coles, Psy.D., District Superintendent
Jacqueline O'Donnell, Deputy Superintendent/Chief Operating Officer
Kathleen Conley, Executive Director, Lower Hudson Regional Information Center
James A. Gratto Jr., Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services
Stephen Tibbetts, Assistant Superintendent for Business

SWBOCES COVID Response Team

Jacqueline O'Donnell, Deputy Superintendent/Chief Operating Officer
Kathleen Conley, Executive Director, Lower Hudson Regional Information Center
James A. Gratto Jr., Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services
Stephen Tibbetts, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Suzanne Doherty, Director of Human Resources
Tom Briggs, Director of Operations & Maintenance
Brandon Cruz, Supervisor of School Safety
Brian Howard, Director of Communications
Dahlia Jackson, Director of Career Services
Jesse Merchant, Assistant Director of Interscholastic Athletics
Victor Pineiro, Director of Technology
Tracy Racicot, Director of Adult & Community Services

Stakeholder and Resource partners

Westchester County Department of Health
Southern Westchester BOCES Component School Districts
Regional Pupil Personnel Directors
New York State BOCES Leaders
Southern Westchester BOCES Leadership Team
Southern Westchester BOCES staff
Southern Westchester BOCES students and parents
Southern Westchester BOCES community partners
Southern Westchester BOCES state partners

This Health & Safety guide is a supplement to the SWBOCES Reopening Plan and includes any changes that are made in alignment with updated guidance from the NYSDOH, WCDOH and NYSED. The SWBOCES Reopening Plan is comprehensive and includes some program specific information. Additionally, some divisions have developed additional guidance specific to their operations. This guide will provide easy access to practices that are in place across the entire district. Please refer to the [SWBOCES Reopening Plan](#) and/or program guidance for additional information.

Health & Safety

Physical Distancing

SWBOCES will follow all guidelines from the state of New York and the Westchester County Departments of Health regarding social distancing. The distance as defined by guidance must be maintained among all individuals while in SWBOCES facilities or on SWBOCES grounds, inclusive of students, faculty, and staff, unless safety or the core activity (e.g., instruction, moving equipment, using an elevator, traveling in common areas) requires a shorter distance or individuals are of the same household. Currently the recommended distance is three feet between students and six feet between adults and other adults or students.

Per NYSED Guidance:

The CDC recommends that schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing, to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, such as when schools cannot fully reopen while maintaining these distances, it is important to layer multiple other prevention strategies, such as cohorting.

Recognizing that distancing can present a challenge in providing needed support for students, multiple layers of prevention are in place, including grouping of students, masking of all individuals, temperature screenings and daily sanitizing procedures.

Classroom Capacity

All instructional spaces will follow recommended CDC and NYSED guidelines. Space will be reevaluated periodically based on changing guidance or program needs.

All instructional spaces will be arranged to maximize opportunities for appropriate social distancing.

Participation in activities requiring projection of voice (e.g. singing), playing a wind instrument or aerobic activity may be subject to additional social distancing guidelines based on CDC,

Department of Health or NYSED guidance. In student programs, staff will develop activities that ensure that the distance required by guidance is observed.

Seating configurations will be arranged to align with social distancing guidelines. In instructional programs, all desks, including the teacher's desk, will face in the same direction with appropriate distance between them.

Partitions will be used to separate work spaces as appropriate. Face shields or desk shields will be available for those whose location or position requires additional protection or cannot allow the required distance between individuals.

All social distancing protocols must be followed for in-person meetings. Meetings must be limited to the number of people that can be accommodated per social distancing guidelines.

Personal Protective Equipment

CDC-recommended face coverings are required. Masks are provided at each entrance and must be worn whenever more than one person is in a room and within six feet. Masks must be worn in all common areas. Masks may be removed while eating, but individuals must maintain social distancing.

Face shields and desk shields are available as appropriate in alignment with guidance.

Additional PPE may be requested.

All applicable Operations and Maintenance staff and contractors will be fit-tested for N95-rated face masks as appropriate.

Hand Hygiene

Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when soap and water are not available.

