

# CLOSTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS RESTART & RECOVERY PLAN

DISTRICT CODE 03-0930

SUBMITTED TO NJDOE ON JULY 20, 2020

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NJDOE ON AUGUST 24, 2020

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NJDOE ON MARCH 29, 2021

BASED ON THE BOARD OF EDUCATION DECISION ON  
MARCH 25, 2021

*(updates Highlighted in Yellow)*



Closter Public Schools  
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Vincent McHale, Superintendent

*The district Reopening Plan is an ongoing process and subject to change as directed by the New Jersey Department of Education or as dictated by changing circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

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## **Overview**

In Closter Public Schools, we believe:

- all students can learn and thrive academically, socially and emotionally with support from staff, parents and peers;
- skilled, caring teachers are the most important variable in the classroom and we should consistently provide resources to assist them in life-long learning;
- instruction should be differentiated and culturally responsive to address students' learning styles;
- in a strong home-school-community connection and respect Closter's diversity;
- open and honest communication is vital to creating a positive environment for all;
- in the value of diversity and pledge to create a positive culture that safeguards equity, inclusion, dignity and respect for all.

These core beliefs guide the way Closter Public Schools operate on a daily basis. As we prepare to restart school in September 2020 and recover from the school building closure that extended from March to June 2020, we will be guided by these core beliefs with our focus on maintaining the safety and health of our students and staff. This plan was created following the guidance from the New Jersey Department of Education document, *The Road Back: Restart and Recovery Plan for Education*, provided on Friday, June 26, 2020.

## **Demographics**

The District Demographic Profile (as of June 19, 2020):

- Total number of students: 1,197 (666 in HES; 531 in TMS)
- Number of students with disabilities: 165 (86 in HES; 79 in TMS)
- Number of English Language Learners: 99
- Number of homeless students: 0
- Number of students eligible for free/reduced meals: 0

## School Building Reopening Committee

Committee Member	Role within the School Community
Jennifer Annese	Teacher, Tenakill Middle School
Courtney Carmichael	Assistant Principal, Hillside Elementary School and Supervisor of Curriculum & Instruction, District
Susan Carpenter	Teacher, Hillside Elementary School
Jaime Caruso	School Nurse, Tenakill Middle School
Ralph Chappell	Director of Operations and Maintenance
Magaly Cross	Closter Board of Education Trustee and Parent
Patricia Eichenlaub	Director of Special Services
Alexandra Earle	School Counselor, Tenakill Middle School
Janet Felice	Child Study Team, Hillside Elementary School
Melody Finkelstein	Closter Board of Education Trustee and Parent
Karen Freyre	Parent
Kristen Haenelt	School Nurse, Hillside Elementary School
Mikelle Hochron	Parent
Josephine Hunt	Teacher, Hillside Elementary School
Joanne Iyo	Teacher, Hillside Elementary School
Amy Kenny-Whritenour	Teacher, Tenakill Middle School and Closter Education Association President
Chris Kwon	Closter Board of Education Trustee and Parent
Ofer Marcovitz	Parent
Keith McElroy	Assistant Principal, Tenakill Middle School
Vincent McHale	Superintendent of Schools
Limor Moshkovich	Parent
Lukshmi Puttanniah	Parent
Laurie Rochlin	Child Study Team, Tenakill Middle School

Dianne Smith	Principal, Hillside Elementary School
William Tantum	Principal, Tenakill Middle School
Floro Villanueva, Jr.	Business Administrator
Dara Weiss	School Counselor, Hillside Elementary School
Janice Yeoh	Parent

### **School Building Reopening Sub-Committee**

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Role within the School Community</b>
Jodi Belnick	Teacher, Hillside Elementary School
Erica Cho	Teacher, Tenakill Middle School
Kari Corcoran-McPartland	Teacher, Hillside Elementary School
Barbara Cullere	Teacher, Tenakill Middle School
Becky Dippolito	Teacher, Hillside Elementary School
Rachel Fineman	Teacher, Tenakill Middle School
Charlene Gerbig	Teacher, Hillside Elementary School
Silvia Jost	Teacher, Hillside Elementary School
Katie Lee	Teacher, Hillside Elementary School
Alyssa Levy	Teacher, Hillside Elementary School
Kate Maher	Teacher, Hillside Elementary School
William Potkulski	Teacher, Hillside Elementary School
Catherine Ricca	Teacher, Hillside Elementary School
Gila Rochlin	Speech Language Pathologist, Hillside Elementary School

## Re-entry Plan Components

### Conditions for Learning

#### 1. General Health and Safety Guidelines

- *In all stages and phases of pandemic response and recovery, schools must comply with Center for Disease Control (CDC), state, and local guidelines.*
- *Schools must also provide reasonable accommodations for staff and students at higher risk for severe illness and promote behaviors that reduce spread, such as social distancing, frequent hand washing, and the use of face coverings.*  
(see pages 15-18 of [state guidance](#))

#### **At both Hillside Elementary School and Tenakill Middle School:**

- Upon arrival, all employees will have their temperature read.
- Students will enter at assigned entrance doors and paraprofessionals will check students' body temperature.
- Students who exhibit temperatures of 100.4 or above will be escorted to the outdoor nurse station and will be required to return to home.
- The spread of COVID-19 will be mitigated by:
  - reduced classroom occupancy;
  - social distancing;
  - scheduled hand-washing for students and staff;
  - use of hand-sanitizer in every classroom;
  - providing every staff member and student with two cloth face masks and one face shield and requiring their use;
  - Use of signs and floor stickers to encourage social distancing, use of face masks, and reminders for hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Students at higher-risk for severe illness will have the reasonable accommodation of participating in virtual learning. The district will make reasonable accommodations for staff members at higher-risk for severe illness. Staff members who are at higher-risk for severe illness may also elect to take a leave under the expanded Family Medical Leave Act.
- There will be no field trips or large group assemblies scheduled until the pandemic restrictions are lifted.

#### 2. Classrooms, Testing, and Therapy Rooms

- *Schools and districts must allow for social distancing to the maximum extent possible.*
- *When social distancing is difficult or impossible, face coverings are required, and face coverings are always required for visitors and staff unless it will inhibit the individual's health.*
- *School districts must also minimize use of shared objects, ensure indoor facilities have adequate ventilation, prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations, and ensure students wash hands frequently.*  
(see pages 18-21 of [state guidance](#))

### **At both Hillside Elementary School and Tenakill Middle School:**

- Based on the CDC and NJDOH guidelines revised in March 2021, Hillside Elementary School will maintain three feet of social distancing between students, with strict adherence to mask-wearing. Tenakill Middle School will maintain six feet of social distancing between students where practicable and will follow CDC guidelines for three feet of social distancing where six feet is not practicable. This will allow students who chose the hybrid learning model for trimester three to attend school for five single session days while keeping students in classroom-level cohorts. Students who chose the fully virtual learning model for trimester three will continue in that model.
- All desks will be placed in rows and will face in the same direction. Students will wear face masks at all times. Whenever a student, teacher and/or paraprofessional need to interact more closely than six feet for academic assistance, the students and the teacher or paraprofessional, will use face shields in addition to the face masks.
- The school district will provide every student and staff member with two cloth masks and one face shield. All students in PreK through grade 8 will be required to wear a face mask while inside the school building. Staff members at both schools are required to wear a face mask.
- Each student will have his/her own desk or classroom space to maintain personal belongings. Tenakill Middle School students will not use the lockers or locker rooms until the pandemic restrictions are lifted.
- We will remove extra tables and furniture from classrooms to maximize floor space for social distancing.
- Hillside Elementary School classrooms all have sinks, soap and hand sanitizer for frequent hand washing. Tenakill Middle School classrooms do not all have sinks, so students and staff will follow a schedule for regular hand washing throughout the day. The middle school classrooms will also have hand sanitizer.
- In classrooms, therapy rooms and testing rooms, the sharing of instructional objects and materials will be restricted. Students will have their own materials, supplies and resources. In the event that any object or material is shared, the teacher will use the district-provided disinfecting wipes to sanitize it.
- The revised Board of Education policy 1250 directs, "No visitors shall be permitted in the schools until pandemic restrictions are lifted. The principal may admit a visitor if he or she determines that it is necessary. In all such cases, the visitor shall submit to the screening procedure (e.g., temperature and exposure questionnaire) and shall be required to wear a face mask while in the school building. The face mask shall be required in all cases. However, an accommodation may be made where the visitor can demonstrate that wearing a face mask is detrimental to the visitor's health. A child under two years of age shall not be required to wear a face mask."

