



Glens Falls

C I T Y S C H O O L S

Glens Falls City School District COVID-19 Reopening Plan

Big Cross Street Elementary School
Jackson Heights Elementary School
Kensington Road Elementary School
Glens Falls Middle School
Glens Falls High School

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Foundations of Glens Falls Nation

Glens Falls City Schools provide UPK-12 public education for approximately 2,000 students living in the City of Glens Falls and part of the town of Queensbury within the Adirondack region of upstate New York (Warren County). Our small-city district covers approximately four square miles, and students walk to and from one of three neighborhood elementary schools, or the middle and high school, which are situated next-door to each other on Quade Street. The mission of the Glens Falls City School District is to provide a safe, positive, and stimulating environment – one that fosters self growth, a passion for continuous learning, confidence, and the ability to succeed in a changing world.

Our five-year efforts as a district have centered on the ideal that each Glens Falls student will reach their full potential, proficient in skills and civic duty. The district has devoted resources to reach this goal in three overarching areas: curriculum, technology, and a safe and healthy learning environment.

In addition to our overall program priorities, Glens Falls commits to equity in instruction and programming that ensures all students have the opportunity to engage in learning. This equitable access considers the district's early learners, English language learners, students without access to technology/high-speed internet, students with special education needs, students with medical fragility, students experiencing homelessness, and under-resourced/economically disadvantaged students, among others. Our commitment to equity applies equally to instructional and operational pursuits.

Our educational plan is developed so that whether delivered in-person, remotely, or through a hybrid model, there are clear opportunities for instruction that are accessible to all students. These opportunities are aligned with New York State standards, and include routine scheduled times for students to interact and seek feedback and support from their teachers.

It is the philosophy of the Glens Falls Board of Education that our schools are the responsibility of the entire community, and the district leadership team places high value on stakeholder engagement in the decision-making process. This COVID-19 Reopening Plan has been developed over months through the input of a vast number of school community members, including building and district administrators, teachers, support staff members, nurses, buildings and grounds staff, students, parents, Board of Education members, union representatives, and the Warren County Department of Health. Specifically, the district's return-to-school surveys garnered quantifiable data and open-ended feedback from more than 1,500 parent/guardian responses, nearly 450 student responses, and more than 200 faculty/staff responses. Our school community's sentiments are reflected in this plan, and many of their ideas are incorporated herein.

Guiding Health and Safety Principles

As we are confronted with re-ordering and re-envisioning the school experience for 2020-21, the safety and health of our students, faculty, and staff has been at the forefront of our planning. Glens Falls City Schools are committed to a path that returns our students to in-person instruction in school buildings, and lessens the impact of COVID-19. However, because we are unable to predict the course of the pandemic, our response will evolve so the well-being of our students and staff stays firmly at the forefront of our planning.

As a baseline, we as a learning community are required to:

- Develop proper procedures for hand washing, cleaning and disinfection, ventilation, and appropriate use of PPE—adhering to federal and state guidelines, and in consultation with state and local health departments as conditions change.
- Ensure physical/social distancing of six feet between all occupants in classrooms. In instances when six feet cannot be maintained, proper face coverings must be worn in common areas such as hallways or on school buses. Provide exemptions or alternatives for those medically unable to wear masks.
- Place students in cohorts throughout the school day where feasible, and determine appropriate meal service options to ensure social distancing.
- Develop a plan for screening of students and staff.
- Work with state and local health departments to develop mitigation measures—such as additional disinfecting, postponing in-classroom instruction, or school closures—in cases of student and staff infections.
- Consider the needs of vulnerable populations and offer options for students and staff at higher risk of severe illness to limit their risk of exposure (e.g., virtual learning opportunities).
- Work with state and local health departments as conditions may change. The flexible plan must adhere to federal and state guidelines for cleaning, sanitization and social distancing protocols.

In order for our schools to safely reopen, we need to be able to achieve and maintain these requirements, and any future requirements imposed by the New York State Education Department, and/or the New York State Department of Health. As such, this reopening plan is intended to be flexible; it can and will change as needs and circumstances evolve throughout the year.

This reopening plan has been designed after careful review of building and classroom capacities and the limitations of providing socially-distanced in-person instruction.

The District has designated Superintendent Paul Jenkins as the COVID-19 Safety Coordinator, whose responsibilities include continuous compliance with all aspects of the school's reopening plan, as well as any phased-in reopening activities necessary to allow for operational issues to be resolved before activities return to normal or "new normal" levels.

Health and Safety Practices and Protocols

Health Screening for Students, Staff, and Visitors

A safe and successful day of learning in our buildings will begin with actions at home, including a **daily fever check for anyone headed to school for in-person teaching, learning, or working**. “Specifically, all individuals must have their temperature checked each day - ideally, at home, prior to departing to school - before entering any school facility.”

- All parents and guardians will be required to ensure that their child(ren) are not experiencing any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and do not have a fever of 100°F or more **prior to leaving home in the morning**. Periodically, a “Symptoms and Status” Questionnaire will also be required for students before beginning their day at school. Separate guidance and directions will be sent to all families on how to verify fever-free students and/or report symptoms and status.
- Faculty and Staff members will be required to self-screen for fever and ensure a temperature below 100°F using the district-provided screening tool. Additionally, a **daily** “Symptoms and Status” Questionnaire will be required for all employees reporting to school.
- The “Symptoms and Status” Questionnaire will determine whether the student or staff member has:
 - a) knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;
 - b) tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days;
 - c) experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature of greater than 100.0°F, in the past 14 days; and/or
 - d) traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days.
- Students, faculty, and staff members will enter the building one at a time, pausing to register their temperature using a no-touch scanner. The scanner simply checks for “above” or “below” 100* F. If the scanner alerts “above,” the individual immediately goes to the isolation room for assessment by the nurse.
- Outside visitors to school (contractors, vendors, etc.) will be discouraged and limited in all buildings. Only scheduled visitors and parents picking up children during the school day will be allowed in the building. In the event that the principal determines the necessity, visitors will need to make an appointment and abide by protective guidelines that include self-screening for fever, completion of the “Symptoms and Status” Questionnaire, and wearing a mask that covers the mouth and nose for entry beyond the vestibule. Parents dropping off or picking up students during the school day (times other than regular arrival and dismissal) will not need an appointment, but will not be allowed beyond the vestibule.
- School community members should note that the district **will not keep**—and is specifically prohibited from keeping—records of student, faculty, staff and visitor health data (e.g. the specific temperature of an individual), but will maintain records that confirm individuals were screened and the result of such screening (e.g. pass/fail, cleared/not cleared).

Any individual who screens positive for COVID-19 exposure or symptoms **must stay at home**, and notify their supervisor (employees) or teacher/school nurse (students) for further guidance. Any individual who presents with a temperature greater than 100.0°F on school grounds will be denied entry to the building, or sent directly to a dedicated isolation area prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home with instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing.

