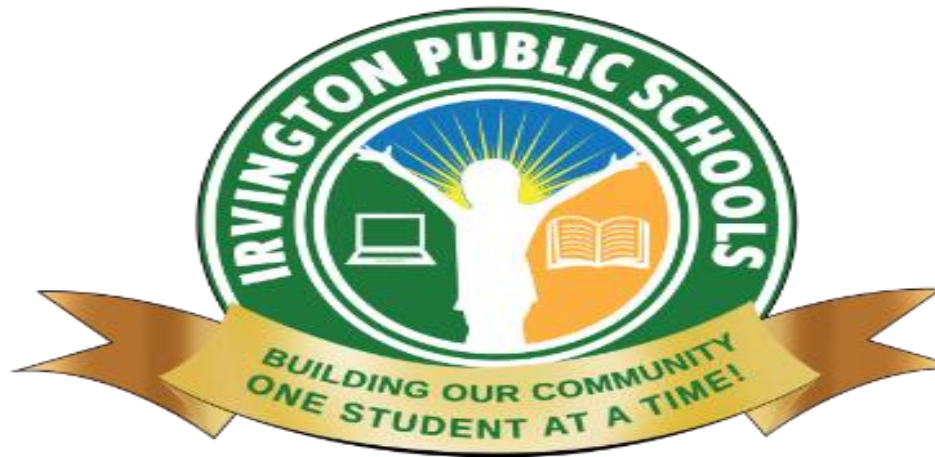


IRVINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS: OPENING PLAN FOR THE 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR



Dr. April Vauss
Superintendent of Schools

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2023-2024 Irvington Board of Education

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Mathematics K-5
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Berkeley Terrace School
Chancellor Avenue School
Florence Avenue School
University Elementary School
Grove Street Elementary School
Madison Avenue School
Mt. Vernon Avenue School
University Middle School
Thurgood Marshall School
Union Middle School
Irvington High School
Rita L. Owens STEAM Academy
Special Assignments

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

August 10, 2023

Dear Irvington Public Schools Stakeholders:

First, I want to thank you for your continued support. It takes parents, students, staff, and community members coming together to ascertain the normalcy during the last school year. Though the 2022-2023 SY presented some challenges, with your continued support, Irvington Public Schools was able to have our students present for learning in their respective school buildings. Our schools will continue to open for in-person learning for all students in the new school year. As we endeavor to prepare an educational environment that will remain conducive to learning, your engagement, and support are vital. I would be inattentive if I did not say that Irvington Public Schools will continue to rely on all stakeholders to ensure that our students are college and career ready.

It is impossible to elaborate on all of the details regarding our planning in this letter, but please know that we will continue to provide the healthiest and highest quality instructional environment feasible for our students before the first day of the 2023-2024 school year. We plan to follow the standards required to keep everyone in the school safe and healthy by following the New Jersey Department of Public Health Guidelines as well as guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the New Jersey State Department of Education.

As we continue with our plan for 100% in-person learning, please remember our priority is to provide our students with the opportunity to grow academically in an environment that is welcoming and conducive to learning. We continue to increase our cleaning and maintenance activities to promote the healthiest instructional environment possible.

I appreciate your cooperation and assure you that the Irvington Board of Education's staff will continue to work tirelessly to provide the best education for students. Irvington Public Schools thanks you for your support as we continue "Building our Community, One Student at a Time!"

Dr. April Vauss

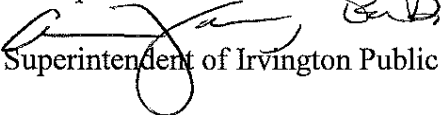

Superintendent of Irvington Public Schools

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Introduction

Irvington Public Schools: Reopening Plan- Recommended Procedures for the 2023-2024; and has been developed to be consistent with the requirements in the NJDOE Guidance with consideration to the school district's local needs in order to ensure school(s) in the district remain open to in-person learning.