Key times to clean hands include:

- Before and after the school/workday
- Before and after work breaks or recess
- After blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After using the restroom
- Before eating or preparing food
- After putting on, touching, or removing masks/face coverings

Hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol will be provided in the wall dispensers and at the copiers and printers.

Staff and students must sanitize their hands and surfaces of shared equipment/items before and after use (i.e. copier/printer, microwaves, etc.). Sanitizing wipes will be provided.

Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- CDC Poster—Social Distancing & Face Coverings:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID19-social-distancing-cloth-face-coverings.pdf>
- CDC Poster—Stop the Spread of Germs:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf>

Additional Space Considerations for Safety

When social distancing in **cafeterias** is not possible, meals will be served in classroom spaces or other designated spaces..

Health offices in student programs will have a designated isolation area to allow for separation of symptomatic students from those receiving other health services.

Staff and students should use the **restroom** designated for their work area, and social distancing should be observed whenever possible.

Pantries and staff lounges are open but may have restrictions based on number of building occupants and available space. Restrictions for specific locations will be noted in writing and communicated to staff. Availability of coffee will be decided based on COVID numbers and local data, which are monitored weekly. Currently, no shared food is allowed unless the food is commercially purchased and packaged individually.

Social distancing reminders will continue to be posted to denote required spacing in commonly used areas such as around copiers or in mailrooms and bathrooms.

Passage through hallways should be limited to essential movement. Signage will be used to indicate the flow of movement through hallways where appropriate.

Facilities Practices

Cleaning Protocols

All occupied spaces will be cleaned and disinfected daily, more frequently if required. Facilities staff will use high-performance cleaning and disinfecting products (COVID-approved) and methods.

Continued training for cleaning staff will ensure proper cleanliness and disinfection levels in all SWBOCES facilities.

In addition to regularly scheduled cleaning, daily disinfecting will take place and include focus on high-touch points.

Facilities staff will maintain cleaning logs indicating work date(s), areas cleaned, cleaning staff and any additional information to ensure proper procedures are followed.

Cleaning products will be supplied to classrooms as requested. **Staff-supplied cleaning products will not be allowed.**

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers are available in multiple locations at all SWBOCES sites.

Ongoing Maintenance

All ventilation systems have been assessed and are operating as designed. Filters have been upgraded to the highest practical MERV rating. Continued monitoring and maintenance will take place as appropriate.

Space needs will be reviewed periodically for alignment to CDC recommendations. Any required modifications to space will be done in compliance with all applicable codes, rules and regulations.

Water dispensers with single-use cups will be available as required. Water fountains will be disabled to reduce cross contact.

Annual Processes

All safety drills, including fire drills and lockdown drills, will be conducted per NYSED requirements and will observe social distancing guidelines wherever possible.

Building Condition Survey will be performed during the 2021-22 school year and following.

Lead-in-water testing will be conducted during the 2021-22 school year and following upon approval from NYSED.

Movement within Buildings

Staff, students and visitors should not enter buildings if they have COVID-related symptoms. All staff and students will be provided with guidance stating that they should remain at home if they are symptomatic or have been asked to quarantine.

Staff were provided with an app during the 2020-21 school year that allowed for a daily self-screening before the workday to identify anyone who should not be on-site due to a COVID related concern. ([Directions for Using the Self-Screening App](#)) The app will continue to be used for all staff during the 2021-22 school year, and staff cannot be on site unless they have received a “Cleared for building entry” notice upon completing the app. Anyone not using the app must sign an attestation sheet at the entrance, indicating that they are not symptomatic and do not have any COVID-related restriction that would prohibit them from entering the building. Masks, hand sanitizer and instruments for taking temperatures are available at all main entrances.

Any staff member or visitor who is not able to affirm all screening questions will be denied entry to SWBOCES buildings and should avoid coming in contact with other staff members.

The health screening consists of a series of questions. If anyone is flagged by the screening questions, he/she should not enter the facility.

1) Self-Assessment Questions*

- Have you tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 10 days?
- Have you been designated a close contact of someone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
- Are you experiencing, or have you experienced in the last 10 days, a temperature of 100° F or above or have **new or worsening COVID-related symptoms**?

If a staff member answers yes to any part of question 1, additional questions ask if they have received clearance from Human Resources or if the symptoms are related to a vaccine reaction.

