

**BUFFALO UNITED CHARTER SCHOOL
2020-2021 REOPENING PLAN****RESPONSE 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Buffalo United Charter School, located in Buffalo, NY, opened in the fall of 2003 and is managed by National Heritage Academies (NHA). Our school offers grades K-8 and enrolled 626 students during the 2019-20 school year. Buffalo United's mission is to offer families and students a public charter school, which focuses on high academic achievement and instills a sense of family, community, and leadership within all of our students. We believe children instilled with a strong moral character and provided excellent college-preparatory instruction will excel in any path they choose. We achieve this through our program built on the pillars of moral focus, academic excellence, personal responsibility, and parental partnerships. In these unprecedented times, our values continue to guide our efforts as we work to ensure that all students continue to receive a quality education regardless of the learning environment(s) for the 2020-21 school year.

As fall approaches, Buffalo United Charter School, in partnership with NHA, is preparing for four possible learning environments that may be necessary throughout the 2020-21 school year. We have created detailed plans around in-person, remote/virtual, and hybrid learning scenarios. We are currently exploring the possibility of a completely virtual learning opportunity for parents who do not feel comfortable or safe returning their students to a traditional or hybrid learning environment due to the nature of the pandemic. It is our goal that providing this option will help us to retain students and families that may fall into this category. More information about this will be made available to our families when it is available.

- In-person: a return to a traditional classroom environment
- Remote: teaching and learning done completely at home
- Virtual: teaching and learning in a fully online environment
- Hybrid: a combination of in-person and remote instruction


As noted, our commitment is to ensure Buffalo United Charter School students receive a quality education regardless of the learning environment(s). In anticipation of possible interruptions to in-person instruction, NHA is providing a Chromebook to each student. This investment in technology is being made to ensure a seamless transition between learning environments, as necessary.

Buffalo United's highest priority continues to be the health and safety of our staff and students. We have developed the following plan based on the most current guidance and information available. This plan will allow our school to transition as needed between learning environments with minimal interruptions, as we await a determination on how schools in our region can reopen.

COMMUNICATION/FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

At the close of the 2019-20 school year, the school elicited feedback from parents on remote learning. The survey results were sent to teachers and compiled by the administrative team to assess what worked, as well as what we can improve upon if we face another period of remote learning. Parent-led groups were also utilized to gain additional insight on our school's remote learning program. This feedback will be used to improve and inform future remote instruction. Feedback was analyzed by a cross-functional NHA pandemic team to inform decisions for the upcoming school year. As we embark on an uncertain 2020-21 school year, we will remain flexible and adapt as needed to ensure we meet the needs of students, staff, and the community.

This plan was created through collaboration with NHA and our principal to meet the needs of the school population. In addition, the principal and the NHA Curriculum & Instruction team have sought input from our



teaching staff to design this plan. Our Board was provided an opportunity to review and approve the plan prior to submission.

The school will effectively and efficiently communicate with families and will prioritize clearly communicating student expectations. Information will also be provided in school newsletters, back to school information, social media sites, and the school's website, as necessary. Updates and information will be broadcast to families via the school's SchoolMessenger system, a tool which sends an email and text to every family, as well as generates a post on the school's website (if needed). All official school communication is translated into students' home languages, as appropriate.

Our school will work to efficiently communicate with families, students, and visitors via additional posted signage at our physical location. This will explain and emphasize new protocols due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Signs have been placed at the entrance of the building prohibiting access to anyone experiencing symptoms, feeling ill, or who has had close contact with someone confirmed to have, or suspected of having, COVID-19. Handwashing posters instructing and reinforcing proper handwashing techniques will be placed in bathrooms. Social distancing reminder signs and one-way traffic floor markings will be placed throughout the school building. Students will be taught/trained as necessary to ensure proper guidelines are followed.

Our school will designate Theresa Gerchman, our Principal, as coordinator and primary contact upon the identification of positive COVID-19 cases. She will be responsible for subsequent communication. Our coordinator will be responsible for answering questions from students, faculty, staff, and parents/guardians regarding the COVID-19 public health emergency and plans implemented by the school.

RESPONSE 2: REOPENING OPERATIONS, MONITORING, CONTAINMENT & CLOSURE

2A. REOPENING OPERATIONS

We believe that the best learning environment for students includes regular, day-to-day, in-school instruction. With this in mind, our preference would be to begin the school year with a traditional instructional model, if allowed. However, the safety of our students and staff continues to be our top priority. Our contingency plans will allow the school to offer additional methods that maintain high standards. Detailed below are new operational protocols being developed and implemented by the school.

- **Capacity**
 - As we prepare to return to school, the number of students and staff allowed to return in person has been reviewed and considered. This includes the ability to maintain appropriate social distancing guidelines and the availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including masks. Local health conditions have been and will continue to be considered as we make our decisions on how to best reopen our school.
 - One learning environment we are planning for utilizes a hybrid model. In this instance, fewer students are physically in the building at any one time.
- **Social Distancing**
 - At least one of the following measures will be required at all times to maintain the health and safety of our school community:
 - Social distancing of six feet
 - Barriers
 - Use of masks/face coverings
 - Social distancing reminder signs will be placed throughout the school building.
 - Desks will be spaced with six feet of distance whenever possible.
 - Students who ride the bus (provided by Buffalo Public School District) will have staggered arrivals. They will eliminate bus staging and will unload and reload upon arrival to the school.

