

## **School Re-Opening Plan**

Submitted: 5/12/2020

**Agency Name:** Gateway-Longview, Lynde School

**BEDS Code:** 140203997682

**Administrative Address:** 10 Symphony Circle, Buffalo NY 14201

**Program Site Address:** 6350 Main Street, Williamsville NY 14221

**Program(s) provided at this site:**

- 4410 (Pre-school Special Education
  - Special Class
  - Special Class in an Integrated Setting
  - Multi-Disciplinary Evaluations
- 853 (School Age Special Education)
- Other:

**Contact Person (Name, Title):** Allison Newman, Chief Operating Officer

**Contact Phone Number:** 716.783.3263

**Contact Email Address:** tgirard@gateway-longview.org

**Website where this plan and any plan updates will be posted:**

<https://www.gateway-longview.org/lyndeschool>

### **INTRODUCTION**

This plan was developed to conform to the guidance provided by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) in their July, 2020, document entitled: *Recovering, Rebuilding, and Renewing: The Spirit of New York's Schools – Reopening Guidance*. This plan will be revised and updated as needed to adjust to changing public health conditions caused by the COVID-19 virus and all of the new requirements and regulations which may emerge over time. We solicited input and involvement from the families we serve and our staff and unions during the drafting of our re-opening plan. We will rely on continued input from all stakeholders as we move forward implementing this plan and as we contemplate any additions or modifications.

We know our program must be as flexible and as responsive as possible to the needs of our students, families, and staff members. We will closely monitor the conditions of our community as the COVID 19 pandemic continues and the effectiveness and appropriateness of our plan. Be assured that nothing has changed our sincere commitment to our students and our determination to provide the highest possible

quality of educational programming and related services even during these difficult times.

The goal of the plan is to guide the delivery of high-quality educational services as safely as possible whether that service delivery is in-person, through a remote learning platform or a blended combination of remote and in-person services. Our focus and concerns extend to the social and emotional needs of our students, families and staff members. By diligently working together and remaining focused on the outcomes we desire, we can find solutions to the many challenges ahead.

Our plan includes all the required elements identified by NYSED and follows the structure of the guidance by addressing the following areas as they apply to our students with disabilities and their families:

1. Communication/Family and Community Engagement
2. Health and Safety
3. Facilities
4. Nutrition
5. Transportation
6. Social Emotional Well-Being
7. School Schedules
8. Budget and Fiscal
9. Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism
10. Technology and Connectivity
11. Teaching and Learning
12. Career and Technical Education
13. Athletics and Extra Curricular Activities
14. Special Education
15. Staffing
16. Teacher and Principal Evaluation System
17. Student Teaching

Any suggestions, concerns and/or questions about our plan should be directed to the contact person identified at the beginning of this document.

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## **A. COMMUNICATION/FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

1. What participants involved in the Reopening Plan's creation and may be involved in any possible future revisions

The plan was developed with the assistance of all school administrators, Nursing, Teachers, Para-professionals, and related service staff through their unions. Parents were surveyed online and through direct contact with counseling staff for their concerns and ideas regarding reopening. Agency administration provided input and ensured the plan was consistent with the overall agency plan.

Public schools were consulted regarding the plan regarding coordinating the services offered to students and families.

2. Moving forward how do you plan to consistently communicate with and provide information to each of the following groups?

- The plan will be published on our web site and informational letters will be sent by the postal service and electronically to all families regarding the expectations of reopening for the school. A link to the school web site will allow them to review the entire plan. Ongoing changes to the plan will be communicated via email letters and through direct communication through school counselors and social workers assigned to each family. Students will also get updates through the Google School email system. Signage has been placed around the school building directing visitors and parents to a single entry point. The signage will also inform parents and visitors not to enter if they affirm any COVID-19 medical protocols and/or screening questions along with reminders to wear PPE are placed around the school. All students will receive in class training the first day of school regarding all of the school's changed expectations regarding social distancing, PPE and hand washing. All staff are required to wear facial coverings according to the CDC and DOH guidelines unless safety or instructional issues may not allow the wearing of facial coverings. The Coordinator of Safety Plan is the Chief Operating Officer. Points of contact with the parents will be delegated to the Principal of the school and the Director of Health Services depending on the nature of the question and the person best able to answer. We will use the Director of Health Services to coordinate with the local health officials our response to any exposures and consult with them regarding staying open or reopening.

Staff will all receive training in August before the start of school regarding the reopening standards and the use of PPE, social distancing and how students are to be screened prior to entry into the school.

3.+ 4. Describe how you will ensure that all students are taught or trained how to follow each of the following COVID-19 protocols safely and correctly

- The first day students are in-person they will each be taught the appropriate hands washing procedures, how to use PPE and what social distancing means to them in school. Continued updates and training will be provided as needed. We will cover the changes in class scheduling and meals necessitated to keep them safe and reemphasize the importance of everyone wearing masks. Developmentally appropriate instruction will occur in all of these areas. The students will be provided with incentives for safe behavior and if unable to wear a mask due to health issues will be given examples of how to socially distance for

safety. They will also receive instruction on how to cover their face when sneezing or coughing even while wearing a mask. Signs with pictorial clues will be in each class hallway and bathroom.

5. Copies of the plan are available on the web site and we will inform parents, copies will be available to any parent who requests one. Translations into alternate languages will be facilitated via commercial translation services on an as needed basis.

6. School Counselors will be able to read and explain the Reopening Plan to any families with visual or hearing impairments during regular communication with parents and students.

## **B. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

*NOTE: Students and staff will return to in-person instruction only when governmental authorities permit in-person education. Additionally any return to in-person instruction will necessitate that the school's leadership also determines the number of students and staff allowed to return in-person based on: the ability to maintain social distancing; the availability of PPE, including the availability of cloth face coverings and face masks; availability of safe transportation; local hospital capacity according to the local Department of Health*

1. Staff will all receive training regarding the reopening standards and the use of PPE, social distancing and how students are to be screened prior to entry into the school. They will be familiar with the warning signs of illness and who to report concerns to regarding a student's health.