To ensure consistency with respect to the health and safety of school communities across the State, the NJDOE Guidance speaks specifically to health and safety measures identified as "anticipated minimum standards." These "anticipated minimum standards" are items the NJDOE Guidance recommends a school district incorporate into the Plan as definite components related to health, safety, and operations. Through this established set of statewide standards, the NJDOE can ensure the State's educational health does not come at the expense of public health. The "anticipated minimum standards" in the NJDOE Guidance are listed and have been incorporated into the District Plan.

The NJDOE Guidance also provides "considerations" that may help school officials in strategizing ways to adhere to the "anticipated minimum standards". These "considerations" are not listed in the District Plan, but school officials have reviewed and incorporated these "considerations."

This plan is aligned with the requirements outlined in the NJDOE Guidance. Irvington Public Schools: Opening Plan- Recommended Procedures. Opening of Schools includes the school district's unique and locally developed protocols to ensure school in the district open safely for 100% in-person learning. There is no option for virtual learning in the new school year

The requirements outlined in the NJDOE Guidance and incorporated into this plan are controlled by Executive Orders of the Governor of New Jersey. The Superintendent of Schools reserves the right to modify all guidance based on current information from the governor's office, NJDOE/NJDOH, and the Irvington Township Health Department.

Plan Overview

All students will be back in school for full-time, in-person instruction for the start of the 2022-2023 school year; and a full-time remote learning will not be an option for families. School districts will be required to fully open buildings beginning September 6, 2022 for in-person instruction, and parents or guardians will not be able to opt children out of in-person instruction. However, remote learning will be permitted at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools and in consultation with the Local Health Department in the event that there is a localized outbreak or other emergency. Starting from September 7, 2022, students will attend schools daily and receive face-to-face instruction from their teachers. To be precise, there will be full entry for all students and staff, Monday through Friday.

Building Our Community, One Student at a Time:

Teachers are expected to be confident and positive:

- Teachers will continue to infuse Social Emotional Learning (SEL) into daily instruction in every classroom

- Teachers will prepare lessons and activities to ensure all student engagement

- Teachers will continue to infuse technology into daily instruction

- Teachers will take time to research effective instructional practices to address the diverse needs of our scholars.

- Teachers will continue to report different discipline issues or other problems that might occur in the classroom

- Teachers will share best practices during PLC and/or at staff meetings with fellow colleagues, and district administrators.

- Teachers will partner with colleagues, support staff, parents, principals, assistant principals, supervisors, and directors to support student instruction throughout the school year,

- Until further notice, teachers will continue to have students remain in rows, as opposed to the small groupings.,

Registration Process

In-person early registration will be available to parents/guardians. The district will work with community stakeholders to disseminate information regarding access to the registration process available through the Irvington Public School District Website, school buildings, and on local access radio.

A hyperlink to the registration portal is available on the Irvington Public School District Website with systematic instructions as to how to complete the online registration process.

- The proposed registration portal is an add-on module to the current PowerSchool Student Information System used by the district
- Registration documents can either be uploaded to the system or dropped off at each school building in an envelope
- Clearly identifying the name of the student and the date of registration
- In the case of direct registration at schools, parents/guardians will conduct it at the Home school
- Registration documents will be available in other native languages such as Spanish, and Haitian Creole

Attendance Recordings

For in-person instructional days, attendance must be recorded in PowerSchool by 10:30 a.m. However, daily attendance, absences and tardiness will be reviewed by the principals or designees and contact parents/guardians for updates on students. The following options have been considered:

- During instructional days, teachers will mark students present on a daily basis
- A “school day” shall consist of not less than four hours, except that one continuous session of two and one-half hours may be considered a full day of Kindergarten.
- If a student is going to be absent as a result of an emergency, parents will inform the school nurse and absences will be excused based on proper documentation

Curriculum

English Language Learners

ESL teachers and classroom teachers will continue to implement instructional strategies to address the academic and language needs of ELL students. In addition, supervisors, building administrators, and teachers will continue to collaborate with families to provide resources and tools to ensure the academic success of ELL students.

- ESL teachers will continue to provide in-person instruction to students
- ESL teachers will continue to adjust lessons accordingly to meet the needs of English Language Learners. Teachers will work to make the curriculum content comprehensible to students. They will focus on helping students develop in the areas of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing with specific focus placed on developing speaking skills

The district's website will continue to offer parents relevant resources/tools to support students at home. Information on the webpage is made available in multiple languages to meet the needs of our ELL population.