2) In alignment with the New York State COVID-19 travel advisory do you need to quarantine due to travel? ([New York State Travel Advisory](#))

In addition, all staff members will be asked to affirm that they have read their locations's SWBOCES reentry guidance and agree to abide by all guidelines.

**The app questions are subject to change based on guidance.*

Screening and Testing of Adults

App Denial Message

If an employee receives a denial to enter a building based on their answer to the app questions they will receive a link that will prompt them to send a blank email to COVIDalerts@swboces.org and should follow the positive screen protocol found below. Employees denied entrance due to a COVID-related concern may not return to work until receiving written clearance from SWBOCES Human Resources.

Information collected by the sign-in sheets or digital health screening tool will be used to assess qualification to enter an SWBOCES building to ensure maximum occupancy restrictions are maintained and to support contact tracing should it be needed.

When using a sign-in sheet or digital health screening tool, no health information such as temperatures will be collected or stored. The only information collected will be the identity of the person, the date and time of the health screening and whether or not the staff member was cleared for entry. Information will be kept until the end of the COVID response period.

Visitors

Visitors are also required to attest to their health using a sign-in sheet and take their own temperature with a thermometer provided at the entrance.

Teleconferencing will continue to be an option for meetings. Individual sites and departments will determine when in-person meetings are appropriate and follow all guidelines for those meetings. All social distancing and masking protocols must be followed for in-person meetings, and meetings must be limited to the number of people that can be accommodated per social distancing guidelines.

Each division must establish parameters for permitting visitors on campuses based on current need, social distancing guidelines and current regional infection rates. Visitors must follow all SWBOCES protocols, including signing an attestation upon entering the building and completing a temperature screening.

Each SWBOCES division will create a plan for allowing visitors, contractors and vendors into buildings, assuring that all guidelines can be followed. These individuals will take their own

temperatures on site and will attest to the same health questions via a sign-in sheet, which will record their name, email and phone number as well as the date and time of entry and exit.

The number of visitors, contractors and vendors will be monitored to ensure that maximum occupancy guidelines are not exceeded.

Screening and Health Monitoring of Students

Students are required to complete a daily temperature check using touchless thermometers at the entrance before entering the building. Students with a temperature of 100.0°F or more upon arrival or during the school day will discretely be sent to a dedicated area prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home. Students will be supervised, and social distancing norms will be followed.

Parents and staff that work with students will be provided information based on CDC guidelines explaining the initial symptoms of COVID-19 in children since the manifestation is not always the same as that for adults. The information is available in both English and Spanish. Program directors may choose to have parents/guardians complete a weekly health screening. If the screening process is used, parents will be informed in writing and have multiple options (both electronic and paper) to respond.

When a parent sends their child to school they are affirming that the child:

1. has not had a daily temperature of 100.0°F or more, in the past 10 days;
2. has not been designated a close contact of someone who has tested positive in the past 14 days through a diagnostic test for COVID-19;
3. has not tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 10 days;
4. has not experienced [symptoms of COVID-19](#), including a temperature of 100.0°F or more, in the past 10 days; and
5. is not required to quarantine due to travel.

Surveillance Testing

SWBOCES will participate in surveillance testing when appropriate. The steps for signing up for surveillance testing will be communicated in writing to all who are eligible to participate.

Required Reporting of a COVID issue

Students' parents/guardians must notify SWBOCES when they begin to experience symptoms or are exposed to COVID-19, including during or outside of school hours. The

information should be reported by using the following designated email, healthupdates@swboces.org. The parent/guardian should send a blank email to the address, then respond to the return email by completing the form. Administrators will monitor this email, and a response will be sent accordingly. The student may not come on campus until they receive clearance.

Employees must notify SWBOCES when they experience symptoms or are exposed to COVID-19 or are unable to pass the screening questions in the SWBOCES app.

Notification should take place both during or outside of school hours. Staff are directed to report this information by using the following designated email, covidalerts@swboces.org. The employee should send a blank email to the address, then respond to the return email by completing the form. A member of the HR Department will monitor this email and respond accordingly. The employee may not come on campus until they receive clearance from the HR Department.