Healthy Hand and Respiratory Hygiene Practices

Maintaining proper hygiene starts with the individual actions of each school community member. That's why we will be training students, faculty, staff, and parents/guardians on public health protections against COVID-19 throughout the school year, and provide continued education through written and verbal communication in every school district facility.

Age- and content-appropriate signage will be used throughout school buildings reminding all to: stay home if they feel sick; cover their nose and mouth with an acceptable face covering when unable to maintain social distance from others or in accordance with any stricter policy implemented by the school; properly store and, when necessary, discard PPE; adhere to social distancing instructions; report symptoms of, or exposure to, COVID-19, and how they should do so; follow hand hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection guidelines; and to follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

Hand hygiene includes traditional hand-washing (with soap and warm water, scrubbing for a minimum of 20 seconds), and/or use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Throughout the course of the school day, we will require students, staff, and faculty to wash or sanitize their hands:

- Upon entering a building or classroom;
- After using shared surfaces or objects;
- Before and after snacks and lunch;
- After using the bathroom or helping a student with toileting;
- After sneezing, wiping or blowing nose, or coughing into hands;
- After coming inside from the outdoors; and
- At other regularly scheduled intervals.

The district continues to make multiple provisions to allow all individuals to achieve the best hand hygiene possible. Soap, warm running water, and disposable paper towels are available in every bathroom and at every in-classroom sink throughout each building. Custodians will ensure the replenishment of handwashing supplies at least daily. Additional touch-free garbage cans for disposing used paper towels or PPE will be placed as needed and emptied frequently. All existing warm-air hand dryers installed in bathrooms have been safely rendered inoperable to prevent aerosolization of germs. Alcohol-based and non-alcohol-based hand sanitizer gel or foam is available throughout common areas and in convenient, easy-to-find locations. Every classroom district-wide has a wall-mounted sanitizer dispenser installed by the door.

Good respiratory hygiene practices are also important for students, faculty and staff to follow, because the COVID-19 virus spreads from person to person in droplets produced by coughs and sneezes. Students and staff must cover their mouths or noses with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and dispose of the tissue appropriately. A supply of tissues will be available in every classroom, along with touch-free garbage cans for disposal.

Social Distancing

For Glens Falls City Schools to maintain safe operations, we must use social distancing to protect against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus while on school grounds and in school facilities (including cafeterias, gymnasiums, and other spaces). Specifically, appropriate social distancing means six feet of space in all directions between individuals or use of appropriate physical barriers between individuals that do not adversely affect air flow, heating, cooling or ventilation, or otherwise present a health or safety risk.

To facilitate this, our school district has reconfigured our classroom spaces, common areas, and other rooms throughout the buildings for appropriate social distancing.

For Glens Falls City School classrooms, this reconfiguration translates into 12 students and up to 3 adults per classroom **in most instances**. Based on their square footage, some classrooms can hold more socially-distanced individuals, and some can hold fewer.

Because of the need to create these socially-distanced spaces, in-person instruction may be every day or may involve a hybrid in-person model in order to stay compliant with the Department of Health Guidelines. Please see the Models for Instruction section of this plan's Teaching and Learning provisions for additional details.

On days when in-person instruction is happening at our schools, all students, parents, and staff must maintain social distancing and/or appropriate face coverings on the front lawns and outside grounds during arrival and dismissal. To make this easier, our schools may use staggered arrival/dismissal times and multiple entry doors for students.

Social distancing must be practiced at all times inside our schools, unless safety or the core activity (e.g. moving equipment, using an elevator, traveling in common areas) requires a shorter distance or involves individuals of the same household. During those times, all individuals, including staff and students, must wear face coverings that cover the mouth and nose consistent with public health guidance. To be clear, face coverings are not a replacement for physical distancing, but they will be used to mitigate virus spread when physical distancing is not feasible. Signage will be posted around all school buildings reminding individuals to keep social distance.

Each school will create a plan for moving students in the hallway. This will address physical distancing objectives and reduce bi-directional foot traffic as students move between classrooms. Procedures will be shared with staff and students at the start of the school year, marked with visual aids (such as arrow signs, cones, or tape), and reinforced through frequent written and/or verbal reminders.

Additionally, we must ensure that a distance of 12 feet in all directions is maintained between individuals while participating in activities that require projecting the voice (e.g., singing), playing a wind instrument, or aerobic activity resulting in heavy breathing (e.g., participating in gym classes). Modifications will be made to those classes and curriculum to accommodate this.

Our school district has evaluated our auditoriums, gymnasiums, and cafeterias to provide additional learning spaces for students that are more easily appropriately socially distanced. We have also evaluated smaller spaces in the school building, such as elevators, copying rooms, and faculty rooms, and will be limiting the use of these spaces. These identified spaces will require the use of face coverings and occupancy should not exceed 50% of the maximum, unless the space is designed for use by a single occupant.

All meals and snacks will be served and eaten while adhering to social distance requirements. This may involve individually-plated meals eaten at desks in classrooms, or in the cafeteria with only a few students per table, as per six-foot social distancing requirements. Please see the Food Services section of this plan for additional details.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Every member of our school community has a role to play in keeping our schools safe and healthy. Staff, faculty, and students will be expected to wear and use appropriate personal protective equipment daily to mitigate transmission of the COVID-19 virus on school grounds and in school facilities.

One of the most important pieces of PPE is a cloth or disposable face mask that covers the mouth and nose. NYS DOH **recommends** that face masks be worn by all individuals at all times. NYS DOH **requires** that face masks be worn any time or place that individuals cannot maintain appropriate social distancing. Acceptable face masks include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings (e.g. homemade sewn, bandana, fishing buff), and disposable surgical masks.

Anyone headed to school for in-person teaching, learning, or working should wear an acceptable face mask from home. The district will provide face masks for any individual who needs a replacement or supplement while on school grounds. Training and information will be provided to staff, students, and families on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.

Faculty/Staff PPE

- An acceptable cloth-based face covering will be provided to every employee at no cost, in accordance with Executive Order 202.16.
- Face shields worn without an acceptable face covering underneath **are not** considered adequate protection or source control against COVID-19 and may not be used independently.
- Some faculty and staff members will be given additional PPE such as face shields, gloves, or disposable gowns. These distinct employees work closely with students that need specific support, or perform job duties that require a higher degree of protection, in accordance with OSHA guidelines.

Student PPE

- All students must wear acceptable face coverings, except for students who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering. If parents believe that their child is unable to medically tolerate a face covering, they should contact their building principal.
- Students **will** be allowed to remove their face masks when seated at a socially-distanced desk in the classroom for instruction and while eating meals/snacks. Students will be given additional face covering breaks when they can maintain social distance.

