

**Student Attendance, Truancy and
Chronic Absenteeism
(formerly Student Attendance)**

I. Attendance and Truancy

A. Definitions for Section I

1. **“Absence”** - any day during which a student is not considered “in attendance” at ~~his/her~~ the student’s assigned school, or on a school sponsored activity (e.g. field trip), for at least one half of the school day.
2. **“Disciplinary absence”** - Any absence as a result of school or district disciplinary action. Any student serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should be considered absent. Such absence is not considered excused or unexcused for attendance and truancy purposes.
3. **“Educational evaluation”** - for purposes of this policy, an educational evaluation is an assessment of a student’s educational development, which, based upon the student’s presenting characteristics, would assess (as appropriate) the following areas: health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status and motor abilities.
4. **“Excused absence”** - a student is considered excused from school if the school has received written documentation describing the reason for the absence within ten (10) school days of the student’s return to school, or if the ~~child-~~ student has been excluded from school in accordance with section 10-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes (regarding communicable diseases), and the following criteria are met:
 - a. Any absence before the student’s tenth (10th) absence is considered excused when the student’s parent/guardian approves such absence and submits

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appropriate written documentation in accordance with this regulation.

b. For the student's tenth (10th) absence and all absences thereafter, a student's absences from school are, with appropriate documentation in accordance with this regulation, considered excused only for the following reasons:

i. student illness (verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional);

ii. religious holidays;

iii. mandated court appearances (documentation required);

iv. funeral or death in the family, or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;

v. extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by the district administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance and this regulation; or

vi. lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends.

c. A student, age five (5) to eighteen (18), inclusive, whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the armed forces who has been called for duty, is on leave from or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted ten (10) days of excused absences in any school year, and, in the discretion of the administration, additional excused absences to visit such student's parent or legal guardian with respect to the parent's leave or deployment. In the case of such excused absences, the

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student and parent or legal guardian are responsible for obtaining assignments from the student’s teacher prior to any period of excused absence, and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by the student prior to ~~his or her~~ the student’s return to school.

“Excused absence” excludes a student’s engagement in (1) virtual classes, (2) virtual meetings, (3) activities on time-logged electronic systems, and (4) the completion and submission of assignments, if such engagement accounts for not less than one-half of the school day during remote learning.

5. “In Attendance” - Any day during which a student is present at the student’s assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school, for at least half of the regular school day.

6. “Mental health wellness day” - a school day during which a student attends to such student’s emotional and psychological well-being in lieu of attending school.

7. “Remote learning” means instruction by means of one or more Internet-based software platforms as part of a remote learning model as may be authorized by the Madison Board of Education (the “Board”) in accordance with applicable law.

6. "Student" - a student enrolled in the Madison Public Schools (the “District”).

7. "Truant" - any student five (5) to eighteen (18) years of age, inclusive, who has four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences from school in any school year.

8. "Unexcused absence" - any absence from a regularly scheduled school day for at least one half of the school day, which is not excused or considered a disciplinary absence.

101 “Unexcused absence” excludes a student’s engagement in (1) virtual
102 classes, (2) virtual meetings, (3) activities on time-logged
103 electronic systems, and (4) the completion and submission of
104 assignments, if such engagement accounts for not less than one-
105 half of the school day during remote learning.
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108 The determination of whether an absence is excused will be made by the building
109 principal or ~~his/her~~ designee. Parents or other persons having control of the child
110 may appeal that decision to the Superintendent or ~~his/her~~ designee, whose
111 decision shall be final.