### **3. Transportation**

- *School districts should maintain social distancing practices on buses to the maximum extent practicable and adopt best practices for cleaning and disinfecting all vehicles used for transporting students.*

- *If maintaining social distancing is not possible, all students must wear face coverings while on buses.*

(see pages 21-23 of [state guidance](#))

Closter Public Schools will work with the contracted transportation providers to ensure that buses are thoroughly sanitized and disinfected prior to a scheduled run. The district will provide face coverings for students while on buses.

There will be no field trips planned until the pandemic restrictions are lifted, so bus transportation will not be required for this purpose.

#### 4. Student Flow, Entry, Exit, and Common Areas

- *School district reopening plans should establish the process and location for student and staff health screenings.*
- *This should include providing physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to help ensure that staff and students remain at least six feet apart.*
- *When it is not possible to maintain physical distancing, schools must require the use of face coverings.*

(see pages 23-24 of [state guidance](#))

#### Hillside Elementary School

Students arrive at the following times:

##### Grades K-4

- Arrival: 8:00 a.m. - 8:20 a.m.
- Instructional Day K-4 Start Time: 8:20 a.m.
- Instructional Day K-4 End Time: 12:45 p.m.

##### PreK

- Arrival: 8:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
- Instructional Day: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
- PreK After-Care: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Fee-based)

All entry locations will have social distancing markers as students line up for temperature check prior to entry.

Students will be admitted and dismissed\* at designated doors based on grade level:

- Kindergarten: Door 3, located to the left of the main entrance\*
- Grade One: Door 1, main entrance\*
- Pre-school and Grade Two: Door 8, left side of building in the upper loop, second set of doors
- Grade Three: Door 10, left side of building in the upper loop, third set of doors
- Grade Four: Door 9, left side of building in the upper loop, in the garden area

**\*Note the following for dismissal**

- Kindergarten: Dismissal through individual classroom doors
- Grade One: Door 6, courtyard

**Tenakill Middle School**

Students in grades 5-8 arrive at the following times:

- Arrival: 8:00 to 8:20 a.m.
- Homeroom: 8:20 - 8:30 a.m.
- Instructional Day Start Time: 8:30 a.m.
- Instructional Day End Time: 12:30 p.m.

Students will begin arrival between 8:00 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. All entry locations will have social distancing markers as students line up for temperature check prior to entry.

Students will be admitted and dismissed at designated doors based upon grade level to ensure isolation of each grade level.

- Grade 8 - Door 1 (Main Entrance)
- Grade 7 - Door 6 (Rear Entrance)
- Grade 6 - Door 3 (Balcony Entrance)
- Grade 5 - Door 4 (Side Entrance)

**At both Hillside Elementary School and Tenakill Middle School:**

All interior doors will be held or propped open during entry and exit to ensure door knobs and push-bars do not collect and pass possible droplets. Custodians will clean the exterior door knobs and push-bars after arrival time.

Dismissal of groups will be staggered slightly to ensure hallways, stairwells and doorways maintain social distancing protocols.

**5. Screening, PPE, and Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms**

- *School districts must adopt a policy for safely and respectfully screening students and employees for symptoms of and history of exposure to COVID-19.*
- *Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 must be safely and respectfully isolated from others.*
- *If a school district becomes aware that an individual who has spent time in a district facility tests positive for COVID-19, district officials must immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality.*

(see pages 24-27 of [state guidance](#))

All staff and students will complete an online daily health screening prior to arrival. This will be administered through Realtime. Students survey results will be scanned by an assigned staff member prior to entering the school building. If a student has not completed the screening, his/her temperature will be taken and the parent will be called to complete the survey.

Students and employees will be asked not come into school, or to leave if symptoms present during the school day, if they test positive for COVID-19 or exhibit one or more of the symptoms of COVID-19, based on CDC guidance, that is not otherwise explained:

- A fever of 100° F or greater;
- Cough;
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;
- Chills;
- Repeated shaking with chills;
- Muscle pain;
- Headache;
- Sore throat;
- New loss of taste or smell;
- Fatigue;
- Congestion or runny nose;
- Nausea or vomiting;
- Diarrhea.

Students and staff with elevated temperatures or who exhibit other symptoms will be directed to the designated isolation room, either in the outdoor tent prior to school entry or in the school nurse's office during the school day. The nurse will examine the individual and may refer them for testing and treatment. A student exhibiting symptoms of COVID 19 may be required to submit to a COVID 19 test. The school nurse shall require the certification of a physician that the student is contagion free before readmitting a student to school. The nurse shall report all students testing positive for COVID 19 to the health department. The health department shall conduct the contact tracing.

The district has purchased the following personal protective equipment (PPE):

- Cloth masks: two for every student and staff member
- Surgical masks: for any necessary visitor; for students and staff who do not have a cloth mask
- N95 masks (back-ordered as of July 2020: for use in the nurse's office and as an accommodation for teachers at higher risk of serious illness
- Face shields: one for every student and staff member
- Gowns: ordered for use in nurse's office or whenever necessary

## 6. Contact Tracing

- *Contact tracing is the process used to identify those who have come into contact with people who have tested positive for many contagious diseases, including COVID-19.*

- *All school district administrators, school safety specialists, counselors, and any other staff deemed appropriate by the school district, should be provided with information regarding the role of contact tracing in keeping school communities safe from the spread of contagious disease.*
- *School districts should collaborate with the local health department and engage their school nurses to develop contact tracing policies and procedures, as well as educate the broader school community on the importance of contact tracing.*

(see pages 27-28 of [state guidance](#))

The Board of Education revised policy 5141.2 to direct that the contact tracing will be conducted by the health department. The Closter Public Schools administrators and school nurses will communicate consistently and regularly with the Closter Department of Health Official, Jin Bae, about COVID-19 cases, regional COVID-19 risk level, questions we have, and to provide her with any requested information for contact tracing. The Health Department has provided the school district with a *COVID-19 Confirmed or Suspect Report for the Local Health Department* form for the school nurses to report cases and to provide symptom information. The Health Department has also provided the school district with a *School Contact Line List for Local Health Department* form for school nurses to document anyone who had close contact in school with someone with a suspected or known COVID-19. Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of someone with suspected or known COVID-19 for at least 10 consecutive minutes. In some school situations, it may be difficult to determine whether individuals have met this criterion and an entire cohort, classroom, or other group may need to be considered exposed, particularly if people have spent time together indoors.

Any student or staff member exhibiting symptoms of COVID 19 may be required to submit to a COVID 19 test. The school nurse shall require the certification of a physician that the student is contagion free before readmitting a student or staff member to school. The nurse shall report all students or staff members testing positive for COVID 19 to the health department.