Disease Containment Efforts

The district is in direct and continuing communication with leaders at the Warren County Department of Health and Glens Falls Hospital to ensure the best possible COVID-19 containment actions are in effect at our schools. The district's containment team members are Superintendent Paul Jenkins, Assistant Superintendent for Business Bobby Yusko, Director of Personnel Development Lisa Palmer, Director of Facilities and Transportation Ken Chester, District Nurse Department Chair Kathy Callaghan, and the building Principal and School Nurse, as necessary.

Staff and students should not come to school, and should notify school officials (building principals or supervisor and the superintendent) if they (staff) or their child (families) become sick with COVID-19 symptoms, test

positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case.

Any student or staff member with a fever of 100°F or greater and/or symptoms of possible COVID-19 virus infection should not be present in school. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) keeps an up to date list of symptoms of Coronavirus on its website. This list is not all-inclusive, as some individuals may display other symptoms or none at all. As of 7/13/2020, the following are listed as the most common symptoms of COVID-19:

- Fever or chills (100°F or greater);
- Cough;
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches;
- Headache;
- New loss of taste or smell;
- Sore throat;
- Congestion or runny nose;
- Nausea or vomiting; and/or
- Diarrhea.

All staff members will be educated to observe students or other staff members for signs of any type of illness such as:

- Flushed cheeks;
- Rapid or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity);
- Fatigue, and/or irritability; and
- Frequent use of the bathroom.

Students, faculty, or staff members who develop symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day must

immediately go to the health office. Our school nurse will assess the individual, as chronic conditions (eg. asthma, allergies) or chronic gastrointestinal conditions may present the same symptoms as COVID-19, but are neither contagious nor pose a public health threat.

Protocols for a suspected COVID-19 case involving a student

- Step 1: A symptomatic student will be evaluated by the school nurse, who uses appropriate PPE for standard and transmission-based precautions.
- Step 2: The student will immediately go to the school’s designated isolation room until they can be picked up by a parent. Symptomatic students who are waiting to be picked up must wear a mask, and will remain under the visual supervision of a staff member who is socially-distanced.
 - Individuals who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility depending on how severe their symptoms are. It is recommended that parents contact their child’s physician for further guidance and testing. Families will be provided information to assist with this process.

Symptoms of COVID-19

Symptoms of COVID-19	Strep Throat	Common Cold	Flu	Asthma	Seasonal Allergies
FEVER	✓		✓		
COUGH		✓	✓	✓	✓
SORE THROAT	✓	✓	✓		✓
SHORTNESS OF BREATH				✓	
FATIGUE		✓	✓	✓	✓
DIARRHEA OR VOMITING	✓		✓		
RUNNY NOSE		✓	✓		✓
BODY/ MUSCLE ACHES	✓	✓	✓		

✓ Symptom of illness



- Step 3: Custodial staff will clean and disinfect appropriate areas such as the isolation room, classroom, and/or other areas, as per cleaning protocols.
- Step 4: Students will need clearance from a physician to return to school. Students should stay home until they test negative for COVID-19 or are not showing any further symptoms. Parents must contact the school nurse before the student returns to school.

Protocols for a **suspected** COVID-19 case involving a **staff member**

- Step 1: A symptomatic staff member will be evaluated by the school nurse, who uses appropriate PPE for standard and transmission-based precautions.
- Step 2: The staff member will immediately leave the building, or isolate until they can be picked up by a family member.
 - Individuals who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility depending on how severe their symptoms are. It is recommended that staff members contact their physician for further guidance and testing.
- Step 3: Nurse(s) consult with the appropriate supervisor to assist in determining risk.
- Step 4: Custodial staff will clean and disinfect appropriate areas such as the classroom and/or other areas as per cleaning protocols.
- Step 5: Staff members will need clearance from a physician to return to school. The staff member should stay home until they test negative for COVID-19 or are not showing any further symptoms.

Protocols for a **confirmed** COVID-19 case involving a **student or staff member**

- When a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the individual (or parent) notifies the school nurse and she will confirm the positive case with Warren County DOH.
- Warren County DOH determines length of isolation for an individual confirmed to have COVID-19.
- In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, school administrators will notify the appropriate local health officials, staff, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- School nurses will start the process of tracing by determining contacts within the building, the bus, and possibly other buildings if there are siblings, and share information with Warren County DOH.
 - Warren County DOH will instruct the district on any possible closure and its duration.
 - An entire school may not be closed because of one confirmed case.
 - Warren County DOH will notify potential contacts, with possible assistance from district nurses.
- Any staff or student that meets the close contact criteria will be contacted with further instructions specific to the individual situation. Close contact is defined as being <6 feet for ≥15 minutes. Confidentiality will be maintained in all exposure communications.
- Based on the number of students and staff that meet the close contact criteria, a determination will be made by the superintendent about remote learning for one class, some classes, or the entire school.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Portions of a building used by a sick person will be immediately closed off until after cleaning and disinfecting of all heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces, along with any offices, classrooms, bathrooms, lockers, or common areas used by the sick person.
- Per NYSDOH guidance, outside doors and windows will be opened as possible to increase air circulation in the area, and custodians will wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting, unless waiting 24 hours is not feasible, in which case, we will wait as long as possible.

Return to School after Illness

If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider based on a test or their symptoms or does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, they should not be at school and should stay at home until further notified by the Warren County Department of Health.

The district will follow Warren County DOH guidance for allowing a student or staff member to return to school after exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. If a person is not diagnosed by a healthcare provider (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) with COVID-19 they can return to school:

- Once there is no fever, without the use of fever reducing medicines, and they have felt well for 24 hours;
- If they have been diagnosed with another condition and have a healthcare provider written note stating they are clear to return to school.

Facilities: Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection

The COVID-19 virus can spread through respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze. The virus can spread to hands from a contaminated surface, and then to the nose or mouth, causing infection. That's why Glens Falls City Schools will meet or exceed all hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and NYSDOH.

The district continues to make multiple provisions to allow all individuals to achieve the best hand hygiene possible. These specific actions include the following:

- Soap, warm running water, and disposable paper towels are available in every bathroom and at every in-classroom sink throughout each building. Custodians will ensure the replenishment of handwashing supplies at least daily. Additional touch-free garbage cans for disposing used paper towels or PPE will be placed as needed and emptied frequently. Age-appropriate signage will be placed in each handwashing area to remind individuals of proper handwashing technique.
- All existing warm-air hand dryers installed in bathrooms have been safely rendered inoperable to prevent aerosolization of germs.
- Alcohol-based and non-alcohol-based hand sanitizer gel or foam is available throughout common areas and in convenient, easy-to-find locations. Every classroom district-wide has a wall-mounted sanitizer dispenser installed by the door, in accordance with FCNYS 2020 Section 5705.5.