2. Students. Students arrive in three ways. On the bus, walking over from the living unit and via parent drop off. All students on bus transportation or arriving from an on campus living unit will be screened before entering the school by transportation staff or school staff. Parent drop offs are all routed to the front entrance of the building where the screening process will be done before they are allowed access to the rest of the building. Screening will be by use of the questionnaire and a temperature check. Faculty/ Staff Entrances and Exits. Faculty enter and exit from several entrances but are all required to be screened by the school nursing staff before reporting to their assignment. They will review the screening questions and have their temperature taken. Anyone who fails the screening will be asked to leave the building immediately and consult with their physician and Human Resources. The staff are required to wear facial coverings and maintain social distancing as they are being checked. Hand sanitizer is immediately available in all of these entry and exit points

3. Nursing staff will assist in making a decision on ill students or staff when available. Other staff screeners will be trained and are also available. Nursing staff will contact the family immediately for the ill student to be transported home. All students and staff who fail the screening will be required to provide follow-up with a medical professional before returning to school.

4. All students, faculty, employees, visitors and vendors will be required to have a body temperature screening at a designated location before entry to the school. If their body temperature is at or above 100 degrees Fahrenheit, they will be sent home immediately or in the case of students, will be sent to the nurses' office Exam Room 2 to wait to be picked up and given instructions to follow up with their health care provider for assessment and testing. Employees will also need to follow up with Human Resources. Visitors will be turned away at the door and advised to seek medical attention.

5. Anyone entering the building will be screened at the front door single entry point using the same criteria with the screenings and temperature checks. See above.

6. The Director of Health Services sent home a letter to each family explaining the COVID symptoms and requesting that they screen and check their own child before sending them to school. Families are requested to note the screening on the daily note that passes between the school and the family.

7. Signage is placed in every bathroom and in every hallway in the school and on every outside door reminding students, staff and visitors of the importance of hand washing, sanitizing and respiratory hygiene.

8. Students and staff will be reminded by visual cues placed in all hallway areas to remain 6 Feet apart and to wear their face coverings. Floor decals will be placed in areas where staff and students congregate as visual reminders to follow social distancing protocols.

9. Students at high risk or who live with others at high risk will be educated via remote learning for as long as the health situation warrants it. Parents must notify the school of this in writing. Staff at high risk or living with those at high risk will meet with Human Resources regarding their options for various statutory and voluntary leaves available.

10. All staff, parents, visitors and students will be required to wear face masks or shields during the school day. Students with documented medical or mental health issues may use social distancing as an alternative.

11. Students will be allowed to take a mask break once every 20 minutes on average. Some of the primary students may need more frequent breaks as they become used to the practice of wearing masks in school.

12. Our school has been ordering masks from a wide variety of sources since the pandemic began. We have 7500 cloth masks and 3500 disposable mask currently for a school population of 186 students. We have gloves, face shields, and gowns available in large quantities. We continue to monitor the supply usage monthly so we can keep a 3 month supply available.

13. The local Health Department will be notified of all Positive Cases and we will engage in regular consultation regarding the status of school buildings being safe for staff and students. We will be prepared to transition to virtual and distance learning if a temporary closure is determined to be necessary. The local DOH will be notified by the Vice President of Human Resources of any positive cases involving staff. The Director of Health Services will notify the DOH of any cases involving students.

Tracing Support. Using class schedules and attendance data the school will assist in contact tracing all possible contacts with an infected person while maintaining confidentiality required under HIPPA and FERPA. Notice of who tested positive will not be shared in order to assure confidentiality. All senior school and agency leadership will be aware of an exposure incident. All staff, students, parents and guardians who had close proximate contact will be informed of the possible exposure.

14. The COVID -19 safety coordinator (Chief Operating Officer or designee) will ensure that the reopening is being done in accordance with the school reopening plan. The safety coordinator will coordinate the response from the County DOH, faculty, school medical staff, custodians and Maintenance departments.

15. Cleaning and Disinfection Following Suspected or Confirmed COVID 19 Case. If a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 occurs the areas of contact with the individual will be closed off until properly cleaned and disinfected. If possible a waiting time of 24 hours will be done. The custodial staff and Maintenance staff will move to disinfect per CDC guidelines including using a mister to cleanse airborne particles. Outside air will be introduced as feasible. If the possible areas of contamination can be isolated school could resume the next day if the County Health Department is in agreement. It is most likely that the school will be closed for at least 24 hours to ensure everything is disinfected and all notifications to families and close contacts are completed. Immediately after disinfection and cleaning the area can be reopened to those who did not have close and proximate contact with the person suspected of having COVID 19.

16. Safety drills will be conducted with same frequency as required by NYSED. The students and staff will drill for evacuations by class instead of the school as a whole. Students will be required to wear masks and maintain social distancing during the drills. The faculty classroom staff and administration will conduct the fire drills room by room so all students will become familiar with the evacuation plans. Safety drills such as lockdowns will be conducted school wide. The students will be instructed on where to place themselves out of sight during a real safety crisis. During the drill itself they will be instructed to remain in their socially distant position at their desk. Drill conductors will ask students to identify the safe place they would shelter during a real crisis.

17. We will operate no before or after school programs at this time. Intramurals will not be offered in-person during the school year. In-person after school tutoring will be permitted for educational purposes.

18. Allison Newman, Chief Operating Officer, 716-783-3263, is the COVID-19 safety coordinator of Gateway-Longview, Lynde School selected to be responsible for continuous compliance with all aspects of the school's reopening plan, as well as any phased-in reopening activities necessary to allow for operational issues to be resolved before activities return to normal or "new normal" levels.