## **7. Facilities Cleaning Practices**

- *School districts must continue to adhere to existing required facilities cleaning practices and procedures, and any new specific requirements of the local health department as they arise.*
- *School districts must also develop a schedule for increased routine cleaning and disinfecting, especially of frequently touched surfaces and objects, and sanitize bathrooms daily and between use as much as possible.*

(see pages 28-30 of [state guidance](#))

Closter Public Schools will continue to adhere to existing required facilities cleaning practices and procedures, and any new specific requirements of the local health department as they arise. The planned schedule for cleaning/disinfecting, areas to be cleaned, and methods and materials to be used is as follows:

### **Specialized Flu/Virus Cleaning Routines**

- Each school will have all touchpoints disinfected at the end of each day in addition to scheduled cleaning of door handles, push bars, etc. throughout the day.

### **Specialized Cleaning Products:**

- A very powerful hospital grade disinfectant (Brolin Brutab 6), specially mixed at a level designed to kill viruses, is being applied by day custodian staff to disinfect all touchpoints and surfaces in our schools.
- For the safety of students and staff, this chemical is being applied when classrooms and other spaces are not occupied.
- An electrostatic sprayer which also serves as an atomizer is used to efficiently apply the cleaning product to disinfect all touchpoints and surfaces.
- To be effective, the product must dry intact without being disturbed.
- The specialized hospital grade disinfectant requires special handling and cannot be applied by anyone other than trained staff.

### **Approved School Cleaning Products:**

- A pre-mixed (Envirox H<sub>2</sub>Orange) concentrate is for cleaning all floors and surfaces.
- Child-friendly wipes that will kill germs but are appropriate for use in schools will be supplied to classroom teachers.

### **Hand Sanitizers:**

- Wall-mounted hand sanitizing stations are being installed in all classrooms and offices.
- The hand sanitizing product being used meets the minimum 60% alcohol threshold recommended by the CDC.

Adults should always supervise the use of hand sanitizers by children.

### **Daily Disinfecting/Cleaning Routines**

- Door Handles , Push Bars, and Light Switches
  - Product: Envirox H<sub>2</sub>Orange
  - Schedule: Minimum of twice during the day and once after school
- Desks, Work Tables, and Computer Keyboards
  - Product: Envirox H<sub>2</sub>Orange, Wipe-plus
  - Schedule: At least once during the day, keyboards wiped after every use and once after school

- Bathroom Doors, Sink Handles, Toilet and Urinals
  - Product: Brulin brutab6, Envirox H<sub>2</sub>Orange
  - Schedule: At least once every hour during school hours, cleaning and disinfecting after school

\*\*urinals and toilets will have automatic flushing system
- Cafeteria/Gym Tables and Floors
  - Product: Brulin brutab6, Envirox H<sub>2</sub>Orange
  - Schedule: Minimum of twice during the day and once after school
- Classrooms and Offices
  - Product: Brulin brutab6, Envirox H<sub>2</sub>Orange
  - Schedule: Once after school and/or office hours
- Nurse's Office
  - Product: Brulin brutab6, Envirox H<sub>2</sub>Orange
  - Schedule: At least twice/day during the day and once after school

\*\*Nurse's office will be provided with Odorox Slimline Hydroxyl Processor – eliminating germs, chemical VOCs and odors
- Hallways
  - Product: Envirox H<sub>2</sub>Orange
  - Schedule: Nightly
- Drinking fountains
  - Product: Envirox H<sub>2</sub>Orange
  - Schedule: At least once every hour during school hours, cleaning and disinfecting after school
- The district will routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched.
- Each classroom teacher will be provided with sanitizing wipes, hand sanitizers and cleaning spray for immediate use.
- Bathrooms will be sanitized frequently over the course of the day and partitions are installed to ensure that bathroom sinks are 6 feet apart.
- A plan to thoroughly clean and disinfect school buildings after a person has been identified as COVID-19 positive is available.

## 8. Meals

- *If cafeterias or other group dining areas are in use, school districts must stagger eating times to allow for social distancing and disinfecting of the area between groups.*
- *Additionally, districts must discontinue family-style, self-service, and buffet-style dining and maintain social distancing.*
- *Cafeteria staff must wash their hands immediately after removing gloves and after directly handling used food service items.*

(see pages 30-31 of [state guidance](#))

For Phase I of the return to school for the 2020-2021 school year, Closter Public Schools will follow a single-session day without lunch. Students may bring a snack to school, but it must be in a single-use, disposable package.

For Phase II of the return to school for the 2020-2021 school year, or whenever a full-day session is implemented, lunch service will be coordinated by the Closter Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). The lunch service will be provided by local food vendors. The PTO will coordinate with the vendors to provide one lunch option per day, provided in a brown-bag or individual box. PTO volunteers who assist with lunch distribution will be required to undergo daily temperature screening and to wear a face covering, along with nitrile gloves. Depending upon the guidance of health officials at the time lunch service is provided, the location of lunch service will be determined to be in the classroom or in the school gymnasium. Classroom desks or cafeteria tables will be sanitized after eating lunch and students will be required to wash or sanitize their hands before and after eating.

For Phase IV of the plan (March 29 - June 22, 2021), elementary students may bring a snack to school, but it must be in a single-use, disposable package. Students will be separated by six feet of social distance when eating snacks and will use face shields while eating. Whenever possible, snacks will be eaten outdoors.

We currently have no students who are eligible for Free and Reduced Price Meals (FRPM), but if this changes, the district will provide those students with a bagged or boxed lunch.

## 9. Recess/Physical Education

- *School districts must complete an inventory of outdoor spaces and mark off areas to ensure separation between students.*
- *Recess must be staggered by groups, and staff must disinfect playground equipment and other shared equipment between uses.*
- *School districts should also consider closing locker rooms and encouraging students to wear comfortable clothing and safe footwear to school so they can participate in physical education classes without needing to change.*

(see page 31 of [state guidance](#))

### Hillside Elementary School

- Recess
  - Students will have scheduled recess time outdoors during the Phase I single-session day. The schedule will be staggered with designated areas for each class.
  - During Phase II and/or III, recess time for each grade will be staggered with designated areas for each class.
  - There will be cones and signage to promote social distancing.
  - The playground equipment (slides, climbing bars, etc.) will not be used.
  - Any other equipment used will be sanitized after use.
- Physical Education
  - Physical education teachers for grades K-4 will conduct classes virtually during the Phase I hybrid learning single-session days.

- Rest rooms will have signage to promote proper hygiene and hand-washing.

### **Tenakill Middle School**

- Recess
  - Students will have staggered outdoor recess during the Phase I single-session day, with designated areas for each class.
- Physical Education
  - Physical education teachers for grades 5-8 will conduct classes outdoors on the school field.
  - Social distancing markers shall be established on the field for physical education.
  - The middle school physical education will focus on fitness. Students will have their own materials that they will bring with them each day they have physical education. These items, including [Penalty Box training](#), jump-ropes and tennis balls, will be provided to each student so they will only use their own equipment. Time will be provided at the end of each gym class for all students to wash their hands. Each class is scheduled to meet for 40 minutes with the last 7-8 minutes for clean up. The students will not use the locker room.
  - In the event of inclement weather, health education lessons shall be substituted for physical education, and will be conducted in the classrooms designed to support social distancing.

## **10. Extracurricular Activities and Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours**

- *All extracurricular activities must comply with applicable social distancing requirements and hygiene protocol. External community organizations that use school facilities must follow district guidance on health and safety protocols.*
- *In addition to taking these steps to protect students' and educators' physical health, leaders must also consider the impact of social isolation on both educators and students.*

(see pages 31-32 of [state guidance](#))

Any extracurricular clubs or activities offered will take place virtually for the first trimester. The activities that will be offered will be identified by the school principal by September 15, 2020.

The AfterCare child-care program will operate in the schools and will follow all health and safety protocols set by the district.

Community organizations will be discouraged from using the school facilities until the pandemic restrictions are lifted. When a community organization must use the school facilities, with Board of Education approval, they will be required to follow all health and safety protocols set by the district.