- Three building entrances will be used for students based on the location of their homeroom. Staff will have a separate designated building entrance.
- Lockers and classroom cubbies will not be used. Students' belongings will be kept with them in their classroom space.
- Students will eat lunch in their classrooms.
- **PPE and Face Coverings**
 - All staff and students will be encouraged to bring a mask/face covering unless an underlying health condition or sensory issue prevents them from doing so. Masks must be worn within six feet of another person, in hallways, in restrooms, and in other congregate spaces.
 - We acknowledge that some members of our community will not be medically able to wear masks. We will ask families to communicate this information to their teacher/dean and will properly document this communication.
 - Appropriate face coverings include, but are not limited to, cloth-based face coverings (e.g., homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana, etc.) and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose. NHA has distributed 200 cloth masks to the school for staff use.
 - If students and staff are unable to obtain a mask, or forget theirs at home, additional masks will be on hand in the main office.
 - The school will ensure that students and staff are properly wearing and using their masks.
 - Staff and students will be encouraged to routinely clean and/or dispose of their masks, as appropriate.
 - If a staff member refuses to comply with the mask requirement, we will use our standard disciplinary process for policy violations. This may include coaching, conversations, verbal warnings, written warnings, a final written warning, or termination.
 - In situations where a student is refusing to wear a mask, we will offer education to emphasize the importance of a healthy and safe school community. In the event of continued non-compliance, the school will reach out to the parent/guardian for support.
 - We will revisit the need to require staff and students to wear masks based on guidance from the CDC, the state, and local health departments.
- **Operational Activity**
 - We will aim to limit the movement of students as much as possible. This includes creating cohorts of students that remain in their homerooms.
 - When possible, teachers will rotate in and out of classrooms, as opposed to student transitions. However, if student movement does take place, the teacher will be responsible for ensuring that every desk has been disinfected before a new group of students enters the classroom. Each classroom will have materials to disinfect commonly shared items such as computers and curricular tools.
 - Whenever possible specials teachers will rotate in and out of the classrooms. However, when necessary to use a specials space, all hands-on classrooms will be disinfected between student groups. Students will not be sharing personal materials such as pens, pencils, etc.
 - Large gatherings such as student assemblies, performances, school-wide events, etc. will be suspended or modified based on state and local guidelines.
 - The school is finding creative ways to adapt its traditional summer onboarding and back-to-school events. School Ambassadors and Admissions Representatives are assisting schools by prepackaging information, providing clean pens, hand sanitizer, and masks for events. Some events are being held virtually where appropriate. Others held in new formats that include outdoor settings, a multiple-night event to allow for social distancing, or as a drive-in event. When allowable, tours for new families are being conducted with increased safety measures.
 - No more than two grade levels will use the playground for recess at a time.
 - Restroom breaks will be limited to one classroom at a time.
 - We will limit use of shared spaces such as the gymnasium and library. We are still considering how these spaces can be used and may adapt them into additional classroom spaces to allow

for more social distancing. At this time, we intend to have students eat in their classrooms to maintain cohorts of students as much as possible.

- The school will limit additional people entering our building as much as possible. Family members of students will be asked not to enter the building unless absolutely necessary. Visitors will be allowed by appointment only and at the discretion of the front office and principal. Any necessary guests will be screened for symptoms, required to wear a mask, and asked to sanitize their hands upon entering. A log will be kept of all visitors entering and exiting the building.

- **Restart Operations**

- When our school was closed during the 2019-20 year, it was deep cleaned/sanitized, closed, and then maintained with routine custodial services based on the building's limited usage.
- Hand sanitizer and Virex Disinfectant Cleaner are being placed in each classroom.
- Handwashing posters, social distancing reminders, COVID-19 symptom signs, and where possible, one-way traffic markings are being installed around the building.
- The school leadership team will be conducting a facility walk-through in partnership with the custodial services team to ensure that classrooms, common spaces, and the exterior of the building are ready for staff and students.

- **Hygiene, Cleaning, & Disinfection**

- Several significant changes are being made with our janitorial service partner, Aramark. This includes increased staffing, changes in management structure, improved training, greater accountability, and monthly audits. In addition to our baseline custodial services, Aramark is also providing additional cleaning services due to COVID-19. These include:
 - Increased frequency of high touch point disinfection.
 - All high touch point locations such as light switches, door handles, bathroom faucet handles, etc. will be disinfected three times per day (mid-morning, mid-afternoon, and evening).
 - All cleaning materials are EPA-approved for use against COVID-19.
 - Playground structures will continue to be cleaned with EPA-approved agents, when necessary.
 - Supplying the school with necessary materials.
 - Aramark is ensuring that each classroom within the school has hand sanitizer, a spray bottle of Virex Disinfectant Cleaner, paper towel, and instructions on how to properly use for times when additional cleaning/disinfecting may be needed in individual classrooms. Staff must wear gloves, surgical mask, and face shields when performing all cleaning activities.
 - Aramark is also ensuring that plenty of hand soap is in stock at the school to stay ahead of any shortage. Soap and hand sanitizer will be refilled, as necessary.
 - Retraining of existing custodial staff.
 - All custodial staff is being retrained on cleaning and disinfecting specifically for COVID-19.
 - Facilities Preparedness and Response Plan.
 - An action plan has been created for deployment if there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school building. This plan includes thorough disinfection and cleaning, which may require a temporary closure of the school building.
 - Safe and correct storage of cleaning and disinfection products.
- Should we encounter suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases within the building, the Facilities Preparedness and Response Plan calls for a move into a Level 3 Response Procedure. Within 24 hours of the last known presence of a suspected/confirmed case in the facility, all known areas accessed will be vacated and closed. Partial or full building closure will be done as deemed necessary by school leadership and in collaboration with the local health department.