Special Education

Appropriate educational programs and related services will continue to be provided for students with disabilities. Teachers, support staff, and IEP teams will work with families to collaboratively identify the appropriate services for students. The special education department will provide training, resources, and tools to support IEP teams in determining the needed services for all students.

Special education services for students will occur full-time in-person based on collaboration with families and as per the students' IEP. General education/special education teachers and related service providers will work with families to discuss students' individual needs and access to the curriculum and progress toward IEP goals. General education and special education teachers will meet in-person using the tools/resources provided by the district.

The special education department will continue to work with families to conduct IEP meetings. The case managers and IEP team members will continue to contact parents and monitor special education services to determine progress toward a student's IEP goals.

Physical Education / Recess

The Irvington Public Schools will continue to adhere to the following protocols:

- Stagger the use of playground equipment and establish a frequent disinfecting protocol for all playground equipment used by students
- Students may be encouraged to wear comfortable clothing and safe footwear to school that allows for safe movement
- The school district will mitigate risk associated with sharing of equipment. Per NJDOH guidelines, all equipment must be sanitized after use.
- Plans for storage of backpacks during physical education class shall be in the locker rooms.

Athletics Department Management Protocols

- It is the athletic department's expectation that the entire athletic community be responsible for the health and wellbeing of every stakeholder-staff, students and their families. With that expectation comes the responsibility of Student-Athletes, Coaches, Athletic Trainers, Screeners, Administrations, and within the continuum of resocialization
- If the requirements as set by New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA), the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), and the New Jersey Department of Health are not met, the student-athlete will lose the privilege of being able to participate in the session and not be allowed to return until the official start date of their season
- The program that violates the guidelines will not be allowed to practice for the session
- All parents, athletes and coaches must sign the district's waiver prior to participating in athletic activities
- All parents and athletes must sign and submit the NJSIAA's updated health history form prior to participating in athletic activities
- Administration is responsible for communicating with parents, students, staff, and the Irvington Township Department of Health in the event of an infection
- Parents must get medical clearance for their child to continue participating in any of the Athletics program
- The Director of Athletics will be notified of any student-athlete or coach who fails the screening and further plans will be developed at that time if necessary

- In the event a student-athlete, coach or staff member does not comply with the NJSIAA protocols, they will no longer participate in any of the programs.

Limitations on Gatherings

- No limitation on gatherings for an event.

Facilities Cleaning

- All facilities shall be cleaned and sanitized at all times
- Hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes may be available for individual use

Face Coverings

- Face coverings are no longer required in the district
- Face Masks are no longer part of the entrance requirement for practices and games.

Training Room

- Social distancing and face coverings are no longer required for all staff and students while inside the training room
- All areas must be cleaned and sanitized in accordance with CDC and EPA guidelines.
- No other individuals should be present in the training room except for the athletic trainer, the student receiving treatment, and one medical witness.

Equipment/Storage Rooms

- Social distancing and face coverings are no longer required for all staff and students while inside the equipment storage room

Social and Emotional Learning

The district is committed to the well-being of all students, staff, and families. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) will continue to be infused in to the instruction in every classroom district-wide. The following strategies will be practiced for the school year:

- Mindfulness exercises will continue to be implemented
- Integrated Social and Emotional classroom lessons (shared ideas for the counseling department)
- Consistent check-ins by school social workers and school counselors
- Individual and Group counseling sessions facilitated by school counselors
- Counseling and mental health resources provided to families, as needed
- Professional development for staff to promote the SEL and mental wellness
- Teachers prepare and plan a series of student academies that will provide a platform for students to share their experiences; thus, providing support staff with the opportunity to respond appropriately
- Schools will continue to partner with outside agencies and colleges to deal with overwhelming emotion in the moment during and after school hours. The idea is to provide a safe space for students to decompress and regroup. There will be follow up from a school counselor to ensure SEL and mental wellness.