Each building's drinking fountains have been either retrofitted as bottle refilling stations, or had the bubbler fixture temporarily shut off. We encourage all staff and students to bring their own water bottles or use disposable cups provided. Since drinking fountains are a code-required plumbing fixture, the district is maintaining at least one retrofitted filling station per each 100 building occupants.

Rigorous and ongoing cleaning and disinfection are the primary responsibility of the school's custodial staff, who will follow the instructions outlined in NYSDOH's "[Interim Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19](#)" and "[Interim Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Primary and Secondary Schools for COVID-19](#)." Additional cleaning and disinfection supplies will be provided to faculty and staff, who may be assigned some light cleaning responsibilities. Students should not be present when disinfectants are in use, and will not participate in cleaning and/or disinfection activities. Disposable wipes, and/or disinfectant spray and paper towels, will be available in classrooms so that commonly used surfaces (e.g. desks, remote controls) can be wiped down before/after use.

Building supervisors, custodians, and cleaners will maintain logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection of school facilities. Cleaning and disinfection frequency for each facility type will be clearly stated, assigned to specific staff members, and included in the logs. Specifically, cleaning and disinfection of frequently used restrooms will be performed multiple times throughout each day.

The Operations and Maintenance team has secured 14 new electrostatic sprayers for disinfection of instructional areas nightly with an approved bleach alternative. Cleaning and disinfection of exposed areas in the event an individual is confirmed to have COVID-19 are outlined in the containment plan.

In an effort to increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible, classroom windows, office windows, and other windows throughout each building can remain open during the school day unless inclement weather, outdoor air temperatures, or other health and safety protocols require them to be shut.

Each of the district's building HVAC systems will be upgraded with HEPA-grade MERV-13 air filtration filters. The Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) is an effectiveness scale that goes from 1 to 16, where a larger number indicates a higher filter efficiency and the ability to capture smaller particles. The MERV-13 category captures 95-99% of particulates (0.30-1.0 microns in size), and is used in hospitals¹. These new filters will be installed in every building HVAC system, and in each classroom Uni-vent air handling system, if the room has one.

Any changes or additions to facilities will comply with the requirements of the 2020 New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (BC) and the State Energy Conservation Code, and will be submitted to the Office of Facilities Planning. Detailed floor plans will be submitted to OFP for any classrooms, libraries, cafeterias, auditoriums, gymnasiums, doors, and other points of congregation where dividers are installed. Any plastic separators used will comply with the 2020 NYS Building Code section 2606.

As always, all district facilities will comply with the 2020 Building Condition Survey and Visual Inspection, where applicable. The district will conduct Lead-In-Water Testing at all buildings when they are "normally occupied" as required by NYS DOH regulation 67-4. This plan does not call for any new building construction, temporary quarter projects, usage of tents, or new facilities for leasing. Any project submissions only dedicated to "COVID-19 Reopening" will be labeled as such. All existing toilets and sinks remain unaltered, and meet the minimum standards of the NYS Building Code.

All schools in the district will conduct required school safety drills, including lockdown, shelter-in-place, and fire drills. All school safety plans, including emergency procedures, will be updated with modifications ensuring social distancing between persons during these drills.

¹ <https://www.ny-engineers.com/blog/coronavirus-prevention-with-air-filters-understanding-merv-and-hepa>

Transportation

The Glens Falls City School District is committed to fulfilling all existing mandates regarding the safe and effective transportation of students who have disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care, students who attend non-public schools or charter schools, and students whose Individualized Education Plans have placed them out of district whose schools are meeting in in-person sessions when/if the district is not.

Buses, Vans, and Vehicles

- When outdoor air temperatures are above 45 degrees, our vehicles will transport passengers with the roof hatches or windows slightly opened to provide air flow.
- All student transport vehicles in daily use will be cleaned/disinfected once a day. High contact spots will be wiped down after the AM and PM run. Buses will be disinfected nightly.
- Wheelchair placement on our accessible buses will ensure social distancing of six feet.
- School buses will not be equipped with hand sanitizer, due to its combustible composition and potential liability issues.

Requirements for Transportation Staff Members

- As described in this plan's Health and Safety Practices and Protocols, drivers, monitors, and mechanics shall perform a self-health assessment for symptoms of COVID-19 before arriving to work using the district-provided screening tool. Any employee who screens positive for COVID-19 exposure or symptoms **must stay at home**, and notify their supervisor for further guidance.
- School bus drivers, monitors, and mechanics must wear an appropriate face covering along with an optional face shield.
- PPE such as masks and gloves will be provided for transportation personnel in buses. Drivers and monitors who have direct physical contact with students must wear gloves.
- Transportation staff (drivers, monitors, mechanics, and cleaners) will be trained and provided periodic refreshers on the proper use of PPE, social distancing, and the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Drivers, monitors, and attendants must not carry personal bottles of hand sanitizer with them on school buses.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided for all transportation staff in the dispatch office and bus garage.
- All transportation staff members are encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water before and after AM and PM runs to keep healthy and prevent the spread of germs.

Requirements for Student Riders

- As described in this plan's Health and Safety Practices and Protocols, all parents/guardians will be required to ensure that their child/children are not experiencing any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and do not have a fever of 100 degrees or more prior to them boarding their school bus/van.
- Students must wear a face mask on a school bus/van. Students whose disability would prevent them from wearing a mask, or students unable to medically tolerate a face covering—including students where such covering would impair their physical health or mental health—are not required to wear masks.
- Students will not be denied transportation if they do not have a mask. Disposable masks will be available on every bus for any student who forgets their reusable mask.

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- Students and parents should maintain six feet of social distancing between members of different households while loading and unloading. Students must maintain six feet of social distancing between members of different households on the bus.
 - Students will follow markings on seats and/or directions from the driver/monitor on where to sit to ensure compliance with social distancing requirements.

Technology

The Glens Falls City School District is committed to preparing our students to be successful, productive members of a global society, which necessitates integrating high-quality education technology into teaching and learning.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, equitable access to technology and connectivity has been a priority for Glens Falls City Schools. Since the 2015-16 school year, every student in grades 7 through 12 has received a “take-home” Chromebook provided by the school district. Since 2016-17, students in grades 5 and 6 have each been assigned individual Chromebooks for in-school use, and since 2018-19 this one-to-one program has been expanded to all students in grades 3 and 4. Since the COVID-19 shutdown in March, every student in grades 3-12 has kept their device at home for instructional use, and the district re-deployed additional devices to students in grades K-2. **In the fall of 2020, every Glens Falls student – Kindergarten through grade 12 – will have their own “take-home-enabled” touch-screen Chromebook so that they have multiple ways to participate in learning and demonstrate mastery of Learning Standards in our remote or hybrid in-person models.**

We understand that sufficient access to computing devices is only one half of the equation when it comes to remote learning. High-speed internet access is also essential for full educational equity. At the outset of our Chromebook one-to-one implementation in 2015, the district surveyed every family on the availability of internet connectivity at home, with a 95% positive response. We have worked with families on an individual basis to provide mobile internet hotspots and/or other resources to ensure each student has a device and the connectivity to make it work. The district will resurvey parents and guardians to determine the level of access to high-speed internet in students' homes.