Staff and students who were denied building entry due to health screening for symptoms can return to work or the in-person learning environment in consultation with their health care provider once they have felt well and have had no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicines; **and**, either provide a negative COVID PCR test result, or if they have been diagnosed with another condition and provide a written note stating they are clear to return to school.

All staff and students must follow the guidelines provided in the New York State COVID-19 travel advisory when traveling internationally or to any states referenced in the most current [New York State Travel Advisory](#).

If a staff member or student **tested** positive for COVID-19 they need to have recovered and completed a minimum of 10 days of isolation before returning to work or the in-person learning environment. Discharge from isolation and return to work or school will be conducted in coordination with the local health department. SWBOCES will notify the state and local health departments about any cases if diagnostic test results are positive for COVID-19.

For more information, please see below for The protocol for Return to Work/School.

Additional resources related to COVID-19 are available on the Human Resources Department website or by using the following link:

https://www.swboces.org/groups/49386/human_resources/draft_covid19_hr_resources.

Response to Positive COVID diagnosis or Potential Concern

Southern Westchester BOCES offers programming at numerous centers and within component districts, where component districts serve as hosts for our programming. Closure of programming will be taken very seriously, considering multiple factors that include: presence of

or potential presence of COVID-19 within one of our programs or at or within one of our host districts, absentee rates of faculty, staff, and students, as well as determinations made by the NYS Department of Health, NYSED, the Westchester County Department of Health and the COVID response team. Collaboration with the Westchester County Department of Health will be ongoing, and decision making will be data-informed.

Southern Westchester BOCES will cooperate with state and local health department contact tracing, according to requirements of the New York State Education Department. The Director of Human Resources will serve as the COVID-19 Resource Contact Person and the primary contact and will assist the Westchester County Department of Health in knowing who may have had contact at school with a confirmed case. The COVID response team will continue to serve as a resource and provide leadership throughout this period. A member of that team, the District Deputy Superintendent/COO, will serve as COVID-19 Safety Coordinator. Because SWBOCES has multiple divisions and almost 1,000 employees, it is important that there is a resource person to support each division. Executive Team members will serve this role for their divisions, working closely with the Director of Human Resources, who will remain the primary contact with the Westchester Department of Health. Each member of the SWBOCES Leadership team will be responsible for responding to daily concerns, assuring systems are working well to operationalize the processes and protocols in the SWBOCES Health and Safety Guide for the 21-22 school year and assist members of their teams in understanding guidance and the district plan.

Systems throughout the Southern Westchester BOCES district will be reviewed to assure that attendance records for both staff and students are up to date. Student schedules need to be updated regularly. Sign-in sheets for visitors will include date, time and location of visit.

Southern Westchester BOCES will follow all requirements for assisting local health departments in tracing all contacts of the individual at school in accordance with the protocol, training, and tools provided through the New York State Contact Tracing Program.

Confidentiality will be maintained as required by federal and state laws and regulations. Our staff will not try to determine who is to be excluded from school based on contact without guidance and direction from the local department of health.

Protocol for Return to Work/School

SWBOCES' Reopening Plan has written protocols that comply with DOH and CDC guidance for the return to school of students and staff following a positive screen for COVID-19 symptoms, illness or diagnosis of a confirmed case of COVID-19, or following quarantine due to contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Return to school will be coordinated with the Westchester County Department of Health in alignment with CDC, NYSED and NYSDOH guidance. This guidance will be updated as needed.

