**SOUTHSIDE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL**

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**2020-2021 REMOTE LEARNING PLAN**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Southside Academy Charter School, located in Syracuse, N.Y., opened in the fall of 2002 and is managed by National Heritage Academies (NHA). Our school offers grades K-8 and enrolled 681 students during the 2019-20 school year. Southside's mission is to provide all of our scholars and their families a challenging academic program, with a focus on high academic achievement, and to encourage a sense of family, community, and leadership within all of our scholars. 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, Southside Academy 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 Southside Academy 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.

Southside'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 regarding the period of remote/virtual learning necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey asked questions to identify areas of need in the event future remote/virtual learning periods are necessary. 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 Executive Principal, Tammy Pugh, will be the school's designated coordinator. She will serve as the main point of contact upon identification of any/all positive COVID-19 cases. She will be responsible for subsequent communication. Ms. Pugh will also be responsible for answering questions from students, staff, and parents/legal guardians of students regarding the COVID-19 public health emergency and subsequent plans implemented by Southside.

*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/virtual 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/virtual 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 | In-School | Remote | Remote | In-School | Remote |
| Group B | Remote | In-School | Remote | Remote | In-school |

Special populations, including students with IEPs or 504 plans, English Language Learners, and at-risk Tier III, will be prioritized to receive remote/virtual instruction each Wednesday. Students in kindergarten who require intervention regarding kindergarten readiness skills will receive remote/virtual instruction in a small group setting.

Assignments for student groups will be announced in August 2020. Considerations will be made for families with multiple students enrolled to remain on the same learning schedule.

Remote/Virtual Learning
Remote/virtual learning will occur when the school building must be closed. Students will spend each day learning online using their NHA-issued Chromebook. In remote/virtual 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/virtual learning environment.

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



**Sample Teacher Week at a Glance**
**3rd Grade ELA: Unit 1 Week 1**
NATIONAL HERITAGE ACADEMIES

|  | 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 *Thunder Cake* by Patricia Polacco | Unit 1 Day 2 *An A from Miss Keller* by Patricia Polacco | Unit 1 Day 4 *An A from Miss Keller* 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/virtual 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/virtual 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/virtual 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.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAM

*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/virtual, 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/virtual format. For Math and ELA, a weekly schedule be provided for every week of the year. That way, should the school transition to remote/virtual 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/virtual 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.

*INSTRUCTION*

<u>Hybrid Environment:</u>
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.

<u>Remote/Virtual Learning:</u>
Remote/virtual learning will occur when the school building must be closed. Students will spend each day learning online using their NHA-issued Chromebook. In remote/virtual 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/virtual learning environment.

After much research and new learning, the school in partnership with NHA has prioritized five key components for remote/virtual learning:
1) Ensuring Regular Teacher/Student Connections
   o The school recognizes, that even in a remote/virtual setting, teachers play the most important role in growing our students.
2) Provide Opportunities for Student Discourse
   o We know that students learn more when they are the ones doing the thinking and speaking.
3) Allow for Flexibility in Scheduling
   o Every school may need to operate slightly differently.
   o Schools may need to adjust plans as needed change in their community.
   o Every student's family may have different needs and demands.
4) Encourage Engagement and Participation
   o 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
   o 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/virtual learning, we will be able to continue utilizing these tools.

As we work to transition our instructional vision to a remote/virtual model and develop a plan for remote/virtual learning, we prioritize three learning types for our students.
1) Synchronous Small Groups
   o 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.
   o Math Small Groups will meet two times per week (e.g., on Mondays and Wednesdays).
   o ELA Small Groups will meet two times per week (e.g., on Tuesdays and Thursdays).

- o Science and Science Studies groups will vary by week.
2) Asynchronous Learning
    - o Pre-recorded Lessons.
    - o Independent Practices.
3) Office Hours
    - o 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.
    - o 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/virtual 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/virtual 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/virtual 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 |
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| ELA | 75 minutes |
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| Moral Focus | 15 minutes |
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We will ensure that instruction meets the needs of all students, as described in section 5D, At-Risk Populations, below.

*ASSESSMENT*

Southside will assess students to inform and drive instruction in a manner that is meaningful and specific to each student. We will continue our rigorous assessment process during the 2020-21 school year, taking into account an in-person or fully remote/virtual setting. Students will participate in benchmark assessments three times utilizing aimswebPlus.

Additionally, scholars will participate in weekly formative assessments, virtually and in-person (if in an in-person setting). Our intervention diagnostic tool, i-Ready, will be administered to gauge beginning points for computer-based intervention programs. Teachers will continue to provide ongoing feedback to students regarding their work, and will have regular conversations with the instructional and leadership teams to analyze data in a way that informs instruction.

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.

*AT-RISK POPULATIONS*

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 any 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.

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.