19. Health related considerations:

a) Lydia Nizinkiewicz, Director of Health Services (716) 783-3100 x 3305 is the COVID-19 Resource Person for the school and agency. Email: [lnizinkiewicz@gateway-longview.org](mailto:lnizinkiewicz@gateway-longview.org).

b) Visitors for educational purposes such as parents, school district, DSS and other official visitors, will be screened in the same manner as staff. Intake appointments will be done remotely and in-person if possible after school hours, with mandatory mask wearing and screenings.

c,d,e) Written communication has been prepared for each family requesting that they screen each child before they leave for school. We have asked for them to sign off on the daily communication note to document the screening. Explanations of the screenings process will also be delivered in-person by the school counseling staff assigned to each student. All residential students are screened by nursing staff before they leave the living unit. All designated screeners will have access to appropriate PPE including face shields and gloves. They will ensure social distancing of staff and students standing in line to be screened, perform a self-test to ensure the touchless thermometer is working appropriately and self-assess. We will provide privacy as much possible to individuals being tested. Day students will be

screened when they arrive at school off of the buses or when dropped off by family members. Social distancing markers through signs and floor markings and additional staff will be present to ensure the screening is done safely and quickly and the students move to designated classroom to maintain social distancing.

- f) All students will be required to wear cloth face coverings at all times except when eating meals, when they are social distanced, or if there is a medical, behavioral or mental health reason they cannot. We expect that compliance with this expectation will be difficult and we will help students comply. Students will be offered occasional breaks to go outside or to another remote space to remove their masks safely.
- g) All school health personnel will wear PPE when assessing ill students. Student's parents and personal physicians will be consulted for alternatives to nebulizer treatments in school if necessary. If nebulizer treatments are required they will be conducted by nursing staff wearing N-95 masks or their equivalent in closed room which will be cleaned and disinfected immediately after the treatment.
- h) Any student or staff that develops COVID-19 symptoms will be taken to the Lynde School Health Services office Exam Room 2.
- i) Exam Room 1 will be available for routine nursing treatments and to administer medications.
- j) The School Health Office has more than adequate supplies of disposable gowns, gloves, KN-95 masks and disposable masks to treat students and staff based on the NYSED work sheets.
- k) Custodial Staff are all required to wear PPE whenever working except break periods. PPE for the custodial staff, including cleaners and members of the Maintenance Team, is available at all sites.
- l) Each class is being supplied with their own cleaning supplies based on a checklist which includes paper towels, gloves, disinfectant sprays and wipes.
- m) Lydia Nizinkiewicz, Director of Health Services, (716) 783-3100 x 3305, is the COVID-19 Resource Person for the school and agency. Email: [lnizinkiewicz@gateway-longview.org](mailto:lnizinkiewicz@gateway-longview.org). She is a Registered Nurse and oversees both school programs. She has been involved in the plan and contribute to the development of procedures. She will be the main contact for any student or staff issues. Most importantly, she will be in contact with the local DOH regarding opening and closing issues.

### **C. FACILITIES**

1. The school has reconfigured classrooms to allow for social distancing. The classes are for 6 students only with 2 staff and are able to accommodate that number in the classroom space. Rooms using tables for student groupings have been replaced by desks. The cafeteria will not be used for student meals and that space may be used to allow for more social distancing for group counseling or individual instruction. The Media Center will be used for any small group meetings so social distancing is possible.
2. All changes are within all building codes, NYSED, OCFS safety and fire codes and regulations.
3. The Emergency Plans themselves will remain the same but the mechanism for Drills during the COVID emergency are changed to reflect the need to maintain social distance during drills and evacuations. Building-wide drills will be staggered to maintain social distancing between classes/cohorts. Once outside classes will remain 6 feet apart. When we do lockdowns we will have students remain in their desks and they will be asked if they know where they should go in the class if it was not a drill. We have put the drill changes in writing for the crisis period. Staff will receive guidance before the return of students for the new school year.
4. Schedules for class changes will be minimized. Cohorts of students at all levels will be kept together as much as feasible. Primary and elementary classes will stay in separate cohorts together. Meals will be picked up by classroom staff and delivered to each classroom. Class changes will be required to labs, gym or outside areas but by minimizing the changes social distancing will be easier to maintain. Residential students will be kept together in cohorts based on their living units as long as those cohorts meet the age and academic requirements of IDEA. Those cohorts will travel together in 2 minute time increments.
5. School interior doors will all remain open as they are equipped with automatic closures in case of fire. Windows in the classrooms will be opened twice a day minimally to increase air flow to the classrooms.
6. Plastic dividers have been installed around high traffic areas such as the school reception desks. Most areas have physical barriers already present. In classrooms we will insist on masks and desk positioning. Students that cannot wear masks for physical or mental health reasons will use cubby desks as a physical barrier.
7. We have determined that we have adequate hand washing facilities in the school. All Preschool and two primary classes, technology, science labs, art rooms and

Home and Careers are equipped with hand washing facilities in the classrooms. All other classes have hand washing facilities within 100 feet of the class.

8. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been installed in certain areas of the school for several years primarily for staff use. 7 additional hand sanitizer dispensers were installed in high traffic public areas of the school hallways. Students under supervision and staff have immediate access to these in addition to the preferred hand washing facilities.
9. There are no additional dividers installed around the school. We are providing visual cues in hallways where students line up that will help ensure spacing 6 ft. apart. We are also using the visual cues outside on the sidewalk spaced 6 ft. apart.
10. Drinking fountains will all be turned off at the school. Water will be maintained in plastic pitchers in each classroom and refilled as needed. Each classroom will keep a supply of disposable cups to be used in place of the drinking fountains. In addition students will be allowed to bring in empty personal water bottles from home which they will be allowed to fill and keep with them during the day.
11. Ventilation will be increased by opening the windows in each classroom minimally twice a day to increase air flow.
12. New air filters with a higher filtering HEPA rating have been installed throughout the building. The heating and cooling system has been reconfigured to draw more outside air into the building rather than recirculate the inside air.