112 B. Mental Health Wellness Days
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114 Any student enrolled in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, shall be
115 permitted to take two mental health wellness days during the school year,
116 during which day such student shall not be required to attend school. No
117 student shall take mental health wellness days during consecutive school
118 days.
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121 B. Written Documentation Requirements for Absences
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- 123 1. Written documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absence within
124 ten (10) school days of the student’s return to school. Consecutive days of
125 absence are considered one incidence of absence.
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- 127 2. The first nine (9) days of absence will be excused upon receipt of a signed note
128 from the student’s parent/guardian, a signed note from a school official that spoke
129 in person with the parent/guardian regarding the absence, or a note confirming the
130 absence by the school nurse or by a licensed medical professional, as appropriate.
131 For any absence due to student illness, the signed note must include the specific
132 symptom(s) exhibited by the student so that the District can monitor trends that
133 would suggest the spread of COVID-19.
134
- 135 3. For the student’s tenth (10th) absence, and all absences thereafter, documentation
136 of the absence must be submitted in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 above,

137 and must also include the reason for the absence and the following additional
138 information:

139

140 a. student illness:

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142 i. a signed note from a medical professional, who may be the school nurse,
143 who has evaluated the student confirming the absence and giving an
144 expected return date and including the specific symptom(s) exhibited by
145 the student so that the District can monitor trends that would suggest the
146 spread of COVID-19; or

147

148 ii. a signed note from school nurse who has spoken with the student's
149 medical professional and confirmed the absence, including the date and
150 location of the consultation and including the specific symptom(s)
151 exhibited by the student so that the District can monitor trends that would
152 suggest the spread of COVID-19.

153

154 b. religious holidays: none.

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156 c. mandated court appearances:

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158 i. a police summons;

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160 ii. a subpoena;

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162 iii. a notice to appear;

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164 iv. a signed note from a court official; or

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166 v. any other official, written documentation of the legal
167 requirement to appear in court.

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169 d. funeral or death in the family, or other emergency beyond the control
170 of the student’s family: a written document explaining the nature of the
171 emergency.

172

173 e. extraordinary educational opportunity pre-approved by the district
174 administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department
175 of Education guidance and this policy: written pre-approval from the
176 administration, in accordance with this regulation.

177

178 f. lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than
179 the one the student attends: none.

180

181 4. Neither e-mail nor text message shall serve to satisfy the requirement of written
182 documentation. In rare and extraordinary circumstances, a building administrator
183 may, in ~~his/her~~ the administrator’s own discretion, accept the delivery of written
184 documentation through a scanned copy sent by e-mail.

185

186 5. The District reserves the right to randomly audit written documentation received,
187 through telephone and other methods of communication, to determine its
188 authenticity.

189

190 6. Any absence that is not documented in accordance with this regulation within ten
191 (10) school days after the incidence of absence will be recorded as unexcused. If
192 documentation is provided within ten (10) school days, but is incomplete, the
193 building principal may, at ~~his/her~~ the principal’s own discretion, grant up to a five
194 (5) school day extension for provision of the completed documentation.

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196 C. Extraordinary Educational Opportunities

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198 1. To qualify as an extraordinary educational opportunity, the opportunity must:

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200 a. be educational in nature and must have a learning objective related to the
201 student's course work or plan of study;

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203 b. be an opportunity not ordinarily available to the student;

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205 c. be grade and developmentally appropriate; and

206

207 d. include content that is highly relevant to the student; while some opportunities
208 will be relevant to all students, others will contain very specific content that
209 would limit their relevance to a smaller group of students.

210

211 2. Family vacations do not qualify as extraordinary educational opportunities.

212

213 3. All requests for approval of extraordinary educational opportunities must:

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215 a. be submitted to the building principal in writing prior to the opportunity, but
216 no later than ten (10) school days prior to the opportunity except in
217 exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the building administrator;

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219 b. contain the signatures of both the parent/guardian and the student;

220

221 c. include an outline of the learning objective of the opportunity and include
222 detail as to how the objective is linked to the student's coursework or plan of
223 study; and

224

225 d. include additional documentation, where available, about the opportunity.