## Additional Areas of Focus within Conditions for Learning

### Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and School Climate and Culture

- *Re-engaging students, supporting adults, rebuilding relationships, and creating a foundation for academic learning. To this end, school districts are encouraged to thoughtfully plan around the well-being of educators so they can support the social and emotional well-being and learning needs of their students, acknowledge and prepare for the potential trauma that staff and students have faced during the COVID-19 school closures, and recognize and empower educators' and staff's strengths.*
- *Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) – MTSS is a systematic approach to prevention, intervention, and enrichment in grades PK-12 for academics and behavior that offers educators and families a mechanism to identify individual students who need extra support. In partnership with leaders and educators from districts experienced with implementing MTSS, the NJDOE identified universal screening, collaborative problem-solving teams, family engagement, and data-based decision making as critical components for districts moving toward MTSS.*

(see pages 32-39 of [state guidance](#))

#### Hillside Elementary School

- The school counselor will provide guidance for leading students in person on social emotional learning each morning. The ICARE (Integrity, Caring, Attitude, Respect, Empathy) Character Education program is the foundation for student interaction, well-being and emotional growth.
- Students who are in need of additional support will meet with the school counselor.
- To support staff members, the school counselor will provide a feelings check-in via Google Forms every Monday. Additional supports will be identified based on needs.

#### Tenakill Middle School

- The school counselor will assess the needs of students using various methods and will develop activities and programs to target identified needs.
- The school counselor will meet with teachers to provide them with information about signs to look for to identify students in need of extra support and then provide interventions and services for these students.
- The School Climate Team will meet to determine and review the current school climate, prioritize the needs of our students, and create a plan that will address these needs.
- To support staff members, the school administrators will meet with staff members to discuss their concerns and develop a plan to provide staff members with support and resources.

### Wraparound Supports

- *Wraparound services differ from traditional school-based services in their comprehensive approach to addressing the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of students with interventions both inside and outside of the school environment.*
- *These include mental health support, primary health and dental care, family engagement, expanded before-school and after-school and summer learning time, and mentoring programs.*

(see pages 39-43 of [state guidance](#))

Closter will continue with their Closter Cares Hotline, a service to address parents and students with school-based concerns. The district website provides links to additional support hotlines and helplines provided by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families: <https://www.closterschools.org/Closter-Cares-Hotline>

Closter Public Schools offered summer academic enrichment in English language arts and mathematics to eligible students grades in K-8 during July 2020.

**Closter Public Schools will offer Summer 2021 academic enrichment in English language arts and mathematics to eligible students who have not met grade level standards.**

### **Food Service and Distribution**

- *School meals are critical to student health and well-being, especially for low-income students, and the NJDOE considers it a moral imperative to ensure the seamless and continuous feeding of New Jersey's approximate 1.4 million students during all phases of school reopening.*
- *The Department is working with the Departments of Agriculture and Health to ensure that school district concerns related to food service are addressed as more guidance is made available.*

(see page 43 of [state guidance](#))

Closter Public Schools does not have a school lunch program, but will ensure that any student eligible for free and reduced lunch will be provided with a to-go lunch bag.

### **Quality Child Care**

*Child care will be needed as schools reopen, particularly in instances where modified school schedules may increase the likelihood that families that otherwise would not utilize child care will now require it. The NJDOE encourages schools to involve child care providers in planning meetings, communicate the school's modified schedule to local child care providers, and plan to transport students from school to child care facilities.*

(see page 43 of [state guidance](#))

Closter Public Schools rents our facilities to The School-Age Child Care Program, that provides after-school child care for parents. The district will work with this child care provider to ensure that their services begin at dismissal time and continue until 6:00 p.m.

Closter administrators will work with the organization to ensure that they follow all state guidelines for maintaining the safety and health of students and staff.

Closter Preschool Program will continue their AfterCare Program to provide extended child care for working parents.

## Leadership and Planning

### Establishment of a Pandemic Response Team

- *School districts should establish school-based Pandemic Response Teams in each school to centralize, expedite, and implement COVID-19-related decision-making.*
- *Each school team should have a liaison that reports to district-level administrators to ensure coordinated actions across the district.*
- *Members of the school teams should include a cross-section of administrators, teachers and staff, and parents.*
- *Pandemic Response Teams should represent a cross-section of the school and district, including its gender and racial diversity. (If a school has an existing crisis response team, that team could serve as the Pandemic Response Team.)*
- *If a school or district does not have an existing crisis response team, schools should establish such a Pandemic Response Team to support all planning, management, and decision-making related to the school’s COVID-19 response actions.*

(see pages 47-48 of [state guidance](#))

The Hillside Elementary School Pandemic Response Team and the Tenakill Middle School Pandemic Response Team members are:

#### Hillside Elementary School Pandemic Response Team:

Team Member	Role within the School Community
Wendy Bajakian	Grade One Teacher, School Safety Member
Courtney Carmichael	Assistant Principal, Hillside Elementary School and Supervisor of Curriculum & Instruction, School Safety Specialist, District
Sam DeMaria, M.D.	Parent and Physician
Tara Eddy	Grade Four Teacher, School Safety Member

Andrew Galinac	Custodian, Hillside Elementary School
Kristen Haenelt	School Nurse, Hillside Elementary School
Josephine Hunt	PreK Teacher, School Safety Member
Joanne Iyo	Technology Coordinator/Teacher
Sara Kim	Social Worker, Child Study Team Member
Nicholas Shapiro	Third Grade Teacher, Hillside Elementary School
Lisa Pantaleo	Grade Two Teacher, School Safety Member
William Potkulski	Physical Education Teacher
Catie Ricca	Grade Three Teacher, School Safety Member
Dianne Smith	Principal, Hillside Elementary School
Vickie Solomon	Paraprofessional
Dara Weiss	School Counselor, School Safety Member

**Tenakill Middle School Pandemic Response Team:**

Team Member	Role within the School Community
Jaime Caruso	School Nurse, Tenakill Middle School
Ralph Chappel	Director of Operations and Maintenance
Erica Cho	6th Grade Teacher, Tenakill Middle School
Margaret Churchill	Teacher, Tenakill Middle School, ESL Chairperson
Alexandra Earle	School Counselor, School Safety Member
Rachel Fineman	8th Grade Teacher, Tenakill Middle School
Patricia Eichenlaub	Director, Special Services/Child Study Team

Kevin Hernandez	5th Grade Teacher, Tenakill Middle School
Brenda Kahn	Librarian, Tenakill Middle School
Lisa Licamelli	7th Grade Teacher, Tenakill Middle School, School Safety Member
Ellen Lutvak	Parent
Keith McElroy	Assistant Principal, Tenakill Middle School
Francesca Rivellini	Teacher, Tenakill Middle School
William Tantum	Principal, Tenakill Middle School
Yael Wapinski	Parent

The principal from each school-based team will serve as liaison to the superintendent and will report on a bi-monthly basis.

## Scheduling

- *The NJDOE recognizes that a one-size fits all plan to accommodate hybrid or remote learning is neither feasible, nor appropriate, and is committed to supporting school leaders in developing their plans to reopen schools.*
- *These plans should enable all students to have access to high-quality in-person/hybrid instruction that also prepares for the possibility of a return to all virtual instruction should the need arise.*
- *School districts are required to meet the needs of their special populations in alignment with the New Jersey Specific Guidance for Schools and Districts regarding student accommodations.*
- *When developing school reopening plans, special populations will require unique considerations to ensure the continuity of learning, as well as the health and safety of students and staff within the least restrictive learning environment.*
  - *Special Education and ELL: Provide educators with professional development to best utilize the accessibility features and accommodations tools made available through technology-based formats. Continue ensuring that students receive individualized supports that meet the requirements of the IEP and 504 Plans.*
- *Medically Fragile Staff: Virtual instruction is ideal for staff who are at greater risk for the impacts of COVID-19. Accommodations may need to be made for staff with health issues which are exacerbated by viewing content on screens for an extended period. School districts should accommodate educators teaching both in-person, hybrid, and virtual learning, in a way that allows all students to meet*

*their required instructional hours for the day, which may include remote students completing independent work while students in the classroom receive instruction.*  
(see pages 49-54 of [state guidance](#))

The Closter Public Schools will implement a strategic three-phase plan for returning to the 2020-2021 school year. The 2020-2021 [school calendar](#) will provide 180 school days for students. Due to the complexity of adopting a modified school schedule, along with the uncertainty of what Covid-19 will bring to the 2020-21 school year, the phase-in/out plan will allow for flexibility, structure, and a scheduled and timely reassessment of our implemented schedule.