Academic, Social and Behavior Supports

Multi-tiered Support Systems - All schools will continue to provide the following support systems for students' academic development and social growth: RTI, I&RS, PBSIS, Counseling Support Services; as well as universal screenings if needed. To support all students' academic, social, emotional, and behaviors, teachers will use positive dialogue starters to elicit students' responses and provide appropriate dialogue to support and engage students in the process of learning content and class discussions (identify students in need and provide support).

- Developmental expectations: Language abilities of students based on age, Non-verbal communication (drawing versus writing)
- Engage trusted staff in the school community as per students and families request to support students' social and emotional needs
- Build capacity of staff to recognize students' needs, and seek support for them (professional development training)

Providing for the social, behavioral, emotional, and mental health needs of the students and families will include flexibility to accommodate the different circumstances of families and students.

Developmental Needs

The Intervention Committee is convened for students identified as potentially at risk of harm to self or others. Parents/Families are immediately notified of any concerns. The district's Suicide and Prevention and Crisis Intervention policy will remain the same for the school year 2023- 2024. The following teams are in

operation in every school to support students, teachers, and families:

- School Threat Assessment Team
- School Safety Team
- PBSIS Team
- SCIP Team

Restorative Practice: Restorative justice in schools will continue to be practiced. Building administrators will continue to receive professional development training to create and maintain positive and respectful relationships within the school community. This is a district-wide initiative to enhance communication throughout the schools, and to establish a pro-social school environment during the school year.

Mental Health Supports

School Counselors are preparing for the 2023-2024 SY with a variety of wellness initiatives and mindfulness programs to support initiatives that are already in place within the schools. We recognize the importance of relationships and safe spaces for our students and staff. For the 2023-2024 school year, procedures will continue to be implemented for students to access services without undue attention to self. Check-ins for students identified at higher levels of risk; proactive efforts by all staff to identify students in need of intervention. The Intervention Committee is convened for students identified as potentially at risk of harm to self or others. Parents are immediately notified of any concerns. Levels of risk are assessed, and if a student is found in need, mental health clearance is required for re-entry to school.

School Threat Assessment Team

The purpose of a threat assessment team is to provide school teachers, administrators, and other staff with assistance in identifying students with behaviors of concern, assessing those students' risk for engaging in violence or other harmful activities, and delivering intervention strategies to manage the risk of harm for students who pose a potential safety risk. The Threat Assessment Teams' purpose is also to prevent targeted violence in the school and to ensure a safe and secure school environment that enhances the learning experience for all members of the school community. Each Threat Assessment team must be multidisciplinary in membership and, to the extent possible, include the following individuals:

- School principal or Asst. Principal
- School psychologist or Behavioral specialist,
- School counselor,
- HSSC or other school employee with expertise in student counseling;
- Teaching staff member;
School Resource Officer
- Security Officer; and
Parent Coordinator or a Dean

Technology

Technology

- Assistance and information will continue to be provided on how to make free internet connectivity accessible to students and teachers in need
- The district will continue with the 1:1 device initiative.
- District is implementing a 2:1 device initiative upon request by parents/guardians
- Videos that provide systematic procedures on using technology are available on the District website
- Help-line is available for Technical assistance to students, teachers, and parents at 1-973-399-6800 ext. 1800
- Resources will be available in many languages

Assessment

Early Childhood Assessment

- Students will be assessed during in-class and live instruction to identify their knowledge, skills, and abilities and to plan for instructional decisions using Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment
- Multiple sources of student data will be used to evaluate student performance, such as class anecdotes, work samples, students' portfolios, photos of virtual activities, parents' photos or videos of home activities, etc.
- Regardless of the lesson, accommodations must be made for ELLs and Special Education students

K-12 Schools

- All schools will continue to follow the Board approved testing schedule as outlined in the 2023-2024 Assessment Handbook

Social Distancing in Schools

Physical distancing

Though this is no longer required, however, the arrows and markers on the floors, hallways, and walls will not be removed for safety purposes especially when transitioning between periods.