#### **D. NUTRITION**

1. We will provide breakfast and lunch to all students who choose to eat during their school attendance. Residential students will continue to be served all meals through the centralized kitchen. Day and preschool students engaged in remote learning due to COVID-19 will be directed to their home school district site for meals that are readily available.
2. Food as always will be prepared in the central kitchen. Kitchen staff will continue to follow all sanitary guidelines for the safe preparation and serving of food including the use of gloves while serving the food. Additionally, kitchen staff must wear masks while preparing the food for students. Meal orders will be taken daily based on a limited menu of choices for breakfast and lunch. Meals will be prepared by the kitchen staff and picked up by the classroom aide or teacher and brought back to student homerooms.

3. Children with severe food allergies who cannot be around known allergens will eat separately in another room away from others if the meal being served contains known allergens.
4. Student meals will be individually dished up by kitchen staff in separate individual disposable containers by cohort. Classroom staff will pick up the meals and deliver them to each student. Utensils are individually wrapped and will be disposed of with the containers after meals are complete. Students are also allowed to bring and eat their own meals from home.
5. Students will sit at their desks and eat their meals to ensure social distancing while masks are taken off to eat breakfast and lunch.
6. All students will wash their hands before and after eating any meals to ensure appropriate hygiene. In some cases hand sanitizer will be used as a substitute for hand washing before and after the meals.
7. No family style meals will be served during the school day. Students will be instructed that sharing food cannot be allowed during the current health crisis.
8. Our school is in compliance with the Child Nutrition Program standards as a SFA. All meals meet the nutritional requirements under the guidelines and we use dietician approved menus that are published to families monthly on our web site.
9. Any family who needs translation services for any reason including meals and nutrition are communicated with their own language. Either bilingual staff or a translation service are utilized to facilitate communication.

## **E. TRANSPORTATION**

*NOTE: Transportation for students with disabilities enrolled in 4410 and/or 853 programs are provided by the school district. School programs, however, are involved in the embarking and disembarking of students.*

1. Students will arrive from 8:10 to 8:45 AM on buses. They will be unloaded in order of arrival by support staff and specials teachers. Students will use hand sanitizer as they enter the building. Even though both families and transportation providers are being asked to screen students before entering the buses we will do our own screening. Staff will review screening questions which will be posted in the hallway and on our website at least twice a week. Each student will have their temperatures checked daily by staff wearing masks. Students will enter through two different entry doors staffed by 2 different screeners to help the process flow quickly. Both sets of doors have 6 foot markers both outside and

inside the building to ensure social distancing. Students will go directly to their home rooms until the locker area is clear. Homeroom Teachers will remain in the classroom and aides will stay in the hallway to ensure no congregating around lockers.

2. Students will be called to their buses from their homerooms and dismissed directly to their buses instead of congregating in the cafeteria. We will be using three different exits, the elementary door, the secondary door and the front door of the school for parent pick-ups. Parents will not be allowed past the Reception Desk without following the Visitor Procedures and wearing a face covering.
3. Students come from multiple school districts and the times buses arrive and depart varies into staggered times but dismissals will be driven by districts transportation providers. Masks are required in all bus transportation arrangements.
4. The amount of per pupil time for arrival and departure may increase due to social distancing and screenings but we feel that the total time for Arrivals and Departures will become a fairly normal part of the schedule after the initial adjustment period.
5. Scheduling will be maintained for all students whether they are transported by families or by the bus. No students walk to our school or take public transit. We may adjust dismissal if parents are insisting on transporting and have timing issues on when they can arrive. A 30 minute window around 2:45 PM will be a general expectation for family transport.
6. All students will be asked to use hand sanitizer or wash their hands as they enter or leave the building.

## **F. SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING**

1. The Gateway-Longview Lynde School uses Therapeutic Crisis Intervention and PBIS to ensure the well-being and behavior management needs of students. Each student has an Individual Crisis Management Plan to address specific needs with targeted interventions. Social Emotional Learning skills are taught by clinical staff in group counseling sessions, using the Second Step Curriculum.
2. Gateway-Longview Administrators have reviewed school wide plans, finding they are appropriate to meet student needs.

3. The Gateway-Longview Lynde School will prioritize the mental health, SEL and well-being of our students, families and staff through established program policies and procedures, in addition to additional staff training and support.
4. The Gateway-Longview Lynde school collaborates regularly with all stakeholders to inform and modify program procedures by way of Parent Counseling and Training sessions, regularly scheduled treatment team meetings, staff meetings and surveys. Consideration will be given to forming a group which specifically reviews and addresses issues related to student mental health and emotional well-being.
5. Clinical staff (counselors, social workers, art therapist) will continue to provide services to address the mental health and support needs of students and families. They will continue to make appropriate referrals for additional community supports as necessary.
6. Staff will receive training in understanding the impact of trauma and mental health on student behavior and family dynamics. Staff will also receive training on identifying and coping with the impact of the work during and after the COVID-19 public health emergency. Staff will be asked for feedback to identify useful supportive activities/resources. Ongoing opportunities for discussion will be provided by Administration.
7. Communication of social emotional well-being as priority for the school will be done through the following:
  - Stated throughout the reopening plan which will be posted on the agency website
  - Staff training, including refreshers on the PBIS system
  - Written correspondence to families from school administrators
  - Direct connection between clinical staff and families
  - Use of time in regularly scheduled meetings to promote these needs in day to day instruction, service provision and interactions with students and families

## **G. SCHOOL SCHEDULES**

1. Our In-person schedule is making no changes to the normal school hours or work hours for staff. We will modify the schedules if we are required to do a hybrid model that has some students working from home. We will also modify the schedule if the health crisis causes the school to become fully remote. We are planning on running normal class schedules for all three options. We will use Google School to stream all classes live so both in-person and remote students can participate. The plan has staff coming in to deliver the lessons and provide support. Tele-therapy will continue to be used for all related services if we are partially or fully remote.