### **PHASE I: September 1 - October 16, 2020**

- 50% reduced classroom occupancy
- A/B Day Schedule
  - Half of the students have in-person instruction on Monday/Wednesday; the other half of the students have virtual learning.
  - Half of the students have in-person instruction on Tuesday/Thursday, the other half of the students have virtual learning.
  - Fridays will alternate A/B by week, with the Monday/Wednesday group having in person instruction one Friday and the Tuesday/Thursday group having in person instruction on the next Friday.
  - Students will be assigned to their A or B cohort so that families with more than one student and families with students in both schools will have in-person instruction on the same days.
- Single-session school days (4 hours) - The single session day is necessary to provide teachers with common planning time to deliver both in-person and virtual learning to their students.
- Offer a fully virtual learning option for students whose parents determine that returning to in-person instruction is too risky for their family. *Students who choose the fully virtual learning option must remain in it for the first trimester, which ends on December 7, 2020.*

### **PHASE II: October 19 - November 25, 2020**

- Reassess schedule and make necessary modifications.
- Determine if we will continue with 50% classroom occupancy or if it can be increased.
- Determine if in-person instruction can be increased to full days or if A/B Day schedule can be revised for more in-person instruction.
- Students who have selected the fully virtual learning option must continue that instruction through the end of Phase II (this is to ensure curriculum consistency, continuity of learning, regularity in first trimester grading, and to allow contact tracing of student cohorts).

### **PHASE III: November 30, 2020 - January 15, 2021**

- Reassess schedule and make necessary modifications.
- If possible, increase classroom capacity and increase in-person instruction to five days a week for all students.

- Parents who selected the fully virtual learning option for their students may opt-in for in-person instruction for the second trimester.

**PHASE IV: March 29, 2021 - June 22 , 2021**

- Based on revised guidelines from the New Jersey Department of Health and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for three-feet of social distancing in classrooms, we will combine A/B cohorts into one class and increase in-person instruction to five days (single session day) for all students who chose hybrid learning for Trimester Three.
- Fully virtual learning option will continue as scheduled.

All stakeholders should be aware that during any phase of this plan, the school district could return to a fully virtual learning model if directed by the Executive Order of the Governor, by the New Jersey Department of Education, or the New Jersey Department of Health if there is an increase in COVID-19 spread within the community. If the school district must transition back to a fully virtual learning model, students will remain in their existing cohort groups (either hybrid or fully virtual) and the teacher will follow a daily schedule that was set for the cohorts already using a fully virtual learning day.

The overall goal of the phase-in/out scheduling plan is to increase classroom occupancy and in-person instructional time as we move between phases.

The phase-in schedule will be posted on the district website and will be communicated to parents and staff via correspondence from the superintendent. The student schedule will be communicated to parents via correspondence from the school principal.

Student attendance will be taken each day. During virtual learning days, students will be required to sign-in virtually via a form posted on the school webpage. Teachers will also take attendance during lessons that are delivered in a streaming video format, such as Zoom. Students are required to attend all scheduled live virtual learning lessons. Students who require devices for access to online learning will be provided with devices from the school district.

Students in self-contained special education classrooms and English language learners require additional levels of academic support. If possible based on classroom occupancy, students in self-contained special education classrooms and English language learners may be encouraged to attend in-person instruction every day during Phase I of the plan.

**Staffing**

- *Teachers serve as the number one in-school factor impacting student learning. Regardless of the environment, teachers should clearly understand expectations and be supported and held accountable for student learning. Districts should consider access and equity for all staff to ensure continuity of student learning. School reopening plans and decision-making throughout the school year should*

*consider unique needs of each staff member, such as access to technology, social and emotional health, and child care concerns.*

- *When making staffing scheduling and assignments, districts must comply with all applicable employment laws including but not limited to the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and all applicable state law. Additionally, prior to finalizing any COVID-related changes for the 2020-21 school year, districts should also consult with the local bargaining units and legal counsel.*

(see pages 54-57 of [state guidance](#))

During all phases of the Closter Public School plan, administrators will leverage staff to monitor student movement at arrival, dismissal, and in hallways, and to maintain safety according to guidelines. Instructional and non-instructional staff schedules will include designated time to support school building logistics required to maintain health and safety requirements. This is necessary to ensure the safety of all.

*The Road Back* plan identifies the following responsibilities for staff:

**Instructional Staff should:**

- Reinforce social distancing protocol with students and co-teachers or support staff.
- Limit group interactions to maintain safety.
- Support school building safety logistics (entering, exiting, restrooms, etc.).
- Become familiar with district online protocols and platforms.
- Plan standards-based lessons to meet the needs of students at various levels, ensuring versatility of lessons to apply to both settings.
- Develop predictable routines and structures for students while maintaining student engagement through varied instructional strategies/modalities.
- Provide regular feedback to students and families on expectations and progress.
- Set clear expectations for remote and in-person students.
- Assess student progress early and often and adjust instruction and/or methodology accordingly.
- Develop opportunities for real-time interactions with students (office hours, virtual meetings, etc.).
- Instruct and maintain good practice in digital citizenship for all students and staff.
- Instructional staff with additional capacity or limited time spent with students may assist with school building and safety logistics.
- Teacher leaders should support teachers in making necessary curricular adjustments and continuously improving the quality of instruction in remote and hybrid environments.
- Providing materials, manipulatives and items for at-home activities at no cost to families (particularly in preschool).
- Limiting on-line activities for preschool students.

**Mentor Teachers should:**

- Plan for “in-person” contact with the mentee using agreed upon communication methods and schedules that provide confidentiality and sufficient support.
- Identify the most immediate issues to address with the mentee considering technology needs and how to provide effective remote instruction.

- Establish observation protocols for remote environments that protect confidentiality, respect student privacy, and provide the mentee with relevant support.
- Integrate self-care, for mentor and mentee, into mentoring scheduling and practices.
- Continue to maintain logs of mentoring contact.
- Mentor teachers should consider all health and safety measures when doing in-person observations.
- Plan for “in-person” contact with the mentee using agreed upon communication methods and schedules that provide confidentiality and sufficient support.
- Consider alternative methods for classroom observations and avoiding in-person contact where possible.

**Administrators should:**

- Consider roles for staff with health concerns, leveraging them to enhance the virtual learning environment and inform in-person instruction.
- Provide time for staff collaboration and planning.
- Prioritize practical science areas for on-site opportunities.
- Prioritize vulnerable student groups for face-to-face instruction.
- Identify teachers and teacher leaders who may provide support to staff continuously to improve instruction in a virtual environment.
- Work with staff and faculty to ensure that teaching and learning, and all student services, are effectively and efficiently developed, planned, and delivered.
- Hone collaboration, cooperation and relationship building skills using alternative methods to remain connected to virtual instruction.
- Define and provide examples of high-quality instruction given context and resources available.
- Assess teacher, student, and parent needs regularly.
- Ensure students and parents receive necessary supports to ensure access to instruction.
- Communicate expectations for delivering high-quality instruction, assessing, and monitoring student progress in the virtual environment, in accordance with NJDOE’s Professional Standards for Teachers and NJ Professional Standards for Leaders (N.J.A.C. 6A:9).
- Plan a process to onboard students and reestablish the classroom environment through emphasizing relationships with students and parents and resetting routines.
- Collaborate on curriculum planning and assessing student academic and social emotional well-being when they return to school.
- Create feedback loops with parents and families about students’ academic and social emotional health and well-being, through use of remote learning conferences and/or surveys to parents about their student’s experience and learning while out of school.
- Share a comprehensive account of academic interventions and social emotional and mental health support services available through the district.
- Create and communicate realistic student schedules to increase student engagement and accountability for both hybrid and remote learning models.
- Collaborate in determining expectations for differentiated instruction and rigor in

hybrid and remote learning models.