- If employees/students have **exhibited symptoms but in consultation with a health care provider were not diagnosed with COVID-19**, they can return to work/school once they have felt well and have had no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicines; **and**, if they have been diagnosed with another condition, provide a written note stating they are clear to return to school.
- If employees/students **test positive for COVID-19, regardless of whether they are symptomatic or asymptomatic**, they may return upon completing at least 10 days of isolation from the onset of symptoms or, if they remain asymptomatic, 10 days of isolation after the first positive test. In addition, the individual must have been fever-free for at least 72 hours without using fever-reducing medicine, and the individual's symptoms are improving, including cough and shortness of breath. SWBOCES will notify the Westchester County Department of Health of any positive test results to determine what steps are needed for the school community.
- If an employee/student has been designated a close contact of someone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19, the employee/student may return to work/school upon completing at least 10 days of self-quarantine from the date of last exposure without a testing requirement if no symptoms have been reported during the quarantine period. If the employee/student is fully vaccinated and asymptomatic, they may be exempt from quarantine pending verification from the DOH.
 - CDC guidance recommends individuals get tested 3-5 days after exposure.
 - Continue strict adherence to wearing a mask while indoors **at all times** while at a SWBOCES facility or program through day 14
 - Individuals must continue daily symptom monitoring through day 14.
 - Individuals must continue strict adherence to all recommended non-pharmaceutical interventions, including hand hygiene and the use of face coverings through day 14.
 - Individuals are advised that if any symptoms develop, they should immediately self-isolate and contact the local health care authority or their health care provider.
- If an employee/student has received a vaccine and is symptomatic in the days immediately following the vaccine, they should follow these steps:
 - If the individual would not be able to pass the daily (employee) or weekly (student) app screening tool, they should stay at home, enter a sick day following their centers procedures, monitor symptoms and seek medical advice as necessary.
 - If symptoms resolve within a 48-hour period, the employee may return to work without further action.

- If symptoms persist, the employee should put in a COVIDalerts@swboces.org or the student should put in a Healthupdates@swboces.org and will be contacted by a member of the SWBOCES team to discuss next steps. The individual should not come on campus until cleared to do so. As always, employees and students are encouraged to seek medical advice as necessary.

The New York State Department of Health considers a close contact to be someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes cumulatively, starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the person is isolated. Currently that criteria continues to be used even when the allowable distance between individuals is lower than 6 feet. A negative test result does not release you from the mandated quarantine.

If employees/students **become sick with COVID-19 symptoms while at the workplace**, they must be sent home immediately and follow the guidance above.

All staff and students must follow the guidelines provided in the New York State COVID-19 travel advisory when traveling internationally or to any states referenced in the most current [New York State Travel Advisory](#).

Exemption to Quarantine

Updated guidance from the Department of Health states that individuals who have been fully vaccinated or previously tested positive for COVID 19 may be exempt from quarantine based on current guidance. The DOH will verify the information and issue the exemption from quarantine.

Medically Vulnerable High Risk Staff & Students

SWBOCES is committed to providing a safe work and learning environment for staff and students. SWBOCES recognizes that certain populations are considered at increased risk during the COVID-19 pandemic. The CDC has issued guidance on groups that are at increased risk and may require additional accommodations beyond the safety measures already put in place. [Please refer to this link for more information](#).

Any staff member with an underlying condition that puts them at increased risk may request a possible accommodation. The process is as follows:

- Employee will notify Human Resources of their request for an accommodation.
- Employee will complete and return to Human Resources an Accommodation Form, which includes information provided by their health care provider.

- Human Resources will schedule a meeting with the employee to discuss work duties and possible reasonable accommodation.
- Human Resources will schedule a meeting with the employee's supervisor to review essential functions of the job and possible reasonable accommodations.
- Human Resources will meet with the employee to discuss reasonable accommodations and follow up with a final decision via letter.

Students with special needs, or who may be medically fragile or have underlying health conditions or concerns, may not be able to adhere to safety protocols requiring the use of face coverings, social distancing or hand hygiene. School Nurses will work directly with individual students and their families to identify how best to meet the child's needs at school, while continuing to protect their health and safety. Also included in the development of individual student plans will be the principal, teachers, clinicians and related service providers and the child's health care provider, as appropriate.

Social Emotional Well Being

SWBOCES is committed to enhancing our school community by acknowledging the necessity to take care of ourselves and each other, physically and emotionally. Activities and resources to do this are embedded throughout the organization.

Social Emotional Well Being of Staff'

SWBOCES provides all staff members with access to professional learning opportunities and mental health resources as well as the time to partake in team/group activities to share ideas in a supportive, encouraging environment.