2. Visitors for educational purposes such as parents, school district, DSS and other official visitors, will be screened in the same manner as staff. Intake appointments will be done remotely and in-person if possible after school hours, with mandatory mask wearing and screenings.
3. The plan is for Teachers and Aides to collaborate on site to complete fully remote instruction if the school is inaccessible due to a DOH closure. These staff will be able to easily maintain social distancing while working to provide the best instruction possible in remote situations to the students.
4. Students will be kept in their home rooms as much as possible to reduce hallway congestion. The first option for most classes is to have teachers go to the students rather than have the students switch classes. Homeroom cohorts will have the same schedules as much as academically feasible. In the 9-12 classes there will have to be some movement due to different credits status among these students. Students will move in small groups to certain classes like science labs, PE classes, Art, and Home and Careers. Classes when they switch will be scheduled to use different hallways to further reduce congestion.
5. Teachers, aides and related service staff have been involved in the preparation of this plan. The parents were surveyed regarding these issues and are split regarding some wanting to return fully with the modifications to the schedules and some scared of what will happen and may opt for remote learning options.
6. All families will be communicated with regularly through the daily note sent home and through regular mail, electronic mail, phone calls and texts if the student schedule changes for any reason. We have a phone tree set up that each supervisor calls key staff, who call each family, school districts and transportation providers. In the event of a school closure it will also be announced on the various media outlets both on the radio and television. Families that need translation services will be provided it through a contracted agency.
7. Our goal is every student in every class but know that is unlikely so we will teach each class remotely to any students who cannot attend in-person. In this manner we will be providing FAPE to all. No students require instruction in a language other than English. If that was needed, we would have to provide a bilingual aide to assist in the instruction.

## H. BUDGET AND FISCAL

1. Accounting is tracking all purchasing related to the preparations and needs associated with COVID-19.
2. We have tapped into foundation grants from different charities to purchase 1:1 electronic devices for all students. In addition the agency applied for federal and state grant funds to provide resources to prepare for students returning
3. All options may be looked at if expenses exceed our tuition reimbursement including staffing changes and delaying planned expenditures. Our school's agency may be asked through the foundation to provide more programmatic financial support than already budgeted.
4. We are currently working with local LEAs to provide placements to the students referred currently. We anticipate more referrals will be forthcoming when public schools are in session due to the added stress the pandemic has had in our community and the nature of the students we target. We anticipate having a full roster by mid-October if the school stays in-person.

## I. ATTENDANCE AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

1. **Describe how you intend to collect, document and report daily teacher/student/family engagement or attendance regardless of the instructional setting (in-person or remote):**

In-person: Teachers will be documenting student attendance in PowerSchool.  
Remote: Teachers will be documenting student attendance in PowerSchool as well, for students who log in to remote classes.

2. **Briefly describe how you will develop/sustain positive relationships with students/families to promote attendance and participation:**

Teachers are instructed to maintain a connection with both students and families every week. Teacher designated "office hours" are used to follow up with students continuing to participate in classes and receive support during remote learning. Students who have not been in attendance, whether in-person or remote, are also contacted by teachers to see what they can do to make instruction more accessible.

The school has adopted the Google Classroom platform as the only interface requiring students and families to log in. This alleviates the pressures on both

students and parents to remember log in information, or navigating multiple remote learning platforms.

Students' counselor/social worker will also be in regular contact with students and their families throughout the week to follow up on attendance, as well as emotional support.

**3. Briefly describe your outreach efforts when students and families are not participating in remote learning:**

Teachers and counselors/social workers have been in weekly contact with families to promote remote learning efforts. Both groups encourage families to utilize remote learning to strengthen social dynamics that may have been lost during school closure.

For students and parents choosing not to participate in remote learning, teachers are generating weekly assignments to mimic online instructional discussions, materials, and coursework. We have been diligently working with staff and families in order to ensure they are receiving materials and providing feedback to students and parents about progress.

**4. Describe how you will involve the CPSE/CSE if students are not participating in remote learning:**

The administrative team has been in contact with the multiple districts we serve, to keep all WNY schools informed as to which individual students are not utilizing remote learning or an online platform. District CSE departments have been sent our Continuity of Learning Plan to help connect with families and communicate expectations.

For students not participating, we have been notifying CSE chairpersons and outside agencies of situations when necessary. Some have elected to begin contacting those families, as well, as involving district social workers, or other personnel, to follow up.

**5. Describe how you outreach to families who speak languages other than English:**

We have staff on hand that are fluent in multiple languages and have utilized their abilities to communicate with parents where English is not the primary language spoken. These staff members accompany counselors or teachers when visiting the home or making phone calls to ensure messages are

accurately communicated. In addition we have a contract with a translation service that can be called to do real time translations

**6. Are your staff members periodically reminded of their responsibility as mandated reporters to contact the Department of Social Services if they suspect child abuse or neglect?**

All staff members within the school are aware of their responsibility as a mandated reporter. We are required to complete annual trainings including periodic updates concerning the process and protocols that accompany their duties.

**J. TECHNOLOGY AND CONNECTIVITY**

**1. Describe how will your school initially gather and periodically update information on the level of access students and staff members have to devices and high speed broadband at their places of residence:**

Prior to setting up the online platform, Gateway surveyed all families on their ability to participate in online instruction. Counselors, administrators, and teachers were able to make contact with families over the course of two months. Spreadsheets, consents, and other documentation combined to give the school an accurate picture of internet capabilities and online compatibility.

**2. Describe how you will address the need to provide devices and internet access to students and staff members who do not currently have access:**

Students and families and staff members lacking the necessary devices to receive online or remote instruction were loaned a device based on indicated need during the survey. At this moment, the school has an adequate amount of devices to serve both staff and students. Staff members are also able to access their work desktops and internet.

**3. What multiple means of participation might you employ so that students can participate and demonstrate mastery of the Learning Standards in remote and blended models when they may not yet have sufficient access to devices or high-speed internet?**

All students will have access to a device needed to stream lessons and materials. However, in the event of internet services not available to students, work will be sent home with phone support being added at a designated time for families

Teachers carefully create assignments equivalent to course content and skill development for students unable to participate during remote lessons and in-person. Due to internet insufficiency, mental health, or behavioral barriers, students are continued to be provided access to materials, content, and skill-building so that when schools fully reopen, regression will not be severe, nor will they be academically behind their peers.