Teacher support and professional development around creating effective digital learning experiences has been ongoing in Glens Falls City Schools since 2015. We have two full-time district-wide technology coaches and four full-time district-wide instructional coaches who have been working with teachers before and during the COVID-19 school closure. These coaches have provided robust and individualized remote teaching support to our educators, continuing through the summer and into the fall. Specific efforts have included the following:

- Development of an **internal website** for educators, loaded with resources for standards-based remote instruction and enrichment, including:
 - Subscription access to, and tutorials on, EdLaw 2-d compliant programs/applications for student learning (*Google Classroom, Seesaw, Kami, Online Whiteboard, Newsela, Breakout EDU, Edpuzzle, Choice Boards, and HyperDocs*);
 - How-to videos on specific device/program/application usage (*Google Educational Suite: Classroom, Mail, Sheets, Docs, Forms, Meets; Screencastify and WeVideo recording, etc.*);
 - Guidance and instruction on using technology to communicate effectively with students and families (*Google Sites, Smore Newsletters, Google Calling*); and
 - Responsive online “Help Desk” support for device troubleshooting and repairs, with organized claim/ticket submission and followup.
 - **This internal website will be continually updated and supported throughout the 2020-21 school year.**

- Development of an **external website** for students and families, loaded with resources for remote learning and enrichment, including:
 - Grade-level-specific and content-area-specific educational resources for students and families, developed in consultation with district faculty members to ensure consistency with instruction;
 - How-to videos on specific device/program/application usage (Chromebook Accessibility features, Chromebook keyboard shortcuts, etc.);
 - Tips for parents/guardians on supporting remote learning at home;
 - Responsive online “Help Desk” support for device troubleshooting and repairs, with organized claim/ticket submission and followup.
 - **This external website will be continually updated and supported throughout the 2020-21 school year.**
- Professional development for leaders and educators on designing effective remote/online learning experiences and best practices for instruction in remote/online settings has been offered since March of 2020, and continues to be offered and completed by employees throughout the summer.

		Start	End	Activity Title	Hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blowing Off STEAM #2 (K-8)		03/23/2020		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blowing Off STEAM #3 (K-8)		03/30/2020		
<input type="checkbox"/>	21st Century Learning Lab		04/06/2020		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Taking Virtual Reality to the Next Level		04/20/2020		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diving into G-Mail: Let's Get Organized		07/07/2020		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Screencastify: "To infinity and beyond"		07/09/2020		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Google Drive: Brush Up on the Basics		07/14/2020		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Google Drive: Get Cleaned and Organized		07/14/2020		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Google Classroom: Features and Organization		07/16/2020		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Google Docs: More than a Word Processor		07/16/2020		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Managing Information with Google Sheets and Forms		07/16/2020		
		07/28/2020	07/28/2020	Bitmoji and Virtual Classroom: Join the Craze	1.00
		08/18/2020	08/20/2020	Build NYSSLS Assessments and Enhance Them With Reliability Studies	9.00
		08/24/2020	08/24/2020	Building Relationships-The key to effectively engaging our ELA students	2.00
		07/28/2020	07/28/2020	Create and Collaborate with Padlet	1.00
		08/18/2020	08/18/2020	Creating Success with Seesaw	1.00
		07/30/2020	07/30/2020	Google Slides: Advanced	1.00
		07/30/2020	07/30/2020	Google Slides: The Basics	1.00
		08/04/2020	08/04/2020	Kami: A Game Changer	1.00
		07/27/2020	07/30/2020	Mediation Matters Circles Training	8.00
		08/06/2020	08/06/2020	Preparing for the Unknown: The Best of Remote Learning	1.00
		08/04/2020	08/04/2020	Smart 18 Learning Suite K-12 (NEW)	1.00
		07/30/2020	07/30/2020	Smore: Creating Digital Newsletters	1.00
		08/18/2020	08/18/2020	WeVideo K-12:	1.00
		08/20/2020	08/20/2020	What's New in Tech at GFSD	1.00

- The technology coaches began producing a weekly faculty newsletter with reminders, tips, and best practices to support online learning.

Student data privacy and security will be maintained and the district is in compliance with Federal and State laws related to student technology use, including NY Education Law 2-d and Part 121 of the Commissioner’s Regulations.

Teaching and Learning

The mission of the Glens Falls City School District is to provide a safe, positive, and stimulating environment – one that fosters self-growth, a passion for continuous learning, confidence, and the ability to succeed in a changing world. As a school community, we believe that all students must have the opportunity to feel safe, engaged, and excited about their learning, whether in-person, remote, or some combination of the two².

The district's continuity of learning plan for the 2020-21 school year prepares for in-person, remote, and hybrid models of instruction that are aligned with the outcomes in the New York State Learning Standards. Regardless of the instructional model implemented, the district is focused on providing equity and access for all students in Glens Falls including, but not limited to, students with disabilities, English language learners, students who lack connectivity, and students experiencing homelessness. This continuity of learning plan will be adjusted to meet the dynamic needs of the Glens Falls City School community, based on new/changing NYSED or NYSDOH guidance and evolving local/regional factors.

Our clear opportunities for instruction that are accessible to all students will be:

- aligned with State standards
- include routine scheduled times for students to interact and seek feedback and support from their teachers
- include regular and substantive interaction with an appropriately certified teacher regardless of the delivery method (e.g., in-person, remote or hybrid).

Students and their families/caregivers can contact the school and teachers with questions about their instruction and/or technology in multiple ways (e.g., email, online platform, and/or by phone). We have regular expectations for communication and connection between school and home, which is an essential part of ensuring that all stakeholders play a role in the evolving nature of instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. This two-way communication framework will be accessible to all, available in multiple languages, widely disseminated, and include clear and multiple ways for students and families to contact schools and teachers.

Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism

The district believes in connecting with students on a daily basis, and will collect and report daily teacher/student engagement or attendance, regardless of the instructional setting. Plans to check daily attendance will be shared by each building and teacher in the first week of school.