Some of the ongoing avenues available to our employees include but are not limited to:

- SWBOCES participates in a 24/7 Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This provides confidential and experienced assistance to help an employee and their family resolve personal problems that affect their health, family, or job. In addition to assessment and referral services, the EAP provides information, education, and consultation both independently and in concert with other professional resources. EAP is designed specifically for educators. It offers a number of solutions for personal problems and a targeted menu of benefits and resources addressing the unique professional issues in an educational community. EAP starts with all the traditional counseling services designed to address significant life problems, and they add Work/Life benefits to address the everyday problems involved in juggling work and family. The goal of the EAP is to help all employees achieve their peak performance through training, coaching and wellness. They can be reached by phone at 1-800-666-5327, online at <https://www.theeap.com/educators-eap> or via the EAP page on the [SWBOCES](#)

[website](#). In addition, monthly newsletters are shared via email with all staff members.

- To assist staff members during these unprecedented times, SWBOCES has set up a “Coronavirus Resources for Employees” page on our district website at https://www.swboces.org/groups/49386/human_resources/draft_covid19_hr_resources.

The page includes:

- Coronavirus Resource Flyer
 - Frequently Asked HR Questions section
 - Summary of Benefits Providers with contact information
 - Active links to the CDC, the state departments of Health and Labor, and local health departments.
 - Mental Health Service Providers
 - Tips for Coping while Social Distancing
 - Information flyers and forms for the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and New York State Paid Sick Leave Law
- SWBOCES runs a Center for Professional Development and Curriculum Support. This service includes ongoing training, guidance and webinars on topics that include school building and community safety and wellness; crisis prevention and intervention; race, equity and social justice; and various additional initiatives on all topics related to school and social environments. In addition, the Lower Hudson Regional Information Center (LHRIC) of SWBOCES offers training through NY Model Schools. This Core Service provides instructional technology, professional development and other optional services for staff members.
 - To offer support and guidance specifically to new teachers, counselors, social workers, therapists and administrators, SWBOCES has a Mentoring Program. Mentoring provides personalized and intensive support to new employees in the professions mentioned. To assist in transition, SWBOCES acknowledges the importance of helping personnel, new to their professions, by offering an environment that facilitates growth and development through guidance and support. A catalogue of events are available in MyLearningPlan.
 - Each year, SWBOCES provides all new and returning staff members online training in several mandated areas through the Global Compliance Network (GCN). These areas include: Prevention and Emergency Response in K-12 Schools; Mental Illness Awareness for Educators; FERPA; Digital Security Protection; NYS Ed. Law 2D; Bloodborne Pathogens; Child Abuse; Dignity for All Students Act/Code of Conduct, and Hazard Communications. In addition, GCN has a repository of over 100 optional training sessions on a variety of topics related to the school environment. These include six sections related to an understanding of COVID-19 and best practices that can be followed to help keep our staff and students as safe as possible.

- The Human Resources Department schedules monthly virtual drop-in sessions for each site. Human Resource staff will be available via these virtual sessions to answer staff questions and share resources.
- SWBOCES has informed all staff to send any questions related to the COVID-19 district response to the Director of Communications, who in turn shares those questions with the District Response Team for review. Answers are shared either via email with all staff or with the leadership team.
- Superintendent conference days are held prior to the re-entry of students where staff will be provided with the opportunity to discuss preparedness for teaching and learning in the COVID-19 environment. Staff will also be given the opportunity to discuss related concerns. Opportunities are provided monthly for ongoing support to staff.

Social Emotional Well Being of Students

SWBOCES offers a variety of student programs, many of which have a therapeutic approach embedded in them. Additionally, all student programs, including Special Services and Career Services students, incorporate *Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools* (TCIS)-researched strategies into the classroom environment. Implementing a Connected Learning Environment in all classrooms is a district-wide goal, and all staff members have received annual TCIS training. Also, some staff members at each site have participated in additional TCIS training and are certified to serve as TCIS Response Team members.

SWBOCES has also developed districtwide and building-level Comprehensive School Counseling plans to meet current needs, which will include the establishment of shared decision-making teams or an advisory council. School Counselors, Social Workers and Psychologists participated in the development of the Comprehensive School Counseling Plan. Strategies to provide resources and referrals to address mental health, behavioral and emotional support services and programs are included in the plan, as is the identification of professional development opportunities for faculty and staff on how to support students during and after the current public health emergency.

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