- Support families in connecting with teachers and other services they need to be successful in navigating the virtual environment.
- The Preschool Director should ensure that activities and supports are in place for Preschool students so they are prepared for transition to Kindergarten.

### **Support Staff**

Paraprofessionals who usually serve in physical classrooms supporting students and teachers may also provide support in the virtual environment, especially for struggling students, those with special needs, English language learners, and those who need additional support at home. Paraprofessionals may:

- Lead small group instruction to ensure social distancing.
- Consider student grouping to maintain single classroom cohorts.
- Consider alternative methods for one-on-one interactions avoiding in-person contact where possible.
- Pre-record read-alouds and videos around SEL activities and routines (P-2) Caption prerecorded instructional videos from general education teachers.
- Provide real-time support during virtual sessions.
- Research websites, videos, and links for accessible activities that teachers can incorporate into lessons.
- Support families and students in accessing and participating in remote learning. Paraprofessionals can be added to online classes as co-teacher.
- Lead small group instruction in a virtual environment.
- Facilitate the virtual component of synchronous online interactions.

The district administrators are identifying substitute teachers for grade level assignments and are recruiting for additional substitute teachers, paraprofessionals and school nurses.

### **Educator Roles Related to School Technology Needs**

- *To ensure all staff supporting virtual learning are prepared to provide or support instruction on day one, districts should:*
  - *Designate staff members to provide ongoing support with technology to students, teachers and families.*
  - *Consider developing a schedule and assigning a technology point person to teachers by grade level or content area.*
  - *Survey teachers and families to determine technology needs/access (consider those that have access, but may be sharing personal devices with others).*
- *To the extent possible, provide district one-to-one instructional devices and connectivity.*
- *Prior to the start of the school year, provide district email addresses and access to online platforms (usernames/passwords/organizational credentials).*  
(see page 43 of [state guidance](#))

### **At both Hillside Elementary School and Tenakill Middle School:**

- The district's network engineer will provide tech support to students, teachers, and

families.

- While in school, each student will be assigned a device exclusively for his/her own use. The devices will be wiped with sanitizer prior to being placed in the charging carts and will be wiped again prior to use each day.
- The Tenakill assistant principal will assist with Chromebook distribution and documentation for students who require a device for home virtual learning.
- A survey was sent to parents at the end of June 2020, to determine the technology needs of our families in preparation for partial or full virtual learning. There are 175 students who need a device for home virtual learning. Students who have a device for home use will be required to bring the device to school on the days they attend in-person.
- Before the first day of school, the school administrators will provide teachers with the login information they need for all online platforms (Seesaw, Google Classroom, Schoology, Realtime, etc.)
- During the first week of school, teachers will provide students with login information for all of the necessary online platforms and confirm they are accessible.
- Teachers will have professional development opportunities through the Northern Valley Curriculum Consortium and with our in-district technology coordinator on using technology tools effectively, engaging students during virtual learning, and how to build a classroom community in a virtual setting.

## Student Teachers

- *Survey potential student teachers over the summer to determine technology needs/access.*
- *Provide district loaner devices (where possible) or work with partner institutions to provide loaner devices.*
- *Prior to the start of the school year, provide district email addresses and access to online platforms.*
- *Train student teachers to use technology platforms.*
- *Communicate district expectations/guidelines regarding professional online etiquette/interactions with students.*
- *Communicate district expectations/guidelines regarding professional online etiquette/interactions with students. Survey student teachers to determine technology needs/access (Preschool).*
- *Virtual instruction is ideal for staff who are at greater risk for the impacts of COVID-19. Accommodations may need to be made for staff with health issues which are exacerbated by viewing content on screens for an extended period.*  
(see pages 58-59 of [state guidance](#))

Student teachers who will work in the district (one in the Fall 2020 and three in the spring 2021) will follow all health and safety procedures. Student teachers will be asked if they need a computer device and if so, the network engineer will issue a Chromebook. The classroom teacher who serves as the cooperating teacher will determine what access the student teacher needs to learning management software and will notify the principal to arrange access.

## Athletics

*Under Executive Order 149, high school sports under the jurisdiction of the NJSIAA may resume only in accordance with reopening protocols issued by NJSIAA and cannot resume earlier than June 30, 2020.*

(see page 60 of [state guidance](#))

The Tenakill Middle School athletics will only take place if the Northern Valley Middle School league is in operation and following all guidelines for health and safety. If the league is operational, the superintendent, middle school principal and district athletic director will review the health and safety guidelines to determine if Closter Public School students will participate.

## Policy and Funding

### Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund

- *The federal "Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security" (CARES) Act established the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund to provide direct money to school districts and provide funding to support areas impacted by the disruption and closure of schools from COVID-19.*
- *Under the law, \$310.4 million has been allocated to New Jersey, the majority of which will in turn be provided to school districts as subgrants. Allocations to districts are based on their shares of Title I, Part A funding.*
- *Under federal law, these funds may be used for allowable costs incurred starting March 13, 2020, and must be obligated no later than September 30, 2022. The CARES Act enumerates 12 allowable uses for these funds.*
- *The law authorizes expenditures that are more directly related to the current health emergency, including purchasing educational technology to support remote instruction, supplies for cleaning and sanitizing buildings, and supplemental instructional programs. Districts should avail themselves of this flexibility to address their specific needs.*

(see page 61 of [state guidance](#))

Closter Public Schools used CARES Act funds to provide summer instruction in English language arts and mathematics to students who did not make adequate progress toward grade level standards during virtual learning. We also purchased Chromebooks for Hillside Elementary School, Tenakill Middle School, and the eligible non-public school in the district.

## Federal Emergency Management Agency

- *Public Assistance - the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers the Public Assistance program, which provides financial assistance to eligible applicants for a portion of costs incurred in responding to a declared emergency.*
- *Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, such an emergency declaration was made for the entire country on March 13, 2020. Under this program, FEMA will reimburse 75 percent of eligible expenses that are a direct result of the declared emergency.*
- *A district may apply for assistance through the website maintained by the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management. While there is currently no deadline for applying under the current emergency declaration, districts are encouraged to submit an application as soon as possible.*

(see page 62 of [state guidance](#))

Closter Public Schools filed for FEMA reimbursement for all eligible expenses incurred until June 23rd. The District will continue to request for reimbursement until the applications are closed.

## State School Aid

- *The total amount appropriated for K-12 State aid is essentially unchanged from the 2019-2020 school year. The State aid reductions included in the original February 27 aid notices will still occur and will be apportioned among "underfunded" districts.*
- *As in prior years, the NJDOE will consider changes in State aid relative to the amounts included in the February 27, 2020, State aid notices as a mid-year budget adjustment, leaving the original budget certified for taxes intact. Districts should be prepared to revise their budgets in their internal accounting records to reflect revised State aid amounts following the enactment of the appropriations act.*

(see page 63-64 of [state guidance](#))

Closter Public Schools will adjust the district budget to reflect the reduction of state school aid. The district will consider the use of emergency reserve or other reserves as additional sources of revenue.