Aramark personnel will prepare for full disinfection cleaning after 24 hours have passed. Aramark personnel will utilize enhanced PPE (gloves, face masks, gowns) during their disinfection cleaning. Re-entry will not be permitted until disinfection cleaning has been completed. The duration of disinfection cleaning will depend on the extent of areas visited in the facility by an individual with a suspected/confirmed case. Our return to school will be coordinated with the local health department, as necessary.

- Staff and students will be encouraged to practice good hand hygiene. Effective handwashing techniques will be taught and reinforced by school staff at the start of the year and will continue throughout, including washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and the safe use of hand sanitizer. Handwashing posters instructing and reinforcing proper handwashing techniques will be placed in bathrooms. Hand sanitizer will be provided in all classrooms and front office.
- Respiratory health is crucial to helping prevent the spread of COVID-19. The virus spreads from person to person in droplets produced by coughs and sneezes. Masks will be worn by all staff and students. In addition, staff and students will be reminded to cover their mouths and hands with a tissue, or to use the inside of their elbow if coughing or sneezing.

- **Extracurriculars**

- Large gatherings such as student assemblies, performances, school-wide events, etc. will be suspended or modified based on state and local guidelines.
- Small group programming will be allowed, but safety precautions must be taken to ensure students and staff are safe. Programming can take place where social distancing is possible. Students and staff will be expected to wear face coverings when physical distancing is not possible. Students, teachers, and staff must use proper hand hygiene techniques before and after every practice, event, or other gathering. Any equipment must be disinfected before and after every use.
- Our school does not plan to offer any sports or recreation programming during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. If this changes, the school will follow the guidelines set forth in the Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.

- **Before and After Care**

- We are currently considering options for before and after care for our students and are evaluating options with our long-term partners, the local Boys and Girls Club, to provide programming.

- **Vulnerable Populations**

- Vulnerable populations include those with underlying health conditions, ages 65 and older, pregnant individuals, students with high-risk family members, staff or students with an increased risk for severe COVID-19, and individuals not comfortable returning to an in-person educational environment.
- The school has an obligation to accommodate staff and students with medical conditions.
 - Accommodation requests will be considered, assessed, and handled on an individual basis.
 - Staff who self-identify as high-risk will be directed to NHA's People Services (PS) Department. The PS Department will review potential alternative work, depending on the structure of the school. If an alternative work assignment is not feasible, the staff will be offered a leave of absence.
 - All current plans for accommodating students with special healthcare needs (e.g. Individual Healthcare plans, Individualized Education Programs, Individualized Family Service Plans, or 504 plans) will be reviewed and updated, as necessary, to decrease the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

- **Transportation:**

- A majority of our students are bussed to and from school. Bussing is provided by Buffalo Public Schools. Arrival and dismissal will be staggered. Upon arrival, students will be unloaded in front of the school. At dismissal, students will be loaded as each bus arrives.
- As required by the reopening guidance, the bus driver, any staff, and all students in grades preK-12, if medically feasible, must wear facial coverings while on the bus. If a student does not have a mask, a mask will be provided by the bus driver. Students must social distance on the bus as much as possible.
- The bus and frequently touched areas will all be cleaned between each run. Weather permitting, windows will be open while cleaning, and while the vehicle is in motion to increase air circulation (when appropriate and safe).
- If students are ill or show symptoms of COVID-19, they will not be allowed to ride the bus home. They will remain in the designated quarantine location until they are able to be picked up. If a driver becomes sick throughout the day, they will not be permitted to return to drive students.

- **Food Service**

- The School Food Authority (SFA) will meet all guidance and procedures set forth by NYSDOH, CDC, and the local health department as they relate to food service models and operations for students. Meals will be served in a unitized manner during the school year to ensure items are not contaminated. Additional PPE for staff will be provided, including gloves, masks, cleaning chemicals, and hand sanitizer.
- In the event of a COVID-19 outbreak, SFA will work with school nutrition agencies and local health departments to ensure all necessary requirements are adhered to.
- If allowable, and in a safe manner, food may be served during a school closure. The SFA will continue to provide meal service to the extent applicable.
 - Parents will be notified regarding food availability via the SchoolMessenger system, a tool which sends an email and text to each family, school newsletters and updates, and the school website as appropriate.
- Students will eat in their classrooms and be socially distanced.
- Sneeze guards are being added to all food distribution carts.
- Cutlery, seasonings, and sauces will be placed directly on individual trays.
- The sharing of food and beverages will be strongly prohibited and monitored by the classroom teacher. Proper before and after eating handwashing hygiene will be promoted and encouraged. Students will be taken to the restrooms in small groups prior to eating to ensure proper hand washing. Kindergarten classrooms will only use their in-classroom restrooms.

- **Mental Health, Behavioral, and Emotional Support Services & Programs**

- Traumatic experiences like COVID-19 can impact learning, behavior, and relationships. The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting not just our children's physical health and academic experience, but it is taking a deep emotional toll as well. We believe children's well-being comes first, and that young people learn best when they are happy, safe, calm, and cared for properly.
- As educators, we need to do everything possible to reduce the effects of trauma so students can learn at an optimal level. Trauma does not discriminate between urban and suburban students, as people will perceive threats like COVID-19 individually. It is imperative that our school continue to nurture the hearts and minds of our children and staff, and show a thoughtful, innovative response from schools and networks as we strive to support students' mental health.
- One of the biggest supports we can offer is to partner with our parents to destigmatize COVID-19, understand normal behavioral responses to crises, share best practices of talking through trauma with children, and provide self-care opportunities. We have worked and will continue to work to provide parent resources such as *How to Help Your Child Understand COVID-19*, *Help your Child Cope with Stress and Anxiety*, *Activities for Children and Families to Maintain Normalcy in Schedule*, and *The Grief Experience through COVID-19*. We have provided parents

with additional resources such as healthychildren.org and the SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline.