226

227 4. The building principal shall provide a response in writing and include the
228 following:

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- 230 a. either approval or denial of the request;
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232 b. brief reason for any denial;
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234 c. any requirements placed upon the student as a condition of approval;
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236 d. the specific days approved as excused absences for the opportunity;
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238 e. the understanding that the building administrator may withdraw its approval if
239 the opportunity is canceled or the student fails to meet the agreed-upon
240 requirements of the approval.
241
- 242 5. All decisions of the building principal relating to extraordinary educational
243 opportunities shall be final.
244
- 245 6. Students who are granted excusal from school to participate in extraordinary
246 educational opportunities are expected to share their experiences with other
247 students and/or school staff when they return.
248
- 249 7. Approval for an extraordinary educational opportunity is determined on a case-by-
250 case basis and the analysis of individualized factors. An opportunity approved for
251 one student may not be approved for another.
252
- 253 D. Truancy Exceptions:
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- 255 1. A student five (5) or six (6) years of age shall not be considered truant if the
256 parent or person having control over such student has appeared personally at the
257 school district office and exercised the option of not sending the child to school at
258 five (5) or six (6) years of age.
259

260 2. ~~A–~~ Until June 20, 2023, a student seventeen (17) years of age shall not be
261 considered truant if the parent or person having control over such student consents
262 to such student’s withdrawal from school. Such parent or person shall personally
263 appear at the school district office and sign a withdrawal form indicating such
264 consent. Such withdrawal form must include an attestation from a guidance
265 counselor or school administrator from the school that the district provided the
266 parent (or person having control of the child) with information on the educational
267 options available in the school system and community.

268
269 3. Beginning July 1, 2023, a student who is eighteen (18) years of age
270 or older may withdraw from school. Such student shall personally
271 appear in person at the school District office and sign a withdrawal
272 form. Such withdrawal form must include an attestation from a
273 guidance counselor or school administrator from the school that the
274 District provided such student with information on the educational
275 options available in the school system and community.

276
277 4. Beginning July 1, 2023, a student seventeen (17) years of age shall
278 not be considered truant if the parent or person having control over
279 such child withdraws such child from school and enrolls such child
280 in an adult education program pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-
281 69. Such parent or person shall personally appear at the school
282 District office and sign an adult education withdrawal and
283 enrollment form. Such adult education withdrawal and enrollment
284 form shall include an attestation (1) from a school counselor or
285 school administrator of the school that the District has provided
286 such parent or person with information on the educational options
287 available in the school system and in the community, and (2) from
288 such parent or person that such child will be enrolled in an adult
289 education program upon such child's withdrawal from school.

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291
292 3. If a parent or guardian of an expelled student chooses not to enroll the student in
293 an alternative program, the student shall not be considered to be “truant.”

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295 E. Readmission to School Following Voluntary Withdrawal

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297 1. Except as noted in paragraph 2 below, if a student voluntarily withdraws from
298 school (in accordance with Section ~~D.2,~~ E.2 or E.4. above) and subsequently

299 seeks readmission, the Board may deny school accommodations to the student for
300 up to ninety (90) school days from the date of the student’s withdrawal from
301 school.

302
303 2. If a student who has voluntarily withdrawn from school (in accordance with
304 Section ~~D.2.~~ E.2. or E.4. above) seeks readmission within ten (10) school days of
305 ~~his/her~~ the student’s withdrawal, the Board shall provide school accommodations
306 to the student not later than three (3) school days after the student requests
307 readmission.

308

309 F. Determinations of Whether a Student is “In Attendance”:

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311 1. A student serving an out of school suspension or expulsion shall be reported as
312 absent unless ~~he or she~~ the student receives an alternative educational program
313 for at least one half of the regular school day. In any event, the absence is
314 considered a disciplinary absence, and will not be designated as excused or
315 unexcused.

316

317 2. On early dismissal days and days shortened due to inclement weather, the regular
318 school day for attendance purposes is considered to be the amount of instructional
319 time offered to students on that day. For example, if school is open for four hours
320 on a shortened day scheduled, a student must be present for a minimum of two
321 hours in order to be considered “in attendance.”

322

323 3. Students placed on homebound instruction due to illness or injury in accordance
324 with applicable regulations and requirements are counted as being “in attendance”
325 for every day that they receive instruction from an appropriately certified teacher
326 for an amount of time deemed adequate in accordance with applicable law.