- When students are learning in an in-person hybrid model, attendance will be taken as per usual protocols.
- When students are learning in a remote setting, teachers will use Google Meet and other district-approved programs/applications as necessary to connect with students each day and take attendance. While students are learning virtually, teachers will connect with them both synchronously and asynchronously. All teachers who normally see that student will connect with them during their virtual time, according to the schedule developed by each building principal. Any students that are not connected will be referred immediately to student support team members in each building and a plan will be developed to connect with each family.
- Attendance of any school-age student of compulsory age, who resides in the Glens Falls City School district or is placed by a parent/guardian in another public school district, a charter school, or is placed by a district administrator or the CSE of the school district in educational programs outside the district (such

² Quoted from *Recovering, Rebuilding, and Renewing: The Spirit of New York's Schools*, p. 89

as, another school district, BOCES, approved private in-State or out-of-State school, and State supported school) will be reported in SIRS.

- Attendance will be reported by all schools since they are required to take attendance;
- Resident students of compulsory age who were not in attendance in the current school year will be reported until they exceed compulsory school age, they no longer reside in the district, or the district has documentation that the student has entered another educational program leading to a high school diploma. These students will be immediately referred to the high school social worker for follow-up conversations and planning;
- Students who drop out while still of compulsory school age will be kept on the school attendance register until they exceed compulsory school age or move out of the district. However, high school administrators will attempt to develop a plan to get them to return.

Medically Vulnerable/High-Risk Groups

Guidance from NYSED and the Department of Health states that there are several groups that are at increased risk for complications from COVID-19 and may need added or alternative provisions. Students who have family members who are in high-risk groups may also need to attend school remotely. In addition, we anticipate that parents may want options for educating their children at home if they have concerns regarding COVID-19 risk.

- Students in K-4 will have the opportunity to learn completely remotely for the first trimester of their year.
- Students in 5-12 will have the opportunity to learn completely remotely for the first half of the year.
- At the end of the trimester/semester, we will re-evaluate our district-wide plan and make decisions about the second trimester/spring semester.
- All teachers will meet with their students using Google Meet, Classroom, or other district-approved programs/applications daily.

Models for Instruction

It continues to be the district's main objective to create responsive reopening plans that keep students and staff healthy and safe, and allow for parental choice when it comes to their child(ren)'s education. We understand that all families have unique circumstances and strong feelings about what is best for their child(ren). For the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, parents will need to choose and commit to one of three instructional models for each of their children:

- **All-Virtual Model:** Students enrolled in this option will receive full instruction in all core/required classes covering the same material that is delivered in person, in real time, by participating in a Google Meet simulcast of in-classroom instruction. (Some elective options may not be available in the virtual model.) Parents must commit to the virtual model for the full fall trimester (through late November for grades K-4) or semester (through late January for MS/HS), when we will re-evaluate our district-wide plan and make decisions about the spring semester. This synchronous instruction will allow students to be fully ready to transition back into in-person school in the future.
- **Hybrid In-Person Model:** Students enrolled in this option will attend school in-person, in strict adherence to the Governor's and NYS Department of Health Guidelines for Reopening. Because of the need to create smaller, socially-distanced groups, in-person instruction may be every day or may involve a hybrid model where students are physically in school on a certain day/days and learning remotely on others.
- **Formal Homeschooling.** Students choosing this option will un-enroll in Glens Falls City Schools, and parents/guardians assume all educational duties as outlined in NYS Education Department regulations.

The district will provide multiple ways for students to participate in learning and demonstrate mastery of Learning Standards in the all-virtual and hybrid in-person models.

Here's a general walk-through of each model of instruction, understanding that protocols may evolve as the community situation changes:

All-Virtual Model: Students enrolled in this option will receive full instruction in all core/required classes covering the same material that is delivered in person, in real time, by participating in a Google Meet simulcast of in-classroom instruction. (Some elective options may not be available in the virtual model.) Students are expected to follow their schedule remotely, joining their Google Meets at the beginning of each class period. Teachers will take attendance daily, period by period through eSchool. Authentic grades will be recorded, and expectations for learning will be the same for students at home and students in the building. Report cards will be issued with grades (not Pass/Incomplete). All students with 504 accommodations, IEP's or ENL services will receive services based on their individual needs. This synchronous instruction will allow students to be fully ready to transition back into in-person school in the future.

Hybrid In-Person Model: Students enrolled in this option will attend school in-person, in strict adherence to the Governor's and NYS Department of Health Guidelines for Reopening. **On a student's in-person day(s):**

All families: add health screening into their morning routine at home, then depart for school wearing appropriate face coverings. Parents and students wait on the school's front lawn, maintaining six feet of social distance between households, until it is time for students to enter the building. Different grade levels may enter at staggered times. Wearing face coverings, students line up at their assigned entry door. Students enter the building one at a time, pausing to register their temperature using a no-touch scanner. The scanner simply checks for "above" or "below" 100* F. If the scanner alerts "above," the student immediately goes to the isolation room for assessment by the nurse. All other students walk to their classroom/learning space to begin the day.

- **Elementary:** All students attend school in-person every day. Each class is divided into two groups. Student desks are placed six feet apart in their learning space, making for a group of around 12 students, or about half the class. Group A spends the first half of the day (2.5 hours) learning core subjects (Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies) with their teacher in the classroom. Group B spends the first half of their day (2.5 hours) in their socially-distanced alternate space, participating in art, music, P.E., STEAM activities, and enrichment. Each group eats lunch where they are, either brought from home, or ordered through food services and delivered "TV-dinner style" to each individual. After lunch and thorough cleaning of areas, the two groups switch. Group B gets core instruction, while Group A gets enrichment. Schoolday hours are 8:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. for Kindergarten and Grade 1; and 8:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for Grades 2, 3 + 4.
- **Middle School:** Student desks are placed six feet apart in their learning space, making for a group of 12-14 students, or about half of a typical class. Glens Falls Middle School will be shifting to a block schedule approach. Each day will consist of five 1-hour blocks. Our typical eight periods will be spread over the course of two consecutive days. On Fridays, students will attend all 8 classes for half of a block (30 minutes). Students will be assigned to attend classes in person on Monday/Tuesday or Wednesday/Thursday, and students will attend those same classes virtually on the opposite days. The two groups will alternate attending on Fridays. Schoolday hours are 8:20 a.m. to 2:05 p.m. for Grades 5 + 6; and 8:40 a.m. to 2:25 p.m. for Grades 7 + 8. On their virtual learning days, students are expected to follow their schedule remotely, joining their Google Meets at the beginning of each class period. Teachers will

take attendance daily, period by period through eSchool. Authentic grades will be recorded, and expectations for learning will be the same for students at home and students in the building. Report cards will be issued with grades (not Pass/Incomplete). All students with 504 accommodations, IEP's or ENL services will receive services based on their individual needs.