- School Wide Trauma Informed Care will be a tier one support at our school. NHA's Leadership Summit, held each summer, this year included a general session, as well as three additional breakout sessions that highlighted trauma and the instruction of social and emotional skills. In addition, Trauma Informed Support will be sent to the school throughout the school year via an email newsletter which will continue the discussion of being trauma informed, to provide additional resources, and provide talking points for parents, families, and staff.
- The school is prioritizing the mental and social-emotional health of our staff. Leaders consistently hold one-on-one meetings with staff that will allow for evaluating physical and mental health status. We also have an ethics hotline where employees can report concerns. Additionally, we provide, free of charge, access to an employee assistance program where staff can access a library of resources for self-care as well as are provided with complimentary counseling sessions.

- **Communication**

- The school will ensure that it is effectively and efficiently communicating with its families, ensuring that every family is aware of student expectations. Information will be provided in school newsletters, back to school information, social media sites, and the school's website as necessary. Updates and information will be broadcast to families via the school's SchoolMessenger system, a tool which sends an email and text to every family and generates a post on the school's website, as necessary. All official school communication is translated into students' home languages, as needed.
- The principal is currently conducting weekly Facebook live sessions to keep parents informed of plans for the school year and answer any questions they may have.
- The school will work to efficiently communicate with families, students, and visitors via additional posted signage at the school. This signage will educate and reiterate new protocols due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Signs have been placed at the entrance of the building prohibiting entrance to anyone experiencing symptoms, feeling ill, or who has had closed contact with someone confirmed to have or suspected of having COVID-19. Handwashing posters instructing and reinforcing proper handwashing techniques will be placed in bathrooms. Social distancing reminder signs and one-way traffic floor markings will be placed throughout the school building. Students will be taught/trained as necessary to ensure proper guidelines are followed.

2B. MONITORING

The following information includes protocols and procedures in place to track health conditions at the school. The school will cooperate with the local public health department regarding the implementation of screening and testing of students and staff.

- **Screening**

- When necessary, the school will conduct a temperature scan of students as they arrive at the building. This will be done by trained staff who have appropriate PPE that includes gloves, disposable face masks, and face shields. Temperatures will be taken outside our school facility before students enter the building. This will help ensure social distancing guidelines are followed until screenings are complete.
- Staff members are required to complete daily wellness checks before arriving at work to ensure they do not exhibit COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing). To assist with this, a daily health-screening app was created by our management partner, National Heritage Academies. Staff members can use their mobile device to scan a QR code and complete the required screening survey.

- Students or staff who are feeling ill, or who show signs of illness, will be assessed by the school nurse as necessary. The nurse will use the proper PPE while assessing symptoms. Our school has identified a specific isolation location for students who are sick or run a fever of 100.4 degrees or greater where students will remain until they can be picked up. When in use, the student and staff member supervising will be required to wear masks.
- Students sent home will be provided with home instruction. Virtual materials, including videos and assignments, are being created and will be available to all teachers to push to quarantined students.
- **Health Testing Protocols**
 - The school will cooperate with the local public health department regarding the implementation of screening and testing of students and staff.
 - The school has been provided touchless thermometers, face shields, masks and gloves, and protocols on how to conduct student temperature and health screening. The school will do this as often as practical. Staff and students with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 can return to school when they have received a negative COVID-19 test, if it has been 10 days since the individual first had symptoms, if it has been at least three days since the individual had a fever, or if symptoms have improved (when they have been released from isolation per the CDC and local health department guidelines).
- **Health Testing Responsibility**
 - The school will cooperate with the local public health department regarding the implementation of screening and testing of students and staff.
 - If staff or students screen negative, this information is sent to the school's People Services Business Partner at NHA and they will provide information on next steps. This is done confidentially to both ensure compliance with HIPAA and maintain a safe working environment for school staff.
- **Early Warning Signs**
 - NHA's People Services team is leading this initiative. If someone either tests positive or displays symptoms of COVID-19, the school's Business Partner at NHA will update a live tracking document. The NHA Pandemic Team reviews this document weekly to identify trends. Our school will consult with NHA's industrial nurse hygienist specializing in occupational health.

2C. CONTAINMENT

Containment includes protocols and procedures for how to respond to positive or presumed positive cases, as well as preventative practices the school will deploy.

- **School Health Offices**
 - Students or staff who feel ill, or who show signs of illness, will be assessed by the school nurse, as necessary. The nurse will use the proper PPE including face masks, face shields, and gloves while assessing symptoms.
 - Temperature checks and screenings will be conducted by trained staff who have appropriate PPE. This includes gloves, disposable face masks, and face shields.
- **Isolation**
 - Our school has identified a specific isolation location for students who are sick or who run a fever of 100.4 degrees or greater where they will remain until they can be picked up. When in use, the student and staff member supervising will be required to wear masks.
- **Collection**
 - Parents picking up students who are displaying potential symptoms of COVID-19 will be encouraged to have their student seen by a health care provider.
 - Our school will utilize an isolation room located next to the playground entrance. This entrance has its own parking lot. Upon arrival, parents will be asked to call the office. A staff member,

properly masked, gloved, and shielded will walk the student to the car. The staff member will either check identification or use the family's assigned carpool pick-up number to ensure the person is authorized to pick up the student.