Entering the Building

- Students report to their respective homeroom/classrooms rather than gyms, cafeterias or other meeting places
- Conspicuously post signs on the walls for messaging traffic flow

Students

- Students will enter the building through their designated grade level entrance
- Students will report to their grade level floor
- Students will flow in one direction in the hallway

Teachers/Staff

- The use of common space will continue to be allowed

Visitors

- All visitors will be allowed into the building to conduct official matters
- Visitors will enter the school building only through the main entrance
- Visitors will announce their business before being allowed into the building. Once a visitor enters the building, he/she must wait for the security guard's direction to sign-in; and gets further direction

Rest Time (Early Childhood Only)

- Masks will continue to be prohibited for students during rest time
- Students' bedding for rest time will continue to be stored separately and sent home weekly for washing

Breakfast/Lunch (Early Childhood Only)

- Meals will be served in the classroom using individually wrapped and/or plated meals
- Students will use proper hand washing before and after eating meals/snacks, and all tables/surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected between before and after meals

Distancing in the Classroom (K-12 Only)

- Students will continue to receive instruction as scheduled in their assigned classrooms, Administrator and security will continue to monitor the hallways, and teachers will continue to stand outside their classroom doors to welcome students

Bathroom Procedures

- Students should only be released from classroom one at a time
- Students must sign-in with a security guard to utilize the restroom

Elementary:

- Depending on the size of the bathroom. Only half the capacity based on stalls determine the number of students in a given bathroom. If students enter a bathroom filled to capacity, they must wait until someone leaves before proceeding
- All students must follow the Health & Safety guidelines

Lockers

- Students will be allowed to use their lockers.

Dismissal Procedures

Elementary/Middle:

- Students will have a staggered dismissal by grade level
- Teachers and security guards will ensure the proper movement through the building and off school grounds
- Parents with cars must line up on a designated side of the building in an orderly manner

High School:

- Students will have a staggered dismissal
- Teachers, staff and security will ensure the proper movement through the building and off school grounds

Fire/Emergency Drills

- Drills will continue to be practiced every month (1 Fire/1 Emergency)
- Lockdown procedures require students to gather in a safe, non-visible location
- Refer to each school's individual Emergency Manual

School Closure

- The Superintendent of Schools in collaboration with other Government agencies will determine the school closure and length of time if the need arises

Transportation of Students to and from School

- The safety and welfare of pupils shall be the first consideration in all matters pertaining to transportation
- The Special-Services Department will communicate transportation protocols with families prior to the start of the school year
- Regularly clean high touch surfaces on the school buses daily

Prior to Boarding the Bus

- Parents should assist their child in following bus safety guidelines
- Parents are strongly encouraged to keep students at home if they are sick

Seating on the Bus

- Contracted transportation providers shall be required to clean and sanitize seats, rails and highly touched surfaces before each run. The district shall collaborate with the contracted service provider to develop these procedures and ensure that they are consistently followed.

School Bus Safety:

- All school buses must be inspected according to the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Administration Regulations relating to school vehicle standards and follow all CDC and NJDOE safety measures prior to transporting students
- Thorough school vehicle cleaning must become routine and cleaned after the bus drops off students at home or school (every trip); and at the completion of its morning or afternoon run respectively
- All school bus drivers and staff are required to attend in-service training before transporting students to ensure they understand policies and procedures; and how to effectively clean and disinfect the school vehicle

Professional Development

The district acknowledges that professional development is key to teachers' growth and positive student outcomes. Continuous professional development to support quality in-person educational instruction will be provided for teachers and support staff throughout the 2023-2024 school year.

- Plan restorative supports and access professional learning offerings around trauma, equity and implicit bias, Social Emotional Learning, inclusion, and appropriate use of digital and online learning tools and systems
- Provide PD on best practices for teaching and learning; engage in conversation about the individualized student plans and needs
- The goal of professional development will continue to include providing high quality, evidence-based professional learning practices to educators

Faculty & Department Meetings

- Tuesdays from 3:00-4:00 p.m.
- Special Services Floating School Psychologist will continue to provide trauma-informed school strategies in response to SEL and Mental health to all Irvington Public Schools. This includes offering information on the physical and emotional well-being of staff, assisting in creating trauma-informed learning environments, and identifying, assessing, and addressing traumatic stress in the school setting including professional development
- Care Plus will be available for trauma informed workshops

Specialized and After-School PD Services

- Provide training for parents, students, and staff related to managing stress, anxiety, depression, trauma, etc. made available through the Floating School Psychologist and Care Plus-- trauma designated staff
- The Department of Special Services will provide training on conducting IEP meetings to discuss Regression/Recoupment/Compensatory Services for all students with Special Needs
- "Social Express" an SEL program for PK-5 students will be available for Special Education staff and students
- Professional development will be provided to new teachers through the District's Teacher Mentoring program. Activities will include the use of technology and addressing the SEL needs of students.