**4. Describe your plans for professional development in effective practices during remote instruction and learning:**

Much of the professional development and training during the latter half of the 19-20 school year revolved around remote learning strategies and online platforms to better prepare teachers for a prolonged school closure. Administration has been able to check in with ongoing classes during the remote summer session to assess needs for development in this area as well as provide supervision and support to staff and students.

Staff members have also attended BOCES-led trainings made available to further their understanding and gather as many resources applicable to their instruction. Future development planning will be assessed following the summer remote session including whether or not PD training will be provided in-person or virtually once conclusive decisions are made.

**5. Describe your plan for providing information technology (IT) support to families and staff members who are experiencing IT issues and challenges:**

Each staff member (teacher, assistant, administrator) has been trained in our online systems and can troubleshoot most daily problems that may occur. In the event, of bigger issues, the chain of command has been clearly communicated. The Director/Principal receive phone calls/emails regarding the issues unable to be handled by frontline staff.

Parents also have direct contact information for all school personnel involved in making IT corrections or changes. During the summer session this communication system seems to be working. We will look at continuing the communication infrastructure.

**6. Describe how you will ensure data privacy and security:**

Through the use of Google's G Suite, there is already a secure cloud network that meets strict privacy guidelines. Each student has their own log in information which is password protected. Security settings within the domain for the school have been tailored to not allow outside contact. Communication

through gmail or video technology is limited to only users within the school's domain.

Consents have been signed by all student parent/guardians to acknowledge the usage of, rules, and expectations of participating on line. A separate online school conduct code has been sent to all participating families outlining the strict guidelines for the delivery of remote instruction.

**7. Describe how you will assess the effectiveness of the digital tools and platforms you are using/will use:**

Feedback from all stakeholders is ongoing during this process. Using Google forms a survey has already been issued to stakeholders regarding their opinion on the effectiveness of remote instruction. Also included in this survey were satisfaction questions regarding communication, support, and method of delivery. This data is compiled and reviewed to help guide decision-making for the fall and beyond.

Staff members are also giving feedback and ideas for improvement to help the instructional delivery and usage of the remote platform. Administration and the IT Dept. have been assessing the systems capabilities and making necessary alterations for a better teacher-student interaction.

**8. Describe some ways you intend to promote equitable access and flexibility for students, staff and families during remote instruction and learning:**

All students and staff requiring devices will have access to one. This gives all school stakeholders an opportunity to participate whether in-person or remote during an ever-changing school year.

While some may be in-person during the day, those unable will continue to have access to the same content and skill development. They will also have the ability to continue interactions with staff and peers.

Families without the necessary internet capabilities will be in contact with teachers and counselors on a weekly basis. Materials being sent home to these students would still meet the same learning-standard criteria as their in-person counterparts. Teachers are instructed to provide enough materials and support to students not online or in-person that meets their needs and the 180 minute class standard.

## **K. TEACHING AND LEARNING**

1. Briefly describe your continuity of learning plan should state or local conditions warrant moving to/from in-person, blended and/or all remote instruction:

Due to our school being designated as an 853 school and the majority of students receiving special education services, it is in the best interest of our clientele to attempt a full week of in-person instruction to start the fall 2020 semester.

If parents choose to opt-out of in-person instruction or individual students remain home due to illness, a blended format will be offered. In-person instruction will take place for students in attendance with the lesson being streamed via Google Classroom to those students remaining home.

All students will have access to a device needed to stream lessons and materials. However, in the event of internet services not available to students, work will be sent home with phone support being added at a designated time for families.

If School Closure is necessary, teachers are prepared to seamlessly transition to on-line instruction the day following the in-person or blended plan. All classes and students will be enrolled into virtual classrooms that follow their normal in-person school day. Teachers and students will be required to log in to each classes at the appropriate time for instruction. Materials, coursework, and homework will be available through the online platform.

2. Will instruction, regardless of the modality used, remain aligned with the outcomes in the New York State Learning Standards?

All instruction and coursework will continue to be aligned with NYS Learning Standards including Next Generation Standards.

3. Describe how your school will promote equity by making sure that all students have opportunities to access routinely scheduled instruction, interaction, feedback and support from teachers:

All students and staff requiring devices will have access to one. This gives all school stakeholders an opportunity to participate whether in-person or remote during an ever-changing school year.

While some may be in-person during the day, those unable will continue to have access to the same content and skill development. They will also have the ability to continue interactions with staff and peers.

If School Closure is necessary, teachers are prepared to seamlessly transition to on-line instruction the day following the in-person or blended plan. All classes and students will be enrolled into virtual classrooms that follow their normal in-person school day.

Families without the necessary internet capabilities will be in contact with teachers and counselors on a weekly basis. Materials being sent home to these students would still meet the same learning-standard criteria as their in-person counterparts. Teachers are instructed to provide enough materials and support to students not online or in-person that meets their needs and the 180 minute class standard.

4. Will all students have opportunities for regular and substantive contact with qualified instructional personnel regardless of the delivery method (remote, blended, in-person)?

Yes. Dialogues/interactions between staff, students, and related service providers will be continuous throughout all plans using streaming technology and on-line platforms.

5. Describe how you will engage families in the teaching and learning process:

Families have been provided a survey regarding the effectiveness of remote instruction during the 2019-2020 school closure, as well as questions regarding the expectations and concerns for the 2020-2021 school year. Data is still being collected and continues to be assessed throughout the summer in an effort to hear all stakeholder concerns.

Clinical staff and educational professionals have been in contact or attempted contact with all families on a weekly basis in an attempt to engage or continue participation in their child's educational/instructional process.

6. Describe your communication plan so that students/families, regardless of their home language(s), have multiple means to contact teachers and, as applicable, related service providers:

We have staff on hand that are fluent in multiple languages and have utilized their abilities to communicate with parents where English is not the primary language spoken. These staff members accompany counselors or teachers when visiting the home or making phone calls to ensure messages are accurately communicated.

7. Describe your plan for student support and family involvement to address the specialized needs of students whose educational experiences in 2019-2020 were disrupted due to school closures and who now require additional social, emotional or academic support to be successful.