- **Infected Individuals**
 - If there is a confirmed case at our school, the NHA People Services Business Partner will report the case to the local department of health. The People Services Business Partner will work with NHA's Facilities Team to ensure proper cleaning is done. NHA's Communications Team will make certain proper stakeholders are notified in a timely manner, while also ensuring compliance with employee and student confidentiality and HIPAA requirements. Staff and students with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 can return to school when they have received a negative COVID-19 test, it's been 10 days since the individual first had symptoms or it has been at least three days since the individual had a fever or symptoms have improved (when they have been released from isolation per the CDC and local health department guidelines).
- **Exposed Individuals**
 - Individuals who have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus must complete a 14-day quarantine, as described by the CDC and local health department.
 - NHA is creating materials for virtual instruction that will be available to all teachers. Teachers will be able to send these videos and assignments to students in quarantine.
 - If staff is required to be sent home or quarantined, school leadership will work with NHA's People Services Business Partner on next steps. Depending on that staff member's role, employees may be able to work remotely. If remote work is not possible, staff will need to apply for a leave of absence.
- **Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection**
 - Upon notice of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases in the building, the Facilities Preparedness and Response Plan calls for a move into a Level 3 Response Procedure. Within 24 hours of the last known presence of a suspected/confirmed case in the facility, all known areas accessed will be vacated and closed. Partial or full building closure will be determined by the school leadership and in collaboration with the local health department. Aramark personnel will prepare for full disinfection cleaning after 24 hours have passed. Aramark personnel will utilize enhanced PPE (gloves, face masks, gowns) during their disinfection cleaning. Re-entry will not be permitted until disinfection cleaning is complete. The duration of disinfection cleaning will depend on the extent of areas visited in the facility by the suspected/confirmed case. Return to school will be coordinated with the local health department, as necessary.
- **Contact Tracing**
 - The school will cooperate with the local health department in contact tracing efforts.
- **Communication**
 - The protocols and safety measures taken by the school are detailed within this plan. This plan will be shared with all relevant stakeholders via the school's website.
 - Safety measures and protocols will be shared via School emails/newsletters, social media sites, and the school's website as appropriate and when necessary.

2D. CLOSURE

Closure includes contingency plans and procedures for decreasing the scale or scope of in-person education and/or closing the school.

- **Closure Triggers**
 - Within 24 hours of the last known presence of a suspected/confirmed case in the facility, all known areas will be vacated and closed. Partial or full building closure will be determined by the

school leadership and in collaboration with the local health department. Any and all closures will be done in accordance with state and local guidelines and requirements.

- We will use the SchoolMessenger system to inform parents of the school closure. Students will remain in their classrooms until they are picked up by either bus or their parent/guardian. Any student who was in the same space as the infected individual will be isolated until pickup. We will also notify the Boys and Girls Club, as it would be impacting their after-school program.
- School closure and a transition to remote learning may also be necessary based on other factors, including the number of COVID-19 cases present in the school community, increasing COVID-19 cases in the region/county, the operation and status of the local school district, guidelines from the local health departments, and at the discretion of school leadership and the Director of School Quality.

- **Operational Activity**

- In the event of a school closure, the building will be deep cleaned, sanitized, and maintained with routine custodial services based on building usage.
- The school will be accessible by school employees and contractors, as necessary, for basic school operations. Social distancing and mask use will be required while present in the building. In addition, any staff entering the building will need to complete a health screening.

- **Communication**

- The school will ensure that it is effectively and efficiently communicating with its families, ensuring that every family is aware of updates and expectations for students. Information is provided to families via the school's SchoolMessenger system, a tool which sends an email and text to every family. Information will also be provided in school newsletters, back to school information, social media sites, and on the school's website, as necessary.

RESPONSE 3: PRE-OPENING, SCHOOL CALENDARS & SCHEDULING

3A. PRE-OPENING


The school is prepared to operate in four possible learning environments throughout the 2020-21 school year.

- In-person: a return to traditional classroom environment
- Remote: teaching and learning done completely at home
- Virtual: teaching and learning in a fully online environment
- Hybrid: a combination of in-person and remote instruction

At the close of the 2019-20 school year, the school elicited feedback from parents regarding the period of remote learning necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey asked questions to identify areas of need in the event future remote learning periods are necessary.

The school is finding creative ways to adapt its traditional summer onboarding and back-to-school events. School Ambassadors and Admissions Representatives are assisting schools by prepackaging information, providing clean pens, hand sanitizer, and masks at events. Some events are being held virtually, where appropriate. Other events are held in new ways such as outdoor settings, a multi-night event to allow for social distancing, or as a drive-in event. When allowable, tours for new families are being conducted with increased safety measures. Other specific events we have held or plan to hold prior to the start of school include:

- Virtual Kindercamp for incoming kindergarteners.
- Staff introductions via phone and Google Meet
- Virtual back-to-school open house nights for families to see classrooms.
- We contracted with an ice cream truck to visit neighborhoods to welcome students back to school.



The school is required to conduct at least eight evacuation and four lockdown drills each school year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, safety drills may be performed in an alternative manner. Our school will do its best to maintain social distancing protocols while conducting safety drills. We will conduct these drills by grade level and follow the advice of local emergency personnel.

While drills may be modified to maintain the health and safety of our students, our school will ensure students understand social distancing may not be possible in the event of an actual emergency.