- **High School:** Student desks are placed six feet apart in their learning space, making for a group of 12-14 students, or about half of a typical class. Glens Falls High School will be shifting to a block schedule approach, following a “two days in-two days out” rotation. Each day will consist of four blocks. Students will be assigned to an A/B or C/D group. For the first five weeks: the A/B students will attend classes in-person on A + B days, and learn remotely on C + D days; the C/D students will attend classes in-person on C + D days, and learn remotely on A + B days. After five weeks, the students who were in-person A and B days will meet in-person on C and D days. Students who began the year as in-person on C and D days will change to in-person instruction on A and B days. This will even out the face-to-face classroom time for the two groups for classes that meet only once in the 4-day rotation. Schoolday hours are 8:30 a.m. to 3:01 p.m. On their virtual learning days, students are expected to follow their schedule remotely, joining their Google Meets at the beginning of each class period. Teachers will take attendance daily, period by period through eSchool. Authentic grades will be recorded, and expectations for learning will be the same for students at home and students in the building. Report cards will be issued with grades (not Pass/Incomplete). All students with 504 accommodations, IEP's or ENL services will receive services based on their individual needs.

If choosing the **All-Virtual** model, parents must commit to all-virtual for the full fall trimester (through late November for grades K-4) or semester (through late January for MS/HS), when we will re-evaluate our district-wide plan and make decisions about the spring semester.

If choosing the **Hybrid/In-Person** model, parents may switch to All-Virtual at any point once school starts, BUT once going all-virtual, students may not switch back to in-person until the end of the trimester/semester. **Once a family chooses the all-virtual option for a student, they stay all-virtual through the fall.**

WSWHE BOCES programs are running this fall, in line with all the health and safety precautions outlined by the State. Glens Falls students riding on our buses to/from the program will need to follow all the procedures outlined in the Transportation section of the district's COVID-19 Reopening Plan.

Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK)

The district's Universal Pre-Kindergarten program will be offered to accepted students using an in-person model of 2.5 instructional hours per day. Starting and ending times for the AM and PM sessions will be adjusted as necessary to allow for proper cleaning protocols, in accordance with State guidance.

The district will ensure that contracted Pre-Kindergarten providers have measures in place to ensure they will follow health and safety guidelines outlined in NYSED guidance and required by the New York State DOH. The district will also ensure their eligible agencies have a Continuity of Learning plan that addresses in-person, remote, and hybrid models of instruction.

Special Education

It is important to provide all services that are needed for our special education students. Special education programs and services provide equity and access for students with disabilities to be involved in and to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.

- As part of the reopening planning, a subgroup specifically on special education was created and worked in collaboration with CPSE and CSE. During these conversations, all services were discussed and a plan is developed for in-person, remote, and hybrid learning.
- All students' IEPs have been reviewed by the case managers and each manager is expected to monitor student progress and communicate this progress consistently to parents and the educational team.
- All students with disabilities will continue to have available to them a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) and related services designed to meet their unique needs within in-person, remote, and hybrid learning environments.

PPE

Students with special needs or students who are medically fragile may not be able to maintain social distancing, hand or respiratory hygiene, or wear a face covering or mask. In order to have in-person instruction, the district plans to work with each of these families to determine the best scenario for each student.

- For teachers and aides who work with special needs students or medically fragile students, masks, shields, gloves, and aprons will be provided to them, as needed.
- When hands-on assistance of students takes place, staff will wear equipment listed above.

Least Restrictive Environments

It is essential that we provide equal access to high-quality programs that are designed based on their individual needs and abilities.

- Students in self-contained classrooms will start the year back in school full time. If we have to go to a hybrid model, when students are in school, services such as speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy and assistive technology support will be given in-person or virtually as necessary.
- If schools have to be fully virtual, each teacher and related service provider will create a plan to clearly state how all services will be provided remotely.
- Parents will be contacted and given a choice if they would like to be back full time or completely virtual. These communications will be in the families' preferred language.

Technology

- All students in the district will be given a device. Based on the needs of the students and on the recommendations of the assistive technology support staff, if a student requires additional or different technology, it will be given to them for home and school use.
- Any student requiring Augmentative Communication Devices will be provided access to their devices at home if in a virtual learning platform.
- Assistive Technology services will be provided within the school setting during in-school or hybrid models.
- All students and parents have access to a list of district software, technology tips, and help platforms for requesting services and or instruction in the utilization of such technology.

IEP Implementation

- IEP implementation for delivery of services continues to apply to programs and services whether delivered in-person, a hybrid model or virtually. Flexibility with respect to IEP implementation continues

to apply during the COVID-19 outbreak in regard to flexibility in mode and/or manner; group or individual sessions; specific group size for related services, frequency, duration and location of related services, and special class size ratio. In the event flexibility is required, the educational team will communicate with parents consistently and document such communications within the student's IEP contact log.

- Teachers and service providers will continue to progress monitor individual IEP goals and/or objectives. Data collection and documentation will be completed within the student's IEP. Progress monitoring will be shared with parents at the same time as report cards, at parent request, and during requested review and annual review meetings. Reports may be made via telephone or other electronic means if progress reporting procedures specified in the IEP cannot be met with reasonable efforts.
- All collaboration, assessments and determinations will be documented and shared with parents in their preferred language or mode of communication.

Provision of Services

- During the 2020-21 school year, students with disabilities will be provided in-person instruction and/or virtual instruction in alignment with the special education and related services identified in the student's IEP.
- Parents will be given a choice of face to face instruction or virtual instruction based on the general education procedures for medically fragile students. The district will ensure meaningful parent engagement in the parent's preferred language or mode of communication regarding the provision of services to his/her child to meet the requirements of the IDEA.
- If schools have to be fully virtual, each teacher and related service provider will create a plan to clearly state how all services will be provided remotely.

Compensatory Services

- CPSE/CSE will make an individualized determination whether and to what extent compensatory services are to be provided once school reopens and how those services will be provided in conjunction with the school's reopening plan.
- CPSE/CSE will consider documented formative and summative assessment of skills in collaboration with the district benchmarks to determine regression of skills in relation to the general education population. If compensatory services are warranted, the CPSE/CSE will work together to create a schedule of services conducive and consistent with the IEP service.
- All collaboration, assessments and determinations will be documented and shared with Parents in their preferred language or mode of communication.

English Language Learners

As we shifted to remote learning, it was essential that we connected with our English Language Learners regularly. We contract these services with WSWHE BOCES and because of our number of students, our ENL Teachers were able to connect daily with our students. Glens Falls City School District is committed to providing our English Language Learners with the services they are entitled to and providing face to face and remote learning options equal to our non-ELL population.

- ENL teachers at every level in all of our schools will complete the ELL identification process within 30 school days of the start of the school year for all students who enrolled during COVID-19 school closures in 2019-20, as well as all students who enroll during summer of 2020 and during the first 20 school days of the 2020-21 school year. After this 20 day flexibility period, identification of ELLs will resume for all

students within required 10 school days of initial enrollment as required by Commissioner's Regulations Part 154.