Students will receive counseling once a week as well as additional support when needed throughout the week. Parents will also have contact with clinical staff for at least an hour per month, including additional support as needed.

To start the school year, educational personnel and clinical staff will spend the first week helping all students adjust to new routines and the trauma that may have occurred as a result of the COVID pandemic. We will use Solution-Focused Trauma Informed Care techniques when applicable to alleviate some of the stressors incurred during this tumultuous time.

Additionally, the school's PBIS system will be used to promote hygiene, safe spaces, and PPE to safely conduct classes and transitions. A rewards system will be in place for students continuing to practice safety. Parents/families will be informed of this process as well.

8. Describe how your school plans to help students to re-adjust to in-person instruction and the structure of school:

To start the school year, educational personnel and clinical staff will spend the first week helping all students adjust to new routines and the trauma that may have occurred as a result of the COVID pandemic. We will use Solution-Focused Trauma Informed Care techniques when applicable to alleviate some of the stressors incurred during this tumultuous time.

Additionally, the school's PBIS system will be used to promote hygiene, safe spaces, and PPE to safely conduct classes and transitions. A rewards system will be in place for students continuing to practice safety. Parents/families will be informed of this process as well.

9. Outline some of the things you will do to create a positive school climate of safety, comfort and routine in all program models:

The school's PBIS system will be used to promote hygiene, safe spaces, and PPE to safely conduct classes and transitions. A rewards system will be in place for students continuing to practice safety. Parents/families will be informed of this process as well.

Staff members will also receive additional training by clinical staff to help students through the past school year and moving forward.

10. Describe how you will help staff members share information about individual needs and each student's responses to blended, in-person and/or remote learning:

Our internal communication network and small setting allows all staff members to easily communicate any needs or concerns with necessary personnel. Whether blended or remote learning is taking place, all staff members and parents have contact information of the staff working with any specific child.

Each class containing multiple staff members has a primary contact person in the event immediate notifications need to be made during blended or remote instruction.

In the event of a prolonged school closure, educational and clinical staff are instructed to provide individualized contact at least once a week to students and families.

11. Describe how you will use diagnostic assessment to determine each student's academic, social and emotional needs:

The entire school utilizes STAR assessments within the first 2-3 weeks of school to assess student literacy and math capabilities. This allows us to gather baseline data for the upcoming school year, as well as determine whether or not severe regression may have taken place during the COVID closure.

Teachers will also be assessing students using their own formal and informal tools once students return whether in-person or remote.

12. Programs for preschool students (4410s) should briefly describe how they will:

- a. Manage meals without family-style service and with social distancing
- b. Manage toileting and hand washing when classrooms do not have adjoining sinks and toilets
- c. Implement nap time, if applicable
- d. Modify center time to enhance social distancing
- e. Avoid children having to share materials

- f. Follow sanitation guidelines during the day, i.e., after center time
- g. Discourage practices which encourage physical contact, i.e. partners holding hands

13. For 4410 Programs Only: Describe how you will balance screen time and authentic learning experiences during remote learning periods:

14. Describe how your program will control/limit volunteers and visitors (including parents/guardians) and, if they are permitted, how they will be informed of requirements for health and safety.

All volunteers and visitors will only be admitted through a single entry point. Signs are already posted, a brief question screening will take place, and a temperature taken for anyone coming into the building. A prior screening may also be administered for volunteers scheduled.

15. Describe how you will maintain students in a “cohort”/”pod” for in-person and blended learning:

Students in primary and elementary classes will stay in their cohort pod throughout the day. Secondary students will stay in their cohort as much as possible as while implementing their IEPs for the credits they need to earn. In many classes we will have teachers move to the student cohorts to prevent hallway congestion.

16. Describe some of the best practices which can inform/facilitate high-quality remote instruction?

Teachers and aides have all received direct training on the use of distance learning tools. Teachers and aides are routinely calling students and families when a student is not participating. A combination of packets are mailed to students every two weeks - those packets and the virtual teaching are aligned. In addition there is individual tutoring via Google School for any student who needs it or if family or faculty feel the student needs additional assistance. In 2020 we will be providing a full day schedule of virtual learning for each class that matches the in-person schedule.

17. Describe how are students are assigned to a learning model and if, how and when they might be moved from one model to another:

Due to our school being designated as an 853 school and the majority of students receiving special education services, it is in the best interest of our

clientele to attempt a full week of in-person instruction to start the fall 2020 semester.

If parents choose to opt-out of in-person instruction or individual students remain home due to illness, a blended format will be offered. In-person instruction will take place for students in attendance with the lesson being streamed via Google Classroom to those students remaining home.

All students will have access to a device needed to stream lessons and materials. However, in the event of internet services not available to students, work will be sent home with phone support being added at a designated time for families.

If School Closure is necessary, teachers are prepared to seamlessly transition to on-line instruction the day following the in-person or blended plan. All classes and students will be enrolled into virtual classrooms that follow their normal in-person school day. Teachers and students will be required to log in to each classes at the appropriate time for instruction. Materials, coursework, and homework will be available through the online platform.

Students may be moved to the blended or remote model as a safety precaution for others. Many of our students struggle with the compliance of directives. Out of respect and safety for staff and families, if a student is unable to comply with safety procedures, we may alter a student's learning assignment.

18. Describe how you will make all models as inclusive and culturally-responsive as possible:

Our 6:1:1 program is built to include a wide array of students, abilities, and diverse learners. Because of such a small setting staff are able to individualize appropriate responses to student needs in a variety of settings and conditions.

19. Describe your models for:

a) In-person education, including details such as number of students/staff per classroom; length of session; and any other important information:

School day sessions will run as normal with the school day beginning 8:30am with dismissal at 2:45pm. Students will be a maximum of 6 per classroom with 1 teacher and 1 Teacher Aide. Transitions, when necessary, will be carefully monitored to avoid large numbers passing in halls. Cohorts, when applicable, will be remaining in the same room with the same staff throughout most of the day.

b) Remote learning:

If parents choose to opt-out of in-person instruction or individual students remain home due to illness, a blended format will be offered. In-person instruction will take place for students in attendance with the lesson being streamed via Google Classroom to those students remaining home.