## Purchasing

- *School districts will likely need to purchase items not needed in the past (e.g., personal protective equipment or cleaning supplies to sanitize facilities) and experience increased demand for previously purchased goods and services (such as technology).*
- *Given the broad need for certain items, school districts may be able to purchase items at a lower cost by either purchasing through an established State contract or through a cooperative purchasing consortium.*

- *Districts may collaborate to create new arrangements or use one that already exists (several educational services commissions operate cooperative purchasing programs). School districts must continue to abide by the provisions of the "Public Schools Contract Law," N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-1 et seq.*

(see page 64 of [state guidance](#))

Closter Public Schools will continue to use cooperative purchasing consortium, state contracts and educational services commission to purchase items needed for school operations. All district purchases will adhere to the provisions of the Public Schools Contract Law.

### **Use of Reserve Accounts, Transfers, and Cashflow**

- *As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, school districts may encounter fiscal uncertainty with respect to possible disruptions in the receipt of anticipated revenues or unforeseen expenses.*
- *To the greatest extent possible, districts should consider making expenditures from various accounts or over-budget line items to meet unanticipated costs and to manage their cash flow.*
- *School districts may be able to use funds on deposit in their emergency reserve accounts to finance unanticipated expenses that arise as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, districts may use the maintenance reserve for required maintenance pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-14.2, freeing other funds to be used to meet other needs.*
- *As districts' budgetary needs and priorities shift, they may need to reallocate planned expenditures across different line item appropriations. Under the provisions of P.L.2020, c.34, the Director of Local Government Services in the Department of Community Affairs has the authority to extend the date under which a municipality is required to transfer tax revenue to school districts (and other units of government) during a period of a declared state of emergency or public health emergency. In the event that such a delay is granted, the law requires that the municipality pay a percentage, to be determined by the Director in consultation with the Commissioner, of the full amount due to the district in accordance with the original timeframe.*
- *Additionally, districts should be mindful that certain budget actions, such as withdrawing from the emergency reserve or making transfers that cumulatively exceed 10 percent of the amount originally budgeted, require the Commissioner's approval. These requirements are statutory and cannot be waived by the NJDOE, and districts should not presume that such approval will be automatic.*

(see page 64-65 of [state guidance](#))

Closter Public Schools will ensure that cash flow is properly managed, monitor line item expenses and transfer funds if needed adhering to the 10 percent transfer rule.

## Costs and Contracting

- *All school districts are strongly encouraged to participate in the federal E-rate program.*
- *Through an annual application process, eligible schools and libraries can request funding support for two categories of service.*
  - *Category One funding support is available for high-speed internet access, data transmission services, and modulating electronics used to transmit data within a school district's network.*
  - *Category Two support helps to fund purchases of data and wireless network equipment, firewall equipment, routers, cabling, related installation, training services, as well as other types of equipment.*
- *When school districts procure devices and connectivity or any technology-related item, they must follow all New Jersey State laws and regulations that are applicable to local school districts for procurement. School districts should consider using cooperative contracting when possible.*

(see page 65-69 of [state guidance](#))

Closter Public Schools will continue to participate in the federal E-rate program for all category one eligible expenditures.

## Policy

- *Are there key Board of Education policies that need revision?*

The Closter Board of Education is revising the following policies to include information related to the NJDOE-mandated restart of school while there is still the threat of COVID-19:

- 1250 - Visitors
- 3510 - Operation and Maintenance of Plant
- 3541.33 - Transportation Safety
- 5141.2 - Illness
- 5141.3 - Health Examinations and Immunizations

The first reading of these policies by the Closter Board of Education was at the public meeting on Thursday, July 16, 2020. The second reading will take place on August 20, 2020.

## Continuity of Learning

### Ensuring the Delivery of Special Education and Related Services to Students with Disabilities

- *Procedures to address the return to school of medically fragile students and students with physical or health impairments who may require accommodations and modifications as part of a 504 Plan.*
- *School districts should communicate frequently with the families of students with significant medical risk factors to determine if additional precautions or unique measures are necessary prior to a student's return to school.*
- *IEP teams should review student data/student progress to determine whether critical skills were lost during the period in which remote instruction was being provided to students and determine the need for additional services to address learning loss.*
- *IEP teams should consider the impact of missed services on student progress towards meeting IEP goals and objectives, and determine if additional or compensatory services are needed to address regression and recoupment of skills within a reasonable length of time.*
- *IEP teams should develop procedures to complete overdue and/or incomplete evaluations to determine eligibility for special education services.*
- *The use of school guidance department staff and child study team personnel to identify students whose post-secondary plans may have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and provide support, resources, and assistance, which may include facilitating connection to community organizations, scholarship programs, county, state, and federal opportunities to access support. Clear communication to parents/guardians of the procedures for student referrals and evaluations to determine the eligibility.*

(see page 73-74 of [state guidance](#))

- Health Plans will be developed for medically fragile students in context with each student's medical needs. These plans will be developed with the District nurses and physician taking into consideration the recommendations of student's outside medical team.
- Medically fragile students who cannot be accommodated in the school building will be given remote access to a free and appropriate education.
- All District students, including special education students, will be benchmark assessed at the beginning of the school year to determine progress made during the 2019/2020 school year. Assessment data will be reviewed and appropriate remediation will be begun.
- The Child Study Team will review student Goals and Objectives in terms of related services and assess the need for increased services.
- The District will complete some assessments during the summer of 2020, under the auspices of the Youth Summer 2020 Camp Programs and the CST will, at the end of August, review and assess what assessments continue to require completion and prioritize those assessments for September.
- Closter School District is a K-8 school district and therefore is not involved with

students post-secondary planning.

## Technology and Connectivity

- *Conduct a needs assessment.*
- *Determine the number of students that will require district-provided devices and/or internet access in order to access remote education.*
  - *It is important to consider the technological needs of all students, including those with learning disabilities, assistive technology needs, and language barriers.*
- *Consider the attendant needs associated with deployment of needed technology, including student and parent training and acceptable use policy implementation.*
- *Prioritize the purchase and roll-out of devices and/or connectivity that may improve learning based on the results of the needs assessment.*
- *The information provided in this section, along with funding options in the School Funding section, provide strategies for maximizing available funding to ensure students have access to devices and internet connectivity to improve remote instruction.*

(see page 74-76 of [state guidance](#))

The *District Reopening School Buildings Committee* conducted a needs assessment via parent survey in the end of June 2020, to determine how many students will need a computer device for virtual learning at home:

- 81% parents indicated their children do not need a device for virtual learning at home (470 no)
- 19% parents indicated their children do need a device for virtual learning at home (113 yes)

Of the 113 parents who indicated their children need a device at home, there is a need for 175 devices (64 have one child, 36 have two children, 13 have three children).

Deployment of devices to students will take place at the school level. Students needing devices for virtual learning at home will be assigned a device and charger to take home and back to school each day they attend in-person learning. All other students will be assigned a device to use in school each day they attend in-person learning. At the end of the in-person learning day, the device will be stored in the charging station. Any student taking a device home will sign a form acknowledging they will adhere to the district's acceptable use policy.

We have purchased additional Chromebooks using district funds and CARES Act funds. As the new devices are delivered, they will be distributed first to the 175 students who need them for virtual learning at home. Once all new devices are delivered we will have enough devices for every student to have their own dedicated MacBook, iPad or Chromebook.