In anticipation of possible interruptions to in-person instruction, NHA is providing a Chromebook to each student. This investment in technology is being made to ensure a seamless transition between learning environments, as necessary. Families that have limited internet connectivity have been partnered with community resources to find a solution to this issue.

Our Library Technology Specialist (LTS) will be the school's technology support lead. Families will have the contact telephone number and email for the LTS. Additionally, NHA will provide technology support for all students and staff through a toll-free hotline as needed. The LTS will be trained to safely handle and manage device repairs and replacements during periods of remote instruction, will be provided with cleaning and disinfection supplies, and will have procedures to follow for the packaging of devices for replacement.

Professional development for all staff will take place prior to the start of school. New teachers will participate in NHA's New Teacher Summit, taking place virtually August 6 – 13, which is focused on creating a safe and equitable classroom environment. Teachers will be trained on curriculum and assessment tools to be used throughout the school year. School-wide professional development will take place August 24 – September 4. Learning will support high-quality instructional delivery and effective implementation of instructional resources. Teachers will continue to learn more deeply about their new curricular tools, effective pedagogy and the purpose of assessments and the use of data. Teachers will also receive training specific to remote instruction and the use of virtual tools and trauma-informed practices. These trainings will be provided by NHA, school leaders, and the Erie County BOCES.

3B. SCHOOL CALENDARS

School is scheduled to begin on September 8. There are 183 scheduled school days and 1,170 instructional hours. We are awaiting further guidance from the state on how our region and school can reopen. We will be prepared to operate each of the learning environments described above as we begin the 2020-21 school year. The school will continue to monitor the plans of the local district, regional health and cases of COVID-19, and feedback received from parents as reopening plans are finalized. The school will also follow any updates from the Office of the Governor.

The Governor has released a decision-making framework for reopening schools. If our region is in Phase 4 and the daily infection rate is below 5 percent using a 14-day average, we will be allowed to open. After August 1, if the region's infection rate rises above 9 percent, using a 7-day average, schools will be directed to close.

As we continue to monitor the situation and make the best decisions possible based on available guidance, we will continue to ensure our stakeholders are informed in a timely and efficient manner.

3C. SCHEDULING FOR STUDENTS

Traditional In-person Instruction

We believe that the best learning environment for our students includes regular, day-to-day, in-school instruction. Our goal is to have a traditional, in-school learning model for our students, as long as this can be accomplished in a manner that maintains the health and safety of students and staff. However, local conditions

with COVID-19, safety and social distancing requirements, and/or the operational model of local districts may require a shift to a hybrid or a remote learning model.

Hybrid Environment

As stated, we believe that the best learning environment for our students includes regular, day-to-day, in-school instruction. However, local conditions with COVID-19 and the current phase of the region may require a shift to a hybrid or remote learning model. During hybrid learning, students spend a portion of the school week in the school facility engaging in small group instruction with teachers. The remainder of the week is spent at home, learning through NHA-created instructional videos and independent practice.

The decision to move to a hybrid learning environment will be based on several factors. Those factors include the amount of COVID-19 cases present in the school community, increasing COVID-19 cases in the region, the operation and status of the local school district, guidance from state and local health departments, and at the discretion of school leadership and the Director of School Quality.

While scheduling plans are still being finalized, below is a sample schedule for our hybrid model.

Sample Hybrid Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Group A	Remote	Remote	Remote	In-School	In-School
Group B	In-School	In-School	Remote	Remote	Remote

Special populations, including students with IEPs, English Learners, and at-risk students, will be prioritized for in-person instruction whenever possible. As possible, we will also prioritize kindergarten students in this group.

Remote Learning

Remote learning will occur when the school building must be closed. Students will spend each day learning online using their NHA-issued Chromebook. In remote learning, students will have live small group instruction from NHA teachers, use NHA produced instructional videos, and complete independent study. Factors such as COVID-19 cases present in the school community or surrounding area may require us to step back into a remote learning environment.


Below is an example of what a weekly schedule would look like in a remote environment.

Sample Teacher Week at a Glance					
3 rd Grade ELA: Unit 1 Week 1					
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Synchronous Small Group		Shared Reading: Unit 1 Day 2 "MVP" by Clare Mischica		Shared Reading: Unit 1 Day 3 "A Sudden Slice of Summer"	ELA Small Group Intervention
Read Aloud [Video]	Unit 1 Day 1 <i>Thunder Cake</i> by Patricia Polacco	Unit 1 Day 2 <i>An A from Miss Keller</i> by Patricia Polacco	Unit 1 Day 4 <i>An A from Miss Keller</i> by Patricia Polacco		
Shared Reading	Unit 1 Day 1 "MVP" by Clare Mischica		Unit 1 Day 3 "A Sudden Slice of Summer"		Weekly Quiz: Unit 1 Week 1
Independent Reading	Recommendation: Read for 15 minutes daily and complete Reading Log				
Writing	Persuasive Essay: Persuade your parents to let you travel to another country.				
Digital Tool	Recommendation: 30-60 minutes a week				
Office Hours	Recommendation: 2 hours per week				

For all content areas, including Moral Focus, the school has examples to instruct teachers on how to translate in person learning to the remote format. For Math and ELA, a weekly schedule similar to the above will be provided for every week of the year. That way, should the school transition to remote instruction in the middle of a unit, teachers will be able to find the plan for where they left off in person and be able to pick right up in a remote environment. No matter what form of learning the school year starts with, students will still be assessed to understand where they are academically and inform instructional decisions for teachers, students, and families.