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328 G. Procedures for students in grades K-8*

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1. Notification

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- a. Annually at the beginning of the school year and upon the enrollment of any child during the school year, the administration shall notify the parent or other person having control of the student enrolled in grades K - 8 in writing of the obligations pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-184 to ensure that such a student attends school regularly or to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the District.

- b. Annually at the beginning of the school year and upon the enrollment of any child during the school year, the administration shall obtain from the parent or other person having control of the student in grades K-8 a telephone number or other means of contacting such parent or other person during the school day.

2. Monitoring

Each school shall implement a system of monitoring individual unexcused absences of students in grades K-8. Whenever such a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day, school personnel under the direction of the building principal [or ~~his/her~~ designee] shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or other person having control of such student by telephone and by mail of the student's absence, unless school personnel have received an indication that the parent or other person is aware of the student's absence. [Reasonable efforts shall include two (2) attempts to reach the parent or other person at the telephone number provided by the parent or other person. Such attempts shall be recorded on a form provided by the Superintendent.] Any person who, in good faith, gives or fails to give such notice shall be immune from liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such notice or failure to give notice.

361 [*Note: State law mandates notification and monitoring only with regard to
362 students in grades K-8. Boards of Education are free, however, to extend the
363 application of monitoring and intervention procedures to students at all grade
364 levels.]

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366 H. Procedures applicable to students ages five (5) to eighteen (18)

367 1. Intervention

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369 a. When a student is truant, the building principal or ~~his/her~~ designee shall
370 schedule a meeting with the parent (or other person having control of such
371 student) and appropriate school personnel to review and evaluate the reasons
372 for the student's truancy. This meeting shall be held no later than ten (10) days
373 after the student becomes truant. The district shall document the meeting, and
374 if parent or other person declines to attend the meeting, or is otherwise is non-
375 responsive, that fact shall also be documented and the meeting shall proceed
376 with school personnel in attendance.

377

378 b. When a student is truant, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall
379 coordinate services with and referrals of students to community agencies
380 providing child and family services, as appropriate. The district shall
381 document efforts to contact and include families and to provide early
382 intervention in truancy matters.

383

384 c. If the Commissioner of Education determines that any school under the
385 jurisdiction of Madison Board of Education (the "Board") has a
386 disproportionately high rate of truancy, the district shall implement in that
387 school a truancy intervention model identified by the Department of Education
388 pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-198e.

389

390 d. In addition to the procedures specified in subsections (a) through (c) above, a
391 regular education student who is experiencing attendance problems should be

392 referred to the building Child Study Team [or other appropriate school-based
393 team] to consider the need for additional interventions and/or assistance. The
394 Team will also consider whether the student should be
395 referred to a planning and placement team (“PPT”) meeting to review the
396 student’s need and eligibility for special education. A special education
397 student who is experiencing attendance problems should be referred to a PPT
398 meeting for program review.

399
400 e. Where the documented implementation of the procedures specified in
401 subsections (a) through (d) above does not result in improved outcomes
402 despite collaboration with the parent/guardian, the Superintendent or ~~his/her~~
403 designee may, with written parental consent, refer a student who is truant to a
404 Youth Service Bureau.

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406 I. Attendance Records

407
408 All attendance records developed by the Board shall include the individual
409 student’s state-assigned student identifier (SASID).

410

411 II. **Chronic Absenteeism**

412 A. Definitions for Section II

413 1. “Chronically absent child” - a child who is enrolled in a school under the
414 jurisdiction of the Board and whose total number of absences at any time
415 during a school year is equal to or greater than ten percent (10%) of the
416 total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school
417 during such school year;

418 2. “Absence” - an excused absence, unexcused absence or disciplinary
419 absence, as those terms are defined by the State Board of Education
420 pursuant to section 10-198b of the general statutes and these
421 administrative regulations;

422 3. “District chronic absenteeism rate” - the total number of chronically absent
423 children under the jurisdiction of the Board in the previous school year
424 divided by the total number of ~~children~~ students under the jurisdiction of
425 the Board for such school year; and

426 4. “School chronic absenteeism rate” - the total number of chronically absent
427 ~~children~~ students for a school in the previous school year divided by the
428 total number of ~~children~~ students enrolled in such school for such school
429 year.