Role of the Nurse

- Nurse will contact the parents/guardians and send the child home if they are not feeling well
- The Nurse's office will continue to be cleaned to prevent the spread of any disease

Hygiene and Cleaning

- Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation
- The district will continue use of its established cleaning/disinfecting schedules. Methods and materials to be used are contained in a procedure manual posted on the District website.
- The district will continue to sanitize bathrooms daily, or between use
- The district will continue to clean shared surfaces regularly

General Sanitation Practice

- Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. This will include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops).
- Playground equipment must be cleaned between groups
- Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label. For disinfection most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.)
- Ensure adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfection practices
- External community organizations that use school facilities must follow district guidance on health and safety protocols

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

- The district will continue to prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) or other approved sanitizers, when and where appropriate.
- Children ages five and younger will continue to be supervised when using hand sanitizer. In classrooms that have existing handwashing stations, stations will continue to be prepared with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) or other approved sanitizers, when and where appropriate.
- The district will continue the use of the hand washing and respiratory etiquette requirements.

Regular hand washing with soap and water should be done:

- Before eating
- After sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing
- After using the bathroom
- Before handling the food

Respiratory Hygiene

- Covering coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of elbow
- Disposing of soiled tissues immediately after use

General Sanitation Practices (Early Childhood Only)

- Toys and/or materials placed in a student's mouth or that become soiled must be placed in a contaminated bin and cleaned and sanitized before use again

Handwashing (Early Childhood Only)

- Students will wash hands at regular intervals, including before/after meals, after using the bathroom, after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing, and at the start of the day when children enter the classroom, and when students come in from outdoor play

Security Protocols

Visitors:

- Visitors are allowed to conduct business in the schools
- Visitors do not need an appointment in order to enter the building

Parent/Teacher/Guidance Meetings:

- This will continue to be done in-person, however, parents have the option of virtual or phone meetings with school personnel

Deliveries:

- All deliveries will continue to be made through custodial doors only

Early Dismissal:

- Early dismissal will continue to be allowed as the need arises

Physical Modifications to Buildings:

- A. Signage in the buildings (Principals should coordinate with maintenance as to where and how many)
- B. Playground lineup, a.m. waiting areas, bus pick up, dismissal needs will continue to be monitored for safety purposes
- C. Classroom table/desk spacing needs to be configured to allowed collaboration among students during daily instruction

Field Trips, Extra-Curricular Activities, and Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours

Irvington Public Schools will:

- Have field trips and extracurricular activities in-person.
- Have virtual field trip experiences to compliment in-person activities, when necessary
- Offer afternoon extracurricular activities to students in-person
- Use in-person by school sponsored groups and clubs

In order to ensure proper cleaning of the district facilities and protect the students and staff from undue exposure to other groups, Irvington Public Schools will host gatherings after school hours.

- Events that typically draw multiple families such as Back to School Nights, Parent Teacher Conferences will be conducted in-person and in a virtual/remote format to increase participation
- Student performances that are part of a co-curricular activity may be held in-person in accordance with guidance from Arts Ed NJ. Outdoor performances will also be allowed in accordance with regulations governing outdoor activities

In order to ensure proper cleaning of the district facilities and protect the students and staff from undue exposure to other groups, Irvington Public Schools will continue to regulate and monitor the use of school facilities to outside groups; and shall be approved by the Superintendent of Schools

References

- National Association for School Nurses Return to School Guidelines (2020):
- National Transportation Supervisor Task Force
- NJ Department of Health publications
- NJSIAA Protocols
- The Road Back: Restart and Recovery Plan for Education (2020)
- NJDOE School Reopening Frequently Asked Questions
- The Road Forward-Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year