The table below shows suggested time-on-task for various academic subjects by day. Please note that these times are flexible and may be adjusted, as needed. Teachers will continue to reinforce this flexibility during their communication with families.

Content Area	Time-On-Task
ELA	75 minutes
Math	60 minutes
Science/Social Studies	30-90 minutes
Moral Focus	15 minutes
Specials	30 minutes



Students with IEPs or 504 plans will access the same learning opportunities that are offered to general education students. These learning activities and supports will address student needs identified within their IEP/504, to the extent appropriate. To accomplish this, special education providers will collaborate with general education teachers to ensure provision of accommodations and modifications (when appropriate) that allow students to access learning opportunities. Individualized accommodations will be documented and shared with classroom teachers for each student. A grade level specific list of accommodations has been created for teachers to share with families.

English Learner (EL) teachers are working with classroom teachers to provide necessary scaffolds to schoolwork to ensure EL students have access to the core content. Interventionists will take direction from the leadership team on how to best collaborate and support general education teachers so that all instructional professionals are able to support each student and family as needed.

Virtual Option

The school is exploring the possibility of a completely virtual learning opportunity for parents who do not feel comfortable or safe returning their students to a traditional or hybrid learning environment due to the nature of the pandemic. It is our goal that providing this option will help us to retain students and families that may fall into this category. More information about this will be made available to our families when it is available.

3D. SCHEDULING FOR STAFF

The school in partnership with NHA's People Services Department will assess the need for new or additional positions, additional responsibilities staff will need to take on, redeploy staff, and recruit, interview, and hire school personnel.

Traditional In-Person

As we start an uncertain year, all staff need to be flexible with possibly being asked to "see a need, fill a need." The school recognizes there may be times when staff are out due to illness, negative screening, or quarantine requirements. School leadership will work with its NHA People Services Business Partner to redeploy staff as necessary.

Hybrid

Scheduling for a hybrid learning environment is still being finalized. However, in this model, teachers would be providing synchronous learning to a smaller cohort of students during their time in the school building and providing asynchronous learning opportunities for students while they are out of the school building.


Remote/Virtual Learning

During times of remote instruction, all instructional staff will provide daily activities/assignments. Teachers will develop Google Meetings to support student understanding and mastery of the daily lessons and will maintain "office hours" multiple times throughout the week. The Google Meetings can be one-on-one with students, with a small group, or the whole class. It is the expectation that the teacher provides materials for each student daily, though may not have daily direct interaction.

RESPONSE 4: ENROLLMENT & ATTENDANCE

4A. ENROLLMENT

The enrollment of new students continued during remote instruction this spring, and throughout the summer. We will seek to meet our enrollment goals as in the past. However, the number of new applications and our waitlist are down slightly from previous years due to the uncertainty that exists.



If the school anticipates any material enrollment budget implications not previously in the budget, they will be incorporated into the Fall Amended Budget revision.

4B. ATTENDANCE

The school is required to continue taking and tracking daily attendance regardless of the instruction method the school is operating in at any time. In-person attendance will continue as traditionally taken and reported. Our student and staff attendance policies have been updated to support protecting against COVID-19. This includes excused absences (with remote learning support) for students that have tested positive. Our current attendance policy for students provides support for other excused absences. These excused absences are reviewed by the principal. Any academic support needed during the absence is coordinated with the parent/guardian and teaching staff.

In a hybrid or remote learning scenario, instructors will continue to track student participation. Attendance will be reported and monitored in our online Gradebook system. Students will be considered present when one (or more) of the following situations takes place:

- The student “checks in” or attends a Google Classroom event.
- The student completes and submits a Google Classroom assignment.
- The student completes and submits a learning packet assignment.
- The student “checks in” with the teacher via phone if not able to complete work virtually.

If students are not participating in remote learning and teachers are unable to connect with them, the teacher will share the information with the school leadership. When necessary, the Dean will bring the name to the Principal, which will trigger a response from the social and emotional support team, who will continue attempts to contact the student through a variety of communication methods.

Our school will be responsible for reporting attendance using the above criteria into the MyNHA platform and ensuring that attendance data is accurate. NHA’s Student Data Team will handle attendance reporting to the state.

RESPONSE 5: ACADEMIC PROGRAM

5A. CURRICULUM


The school is continuing to provide the same curriculum regardless of the learning environment. The mode of delivery will simply shift from in-person to remote as necessary.

For all content areas, including Moral Focus, the school has examples to provide support for teachers on how to translate in person learning to the remote format. For Math and ELA, a weekly schedule will be provided for every week of the year. That way, should the school transition to remote instruction in the middle of a unit, teachers will be able to find the plan for where they left off in person and be able to pick right up in a remote environment. No matter what form of learning the school year starts with, students will still be assessed to understand where they are academically and inform instructional decisions for teachers, students, and families.

5B. INSTRUCTION

Hybrid Environment

During hybrid learning, students spend a portion of the school week in the school facility engaging in small group instruction with teachers. The remainder of the week is spent at home, learning through NHA-created instructional videos and independent practice.



Our teachers will be provided with information about best practices for blended learning, grade-level proficiencies, modes of student assessment and feedback, differentiated support opportunities for students, and guidance around daily instructional time. Teachers will continually monitor and assess students' connectivity and accessibility, attendance, and student work.

Remote/Virtual Learning

Remote learning will occur when the school building must be closed. Students will spend each day learning online using their NHA-issued Chromebook. In remote learning, students will have live, small group instruction from NHA teachers, use NHA-produced instructional videos, and have independent studies. Factors such as COVID-19 cases present in the school community or surrounding area may require us to step back into a fully remote learning environment.