430 B. Establishment of Attendance Review Teams

431 If the Board has a district chronic absenteeism rate of ten percent (10%) or
432 higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for the school district.

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434 If a school under the jurisdiction of the Board has a school chronic
435 absenteeism rate of fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an
436 attendance review team for that school.

437

438 If the Board has more than one school with a school chronic absenteeism rate
439 of fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team
440 for the school district or at each such school.

441

442 If the Board has a district chronic absenteeism rate of ten percent (10%) or
443 higher and one or more schools with a school chronic absenteeism rate of
444 fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team
445 for the school district or at each such school.

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447 C. Composition and Role of Attendance Review Teams

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449 Any attendance review team established under these regulations may include
450 school administrators, guidance counselors, school social workers, teachers,
451 representatives from community-based programs who address issues related to
452 student attendance by providing programs and services to truants, as defined
453 under I.A.79, and chronically absent ~~children- students~~ and their parents or
454 guardians.

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456 Each attendance review team shall be responsible for reviewing the cases of
457 truants and chronically absent ~~children- students~~, discussing school
458 interventions and community referrals for such truants and chronically absent
459 ~~children- students~~ and making any additional recommendations for such
460 truants and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians. Each
461 attendance review team shall meet at least monthly.

462
463 D. State Chronic Absenteeism Prevention and Intervention Plan

464
465 The Board and its attendance review teams, if any, will consider any chronic
466 absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State
467 Department of Education.

468
469 **III. Reports to the State Regarding Truancy Data**

470
471 Annually, each local and regional board of education shall include information
472 regarding the number of truants and chronically absent children in the strategic
473 school profile report for each school under its jurisdiction and for the school
474 district as a whole submitted to the Commissioner of Education. Measures of
475 truancy include the type of data that is required to be collected by the Department
476 of Education regarding attendance and unexcused absences in order for the
477 department to comply with federal reporting requirements and the actions taken
478 by the board of education to reduce truancy in the school district.

480 IV. Evolving State Department of Education and State Board of Education
481 Guidance

482
483 The Board will comply with any and all guidance issued by the State Department
484 of Education and/or State Board of Education regarding attendance requirements,
485 including during periods of remote learning. ~~blended learning, and regarding~~
486 ~~attendance requirements of students who choose not to participate.~~
487

488 Legal References:

489 Public Act No. 21-46

490 June Special Session, Public Act No. 21-2

491 Public Act No. 21-199

492 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220

493 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-184

494 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-186

495 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198a

496 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198b

497 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198c

498 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198d

499 Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198e

500 Guidelines for Reporting Student Attendance in the Public School Information
501 System (Connecticut State Department of Education, January 2008)

502 Connecticut State Board of Education Memorandum, *Definitions of Excused and*
503 *Unexcused Absences* (June 27, 2012)

504 Connecticut State Department of Education, *Guidelines for Implementation of the*
505 *Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences and Best Practices for Absence*
506 *Prevention and Intervention* (April 2013)
507
508
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- 522 Connecticut State Department of Education, *Reducing Chronic Absence in*
523 *Connecticut's Schools: A Prevention and Intervention Guide for Schools and*
524 *Districts* (April 2017)
525
526 Connecticut State Department of Education Memorandum, *Youth Service Bureau*
527 *Referral for Truancy and Defiance of School Rules* (February 22, 2018)
528
529 Connecticut State Department of Education, *Youth Service Bureau Referral Guide*
530 (February 2018)
531
532 ~~Connecticut State Department of Education, *Adapt, Advance, Achieve:*~~
533 ~~*Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together* (June 29, 2020), available at~~
534 ~~<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/COVID-19/CTReopeningSchools.pdf>~~
535