**Curriculum, Instruction and Assessments**  
**Virtual and Hybrid Learning Environment—Curriculum**

As noted in the [TNTP Learning Acceleration Guide](#):

- *Prioritize the most critical prerequisite skills and knowledge for each subject area and grade level now.*
- *Train your teachers and leaders to evaluate students' unfinished learning and provide acceleration support.*
- *Plan your approach to diagnosing students' unfinished learning in that prerequisite content knowledge and those prerequisite skills. Keep in mind that during virtual instruction, the type of learning experiences that are appropriate will vary based on grade band and content area.*
- *Adapt the scope and sequence/pacing for each subject area and grade level to accommodate where teachers might need to provide acceleration support.*
- *Monitor your students' progress on grade-appropriate assignments and adjust your supports for teachers and leaders based on student results.*

(see page 76-78 of [state guidance](#))

Closter Public Schools follows the curriculum developed by the Northern Valley Curriculum Consortium. For the 2020-2021 school year, the curriculum has been adapted to optimize priority objectives to address the standards. By giving priority to certain standards and concentrating on the most essential objectives for a grade level or course, teachers can provide targeted instruction and assessments. The key is "prioritization" not "elimination." Additionally, the following guiding principles and questions should guide assessment: 1) What is the purpose of the assessment? And what formative and/or summative assessments can be best used to address the standards? 2) Which digital tools/resources will allow for accurately assessing student performance? 3) What are the limitations that students face in this new environment, and how does that affect the assigned assessment, thinking about the parameters of time, materials, etc. The curriculum still addresses the needs of individual students for those with learning disabilities, who needed additional enrichment, and who are English Language Learners as it is differentiated by assignments, materials, instruction, and assessments.

All subject-matter disciplines can proceed virtually or in person with the technology components included in the curricular materials and supports that are part of the instruction of Closter. An additional assessment tool will be used to benchmark students and monitor progress in mathematics and English language arts.

**Curriculum, Instruction and Assessments**  
**Virtual and Hybrid Learning Environment—Instruction**

- *Develop a shared understanding among staff, students, and families across grade-levels and schools regarding learning expectations, and anticipated environments (e.g., hybrid approaches to instruction, virtual platforms, learning management systems) and expectations for interactions (e.g., connecting with*

*students and their family) to ensure all students have access to high-quality instruction.*

- *Design for student engagement and foster student ownership of learning:*
  - *Develop students’ meta-cognition (parents may be able to provide some insights on how students understand how they learn best).*
  - *Collaborate with school leaders and educators to determine what types of supports are needed for effective pedagogical approaches during remote or hybrid instruction:*
    - *Assess the district’s data on how English language learners experienced instruction during remote or hybrid learning; particularly for newcomer students and students with lower English language proficiency levels.*
    - *Assess English Learners’ levels of engagement and access in an in-person, virtual, or hybrid learning environment.*

(see page 78-80 of [state guidance](#))

**At both Hillside Elementary and Tenakill Middle School:**

- The first few weeks of school will build community and digital competency and assess students with benchmarks based on mathematics and English language arts standards.
- Administrators and teachers will communicate with parents regarding attendance and learning expectations, technology support and how to support their child.
- When planning instruction staff members should collaborate to ensure consistency.
- Administrators will provide students, parents, and staff with a brief outline of the daily schedule, environment, expectations, and classroom/virtual classroom procedures for in-person instruction and virtual learning.
- Administrators will meet with the teachers of English Language Learners and parents to review their virtual learning experience and create a plan to address any challenges.
- Administrators will meet with the ELL teachers regularly throughout the school year to monitor the virtual and hybrid learning experience for our ELL families and make adjustments as needed.
- Administrators will provide faculty meeting time and grade level/department meeting time for teachers to develop a shared understanding of how to engage students in learning by identifying their strengths, providing them with choice, scaffolding, differentiation, and providing effective feedback.
- Administrators will provide faculty meeting time and grade level/department meeting time for teachers to create a plan on the use of assessments, providing clear and flexible expectations, how students will demonstrate learning, and resource selection.

**Curriculum, Instruction and Assessments  
Virtual and Hybrid Learning Environment— Assessment**

*As districts and schools develop plans to reopen, it is imperative that meaningful and appropriate assessment strategies are incorporated into strategic plans for evaluating the*

*needs of students and planning instruction. Students will need time to reacclimate to the school environment, which may look different than what they have previously known. Social and emotional elements of learning will be an important focal point to consider before students are assessed to ensure the conditions for students to receive instruction and demonstrate their proficiency are optimized.*

(see page 80-82 of [state guidance](#))

The administrators and teachers will review different assessment tools and will select one that will be used in the beginning of the school year as a pre-assessment and during the year as an interim assessment of our students. These assessments will provide teachers with data related to student performance on the student learning standards and will help them create an instructional plan.

Before we assess our students on their academic performance, we will begin the school year by assessing the social emotional needs of our students by gathering information and data through our students, parents, and classroom activities and discussions.

Based on the information gathered and the feedback from staff, the administrators will determine the most appropriate time to begin grade level assessments.

The school counselor and assistant principal will follow up with any students who are in need of additional academic, social, and emotional support and provide them with the services and resources to meet their needs.

Teachers will use various forms of formative assessments within their classrooms to provide students with individual feedback on their progress toward meeting their learning goals.

The administrators will communicate with parents regarding student assessments. Teachers will review sources of current student performance data, interpret the data and develop hypotheses, utilize an appropriate assessment, and develop an assessment strategy.

The district will provide teachers with professional development related to data and student assessment. Teachers will meet within their grade level and department meetings to create pre-assessments and post-assessments for units and data analysis.

## **Professional Learning**

*It is imperative that districts provide professional learning that will better equip leaders, staff, substitutes, students, and parents/caregivers with the resources necessary to adapt to altered educational environments and experiences.*

(see page 82-84 of [state guidance](#))

- New teachers will complete the Northern Valley Curriculum Consortium New Teacher Academy in August before the school year.

- Teachers will have professional development opportunities through the Northern Valley Curriculum Consortium and with our in-district technology coordinator on using technology tools effectively, engaging students during virtual learning, how to build a classroom community in a virtual setting, and using benchmark assessments.
- The district will provide training for parents on learning expectations, utilization of online platforms, and requirements for maintaining health and safety.
- All staff members will be trained on safety protocols for in-person schooling.
- The nurses will train paraprofessionals in how to take student temperatures.

### **Career and Technical Education (CTE) - Career and Academic Pathways**

- *When planning for in-person instruction, examine current curriculum content and evaluate which content is most critical in meeting the requirements of New Jersey Student Learning Standards, CTE Core Content Standards, industry certifications, college credit agreements, etc.*
- *Programs should focus on positioning students to independently extend their learning with direction and guidance from their teachers, with the goal of preparing students for careers and postsecondary success.*
- *As a significant indicator of CTE program quality, recognized postsecondary credentials are a new programmatic requirement in the New Jersey Perkins V State Plan. During a time when some credentials may not be accessible online or through other virtual means, it is necessary to ensure students have access to appropriate industry-recognized high-value credentials*

(see page 84-89 of [state guidance](#))

This is not applicable to Closter Public School, as we are a PreK-8 district and CTE is a secondary school program. However, 21st Century and Career standards are embedded within the curriculum for multiple subjects.

### **Work-Based Learning**

- *Transitioning to in-person work-based learning (WBL) will require collaboration by state, regional and local partners to ensure a safe and healthy workplace learning environment.*
- *Students must be provided the opportunity to participate in safe work-based learning, either remotely (simulations, virtual tours, etc.) or in-person.*
- *Districts should consider work-based learning opportunities in all categories addressed in administrative code.*

(see page 84-89 of [state guidance](#))

This is not applicable to Closter Public School, as we are a PreK-8 district and Work-Based Learning is a secondary school program.

## Career Advisement and Development

- Strong career advisement in conjunction with business and community partnerships lead to high-quality CTE programs and provides students access to essential work-based learning opportunities.
- These essential components of CTE programs cannot be compromised in a time of increased social distancing, so modifications must be developed to maintain program quality. Districts should consider career advisement and development in all categories addressed below.

(see page of 84-89 [state guidance](#))

This is not applicable to Closter Public School, as we are a PreK-8 district and CTE is a secondary school program.