After much research and new learning, the school in partnership with NHA has prioritized five key components for remote learning:

- 1) Ensuring Regular Teacher/Student Connections
 - The school recognizes, that even in a remote setting, teachers play the most important role in growing our students.
- 2) Provide Opportunities for Student Discourse
 - We know that students learn more when they are the ones doing the thinking and speaking.
- 3) Allow for Flexibility in Scheduling
 - Every school may need to operate slightly differently.
 - Schools may need to adjust plans as needs change in their community.
 - Every student's family may have different needs and demands.
- 4) Encourage Engagement and Participation
 - Students learn best when actively engaged. The types of learning opportunities we provide and the technology tools that we choose help ensure active engagement and participation.
- 5) Utilizing Rigorous Instructional Materials
 - NHA is committed to offering families high-quality instructional resources. This effort has involved ongoing vetting from both our Board and teams within NHA to ensure these resources continue to improve and align with state standards. Should a situation necessitate a move to remote learning, we will be able to continue utilizing these tools.

As we work to transition our instructional vision to a remote model and develop a plan for remote learning, we prioritize three learning types for our students.

- 1) Synchronous Small Groups
 - By prioritizing small group instruction, we can ensure that teachers and students are able to connect regularly. We are allowing opportunities for student discourse, engagement, and participation. Our same high-quality resources are being utilized within our synchronous small groups.
 - Math Small Groups will meet two times per week (e.g., on Mondays and Wednesdays).
 - ELA Small Groups will meet two times per week (e.g., on Tuesdays and Thursdays).
 - Science and Social Studies groups will vary by week.
- 2) Asynchronous Learning
 - Pre-recorded Lessons.
 - Independent Practices.
- 3) Office Hours
 - Office hours are another opportunity for teacher-student connections. Teachers can provide feedback, offer assistance or support with an assignment, and/or address remediation/extension opportunities.
 - Office hours also provide an opportunity for a parent touchpoint.

For all content areas, including Moral Focus, the school has examples to instruct teachers on how to translate in person learning to the remote format. For Math and ELA, a weekly schedule will be provided for every week of the year. That way, should the school transition to remote instruction in the middle of a unit, teachers will be able to find the plan for where they left off in person and be able to pick right up in a remote environment. No matter what form of learning the school year starts with, students will still be assessed to understand where they are academically and inform instructional decisions for teachers, students, and families.

The table below shows suggested time-on-task for various academic subjects by day. Please note that these times are flexible and may be adjusted, as needed. Teachers will continue to reinforce this flexibility during their communication with families.

Content Area	Time-On-Task
ELA	75 minutes
Math	60 minutes
Science/Social Studies	30-90 minutes
Moral Focus	15 minutes
Specials	30 minutes

We will ensure that instruction meets the needs of all students, as described in section 5D, At-Risk Populations, below.

5C. ASSESSMENT


We will utilize standardized and formative assessments to inform instructional strategies. Within the first two weeks of the school year, unless we are required to open in a fully remote environment, we will administer one of the following assessments, varying by grade level:

- A norm-referenced national assessment in reading and in mathematics (likely NWEA).
- i-Ready Diagnostic.
- AimswebPlus.
- Reading Mastery.

In addition, classroom teachers will monitor mastery of curricular content, as measured through classroom assessments that are administered as part of the school’s formative assessment program. The formative assessment process is designed to provide a mechanism for monitoring all students’ academic needs and will allow teachers to adapt instructional methods and materials as necessary to optimize learning opportunities. We will use weekly tests, interim assessments, and benchmarking to demonstrate student mastery of subject matter.

Students will complete their weekly standards-based assessments through EdCite, an online platform compatible with our Gradebook and student information system. EdCite allows our students to complete assessments virtually, or by paper/pencil method. Assessment results will integrate directly into our school’s Gradebook, and NHA’s Information and Analytics teams are currently undertaking an effort to eliminate the need for classroom teachers to manually enter scores upon completion of student assessments.

We know students will have extensive needs due to learning loss from school closures in the 2019-20 school year. These assessments will help teachers identify learning gaps, inform teachers and school leaders of what



standards may need to be re-taught in each grade level, and aid in designing paths of individualized instructional needs.

5D. AT-RISK POPULATIONS

We will provide the same learning opportunities to both our general education students and students who have IEPs or 504 plans. This will offer activities and supports that meet student needs contained within a student's IEP or 504 plan (to appropriate extent). In order to meet this, collaboration will take place between special education staff and general education teachers. This makes certain that our school is providing sufficient accommodations and modifications, when necessary, that allow students to access learning opportunities. Our staff will document individualized accommodations and share them with classroom teachers for every student. A grade level specific list of accommodations has been created for teachers to share with families.

IEP teams will work collaboratively to ensure that Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is being delivered to each student with an IEP or Section 504 Plan. Data and collaboration with multiple stakeholders will drive necessary supports and accommodations for the student to access a FAPE. IEP teams will determine the best way to deliver a FAPE considering a starting point for instruction once school resumes in the fall.

The school will develop a continuation of services plan for any students needing occupational, physical, and/or speech and language therapy, including evaluations by school psychologists and social workers. A FAPE will be delivered to all students that have an IEP or Section 504 plan. Careful consideration will be given as to the best way to deliver these services in a socially distant and safe way.

English Learner (EL) teachers are working with classroom teachers to provide necessary scaffolds to schoolwork to ensure EL students are able to access the core content. Interventionists will take direction from their leadership team on how to best collaborate and support general education teachers so that all instructional professionals are able to support each student and family as needed.