

**SOUTHSIDE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL
2020-2021 REOPENING PLAN****RESPONSE 1: 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.

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. To ensure NY State Guidelines, for the health and safety of our staff and students will be at half capacity to meet the minimum recommendation for square footage for social distancing.
- **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.
- Multiple entrances will be utilized for student arrival. We will implement a staggered approach to accommodate for temperature screenings and to also allow for social distancing.
- Middle school students will not utilize lockers. Southside will purchase coat hooks to place inside of each classroom to eliminate the use of shared lockers. Both teachers and the school's facilities team will sanitize hooks on a nightly basis.
- Students will eat lunch within the classroom. They will remain in their seats and seek permission from a classroom teacher in order to wash their hands or utilize the restroom. While out of their classroom seat, students are required to properly wear a face mask (if medically able to do so). Meals will be distributed by classroom teachers, limiting excessive student movement. Upon the completion of lunch, classroom staff will collect and dispose of any/all waste. Students will then be instructed to wash their hands. All student movement during lunch will be monitored by classroom staff.
- **PPE and Face Coverings**
 - All staff and students will be required to bring and use 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.
 - Staff/students medically unable to wear a mask within the school facility will be required to submit an assurance from their medical provider that they are unable to do so. A protocol will be established where any/all assurances are submitted to the appropriate grade level dean. Grade level deans will communicate with the full Southside leadership team. A confirmation letter will then be issued to each staff/student medically unable to wear a mask. Staff will receive regular updates as needed and within compliance of all privacy requirements.
 - 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 are unable to obtain a mask, or forget theirs at home, additional masks will be on hand in the main office. In an effort to minimize travel throughout the facility, additional masks will be kept in each wing or classroom of the school building.
 - 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.
- Shared spaces within Southside will adhere to social distancing guidelines. Moveable walls and staggered schedules will assist in maintaining these guidelines, and shared spaces will be sanitized both before and after use by appropriate school staff. We will maintain a record of all shared space use.
- 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 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 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.
 - The school will follow the guidelines set forth in the Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.
 - Southside Academy Charter School offers modified sports programming in both the winter and spring. These seasons are authorized by the NYSPHAA Section III. We will continue to monitor guidance provided by Section III and will make adjustments to our programming accordingly.
- **Before and After Care**
 - Southside Academy Charter School does not offer a before and after school care program.
- **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:** The Syracuse City School District First Student, Inc. provide transportation for Southside students. Our school will adhere to their guidelines and protocols with regard to safety measures and provisions. This may include the following:
 - The bus driver, any staff, and all students in grades preK-12, if medically feasible, wearing facial coverings while on the bus. Students must socially 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 lunch within the classroom. They will remain in their seats and seek permission from a classroom teacher in order to wash their hands or utilize the restroom. While out of their classroom seat, students are required to properly wear a face mask (if medically able to do so). Meals will be distributed by classroom teachers, limiting excessive student movement. Upon the completion of lunch, classroom staff will collect and dispose of any/all waste. Students will then be instructed to wash their hands. All student movement during lunch will be monitored by classroom staff.
 - Sneeze guards are being added to all food distribution carts.
 - Cutlery, seasonings, and sauces will be placed directly on individual trays.
 - Southside students will eat breakfast and lunch within the classroom. Cafeteria staff will transport meals to each classroom where the classroom teacher will distribute to each student. Before and after each meal, students will wash their hands using the school's established protocol. Sharing or trading of any food or utensils is strictly prohibited. Upon completion of breakfast or lunch, classroom teachers will discard meal materials.

- **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 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 office administrator, as necessary. The office administrator 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 office administrator, as necessary. The office administrator 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.
 - School staff will take a temperature screening of each student on a daily basis prior to entering the facility. Should a student have a temperature exceeding current guidance, school staff will escort that student through an outside emergency door to a room designated for those exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms. Efforts will be taken at all times to limit contact within the school building.
- **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.
 - Southside has established protocol to allow for an efficient and orderly closure during the school day (if necessary). The initial step involves the COVID-19 Coordinator to enact all procedures. Staff will be in constant communication with the school's NHA Director of School Quality to ensure closure takes place expeditiously and effectively. We will notify the local health department to inform them of our decision, work with the Syracuse City School District regarding transportation needs, and communicate widely with parents/legal guardians. Communication with families will be done via the school's SchoolMessenger system, a tool which sends an email and text to every family.
- School closure and a transition to remote/virtual 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.

Southside Academy Charter School will provide professional development to staff regarding health and safety in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. This will begin in mid-August with a series of videos outlining health and safety guidelines for the school. Staff will receive correspondence from the school leadership team that outlines all required processes and procedures to maintain student health and safety. The week before the school year begins, staff will complete training that covers content that includes school operations/office procedures, health and safety, curriculum, technology, and student assessments. Staff members will have opportunities to ask questions and seek clarification regarding all topics. Additionally, our staff will be provided guidelines for classroom set-up. A model classroom will be established for reference.

We will conduct new student/family events leading up to the start of the school year that follow strict protocols and guidelines that adhere to measures that include social distancing and wearing of masks (if medically able). Events will be scheduled to take place outdoors, when feasible.

Back-to-school events will take place in a virtual format for the 2020-21 school year. Staff will conduct meetings with families leading up to the start of the school year, and will provide copies and/or recording of presentations for those who are unable to attend.

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 designated technology support lead. Families will have the contact telephone number and email for the LTS. Additionally, NHA will support each individual school with a 1-800 hotline number for additional technology support. To safely manage device repairs/replacements during periods of remote/virtual instruction, each LTS has received training on the safe handling of returned materials, has cleaning/disinfection supplies provided by NHA/Aramark, and has procedures to follow for the packaging of devices for replacement.

3B. SCHOOL CALENDARS

We have a draft calendar for the 2020-21 school year and that will be finalized when the local school district calendar is released. Our intended start day is on September 8. There are 181 scheduled school days and 1,124 instructional hours. We are awaiting further guidance from the state on how our region and school can reopen. We will be prepared to operate in 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/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					
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/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.

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/virtual 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/virtual 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. Currently, 584 students have re-enrolled from 2019-20 and an additional 58 students have newly enrolled with us this year. Forty-eight more students have been accepted, but have not yet turned in their registration paperwork. We maintain a waitlist of 206 students.

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/virtual 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/virtual 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/virtual 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/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 is 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.

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/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
 - 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
 - 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 needed 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/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
 - 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 Science 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/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
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

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.

5D. 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.