All students will have access to a device needed to stream lessons and materials. However, in the event of internet services not available to students, work will be sent home with phone support being added at a designated time for families.

If School Closure is necessary, teachers are prepared to seamlessly transition to on-line instruction the day following the in-person or blended plan. All classes and students will be enrolled into virtual classrooms that follow their normal in-person school day.

Families without the necessary internet capabilities will be in contact with teachers and counselors on a weekly basis. Materials being sent home to these students would still meet the same learning-standard criteria as their in-person counterparts. Teachers are instructed to provide enough materials and support to students not online or in-person that meets their needs and the 180 minute class standard.

c) Blended/hybrid learning, including days and duration of in-person services, staffing for in-person portions and typical patterns and practices for remote instruction:

If parents choose to opt-out of in-person instruction or individual students remain home due to illness, a blended format will be offered. In-person instruction will take place for students in attendance with the lesson being streamed via Google Classroom to those students remaining home.

All students will have access to a device needed to stream lessons and materials. However, in the event of internet services not available to students, work will be sent home with phone support being added at a designated time for families.

## **L. CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

1. Any Career and Technical Education students will attending classes through the local BOCES vocational program and will be addressed through that program

## **M. ATHLETICS AND EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

1. No athletics or extracurricular activities (intramurals and clubs) are anticipated in the upcoming school year in order to limit exposure of students and staff and ensure social distancing.

## **N. SPECIAL EDUCATION**

1. All students will receive FAPE as all IEP services and program modifications will be implemented including instruction and related services. If needed due to the medical situation implementation of the hybrid model or the distance and virtual learning model and teletherapy will be used to fully offer the services on each child's IEP.
2. Parents are addressed in their native language by use of staff with the language skills or through a translation service we have contracted with for those situations.
3. We work closely with all CSEs and CPSEs in providing services to our students and families. We communicate quarterly progress and report any attendance issues. In addition all serious discipline issues are relayed to the school districts.
4. All students will receive necessary accommodations as outlined on their IEPs. Supplementary aids and service are already in place and any devices needed have been distributed to students.
5. We communicate every school day with parents in their native language through a daily note. Any translations required are done by school staff for several languages. If additional translations of daily activities are needed we use online translations and/or the translation service.
6. We will communicate any issues regarding transportation or other barriers to students attending in-person. CPSEs and CSEs will know of our plans to educate our students in-person, remotely or using a hybrid model. We anticipate social and emotional issues will impact some students more than others and individualized BIPs will have to be developed and amended.

7. The plan's primary goal is in-person services from the first day for all of our students. Issues that could impede that include transportation provided by the school districts and counties or an illness outbreak. We believe our students are being severely affected by the lack of in-person instruction and we need them back in order to ensure they receive FAPE.
8. Progress monitoring and report cards will be delivered quarterly. In addition, when in-person education is occurring all parents will receive daily notes from the school regarding student progress. Each family has a school counselor assigned to meet with families twice a month regarding the implementation of the IEP and student progress.
9. Data gathering regarding all areas will remain the same if in-person. Additional record keeping regarding participation and attendance in remote classes will be collected and analyzed for alternatives to engage students who do not regularly participate
10. Related services were being delivered remotely during the 2020 ESY program. Our in-person services will look very similar to normal with the exception of masks and face shields being used by related service staff so students and families can see facial expressions. Group Counseling will be scheduled by cohorts to keep the same children together and we will be using a larger room to maintain social distancing. Parent Counseling and Training will remain remote in most cases to prevent direct contact in the home and to reduce the numbers of parents and visitors on campus. Remote related services if necessary will continue with a combination of virtual learning and packets of materials to support the activities of all related services.
11. Caseloads for Related Services are scheduled in conjunction with the overall school schedule. A priority is placed on students attending the most critical academics and scheduling the Related Services around the academics. Most services are provided individually. Group services will be scheduled as much as possible to keep the cohort pods intact. Group Counseling will be scheduled by cohorts to keep the same children together and we will be using a larger room to maintain social distancing.

## **O. STAFFING**

1. All teachers and related service staff will carry appropriate certifications /licenses for their positions.
2. Normal hiring practices will continue to check through the internet NYSED site to verify certifications and licenses.

3. We may require more teachers to be hired on a temporary basis to cover for the leaves of other teachers due to COVID-19. More staffing changes may occur as the in-person education plan unfolds.
4. Some Incidental assignments may be required after recruiting efforts have failed. The leaves staff are eligible for due to child care and family care may cause a staffing shortage. Efforts will be made to ensure incidental teaching assignments are a last resort.
5. Substitute teachers will have an important role to play upon reopening, especially if there are extensive or protracted staff absences or in certain staff intensive instructional models that blend remote and in-person learning.

Our school will undertake robust recruitment efforts to identify and process qualified substitutes. In the 2020/2021 school year, as permitted by NYSED, if qualified substitute teachers cannot be engaged, individuals with a high school diploma or equivalent, even those not working toward certification can first be engaged for up to ninety (90) days and then beyond the first ninety (90) day period through the end of June, 2021, as long as the superintendent documents and attests that recruitment efforts did not identify a fully qualified substitute teacher. The superintendent must attest to the shortage of qualified recruits initially and then at the end of the first ninety (90) day period. Recruitment efforts will be extensively documented.

6. Staff members who are requesting an accommodation from reporting for in-person work due to concerns about their own health must notify the Human Resources department and then comply with submitting requested information before the agency can determine if a reasonable accommodation can be made based on applicable law, regulation and the agency's needs and resources.

## **P. TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION SYSTEM**

N/A We are an 853 / 4410 School.

## **Q. STUDENT TEACHING**

1. Student teachers and volunteers will be allowed on a case by case basis for educational purposes and agency need. We will consider changing that in the future as we learn how the changes in school climate affect the students and staff.