- Provision of required instructional Units of Study will be provided to all ELLs based on their most recently measured English language proficiency level during in-person or hybrid instruction. Our ENL teachers will continue to co-plan and co-teach with our students as planned in 2019-20.
- ENL and classroom teachers will regularly communicate with the parents/guardians and other family members of ELLs to ensure that they are engaged in their children's education during the reopening process and we will provide all communications for parents/guardians of ELLs in their preferred language and mode of communication.
- All ENL will be given technology that is beneficial to their program to assist with virtual work during hybrid or fully remote learning.

Social Emotional Learning, Well-Being, and Mental Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged our school community to review and renew the capacity of our schools to be welcoming, supportive, inclusive, and equitable environments for learning.³ To meet the new demands of a vastly different teaching and learning landscape, individuals must start with the inner work of healing their own hearts and minds, and finding the capacity within themselves to support healing for students, families, colleagues, and communities.⁴ Understanding and applying Social Emotional Learning strategies provides a useful framework for this personal discovery, growth, and well-being.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines SEL as “the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.”⁵ Glens Falls City Schools have already incorporated SEL into daily instructional and social practices, and will place even greater emphasis on integrating core competencies into the learning landscape of 2020-21. The five core competencies of SEL as defined by CASEL are:



- Self Awareness - the ability to recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts, values, and how they influence behaviors.
- Self Management - the ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations to effectively manage stress, set goals, and motivate oneself.
- Social Awareness - the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others and to recognize resources and supports.
- Relationship Skills - the ability to establish healthy relationships, to communicate, cooperate, negotiate conflict, and seek help when needed
- Responsible Decision Making - the ability to make constructive choices, evaluate consequences of actions, and reflect.

To address Social Emotional Learning in Glens Falls City School District, the district has established an Advisory Council consisting of School Counselors, Social Workers, School Psychologists, Teaching Faculty, Administrators, Parents, and School Board of Education members. This Advisory Council has assisted the district by advising on program goals, reviewing program results, making recommendations about the school counseling program, advocating and engaging in public relations for the school counseling program, advocating for funding and resources, providing information on community and parent expectations for the counseling program, and assisted in the development of the Comprehensive School Counseling Plan for Glens Falls City School District. This plan will be reviewed and updated to meet current and evolving needs through the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

³ Taken from *Recovering, Rebuilding, and Renewing: The Spirit of New York’s Schools*, page 64

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2020) *What Is SEL?*

In addition to these efforts, Glens Falls City School District participates in the Warren County Inter Agency Collaborative which works to integrate and strengthen relationships between the various service providers within Warren County. Through these collaboratives, we have partnered with Warren County Probation and Mediation Matters to provide professional development opportunities to our faculty on the facilitation of Circles and Restorative Justice Practices. We have also partnered with Dave Melnick of NFI Vermont to provide in depth training to all faculty, staff, and administrators on Trauma Informed Practices. We have also provided in-depth training to all faculty, staff, and administrators on the impacts of poverty and ACES. This work continues to be a priority initiative for the district. The district will also provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff on how to talk with and support students during and after the COVID-19 public health emergency, as well as provide supports for developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty, and staff.

The district will identify students and families in need of additional support during the transition back to in-person learning. Student support team members will collaborate and provide resources and referrals to students, families, and staff to address mental health, behavioral, and emotional needs of students. Staff will be provided with additional professional development opportunities on the implementation of SEL best practices, ACEs (adverse childhood experiences), and the impact of trauma on social-emotional development, behavior, and learning.

Food Service

The district will provide all students with access to nutritious meals each school day. The food service plan will split students into two categories to address their food service needs: **in-person student attendees, and virtual student attendees.**

- The in-person student attendees will be physically attending school on a hybrid, or part-time basis, so the district will also ensure in-person student attendees have access to meals while learning virtually from home. To execute this plan, the district intends to use any and all available meal waivers, and has contacted its NYSED Child Nutrition Program Representative to ensure our plans are within waiver allowances. While in attendance, students will enjoy familiar school breakfast and lunch options in either socially-distanced classrooms, or socially-distanced common area spaces utilized out of necessity. On the last scheduled in-person attendance day for the in-person student attendee, the student will receive breakfast and lunch meals for the balance of the week while virtual learning.
- All virtual student attendees will have the option to elect to have a week's worth of meals delivered to their residence.

The district will follow all applicable Local, State, and Federal health and safety guidelines. Local district procedures will be updated to reflect the most recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [guidelines](#). The district will work with its food service management company, who is responsible for the day-to-day food service operation, to ensure the appropriate protocols are followed. Some of these measures include enhanced COVID-19-specific safety training and mitigation tactics, PPE protocol, health monitoring, and increased sanitation measures. An increased emphasis will be placed on repeated cleaning of high-touch areas, such as door handles, tables, trays, and other frequently used materials. All of these high-touch surface areas will be regularly sanitized with approved chemical mixtures.

The district treats the safety and well-being of our students with great care, so it is essential our students with **food allergies** have the same protections in place in our new socially-distanced environments outside the cafeteria. The whereabouts/location of the in-person student attendees will be well known, so if any student with a meal allergy is eating outside of the cafeteria, the district will have the ability to restrict certain food options that will also be served in the same space as the student with the allergy. For example, if a second grade class has a student with a peanut allergy, and the class will be eating pre-packaged meals inside the classroom, the pre-packaged meals for the rest of the class will be prepared peanut-free.

In conjunction with our Food Service Management Company, a Food Service Safety Re-opening Program will be rolled out, which will include age-appropriate signage and educational materials, as well as a newsletter series marketed to the school community. These materials will include health and safety reminders and promote safe integration back into our public environments. Students will be expected to follow the procedures outlined in the Healthy Hand and Respiratory Hygiene Practices section of this reopening plan for appropriate hand hygiene before and after eating, which will include the availability of hand sanitizer, and on-demand access to soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels.

Any and all common areas utilized for meal service will be properly sanitized and disinfected by the district's custodial and maintenance staff, prior any subsequent use.

As always, all aspects of our food service program will ensure compliance with Child Nutrition Program requirements. The district will communicate about school meal service, eligibility, options, and changes in operations for the coming school year. The district will make clear that all meals may not be available at no cost to all children, but the district will advise and encourage families to submit free and reduced priced lunch applications. The district will utilize multiple platforms to promote food service-related communication, all of which will be accessible in multiple languages.

The district will make available, in all of the native languages spoken by our students and families, the multiple modes of communication available to them (i.e., emails, District website, letters, etc.).

The district will ensure that within all meal consumption areas (classrooms and/or common spaces) students adhere to strict six-foot separation. In those spaces where appropriate six feet of socially-distant separation cannot be maintained, physical barriers will be utilized to make up for the lack of appropriate distance.

Communication/Family and Community Engagement

The district’s commitment to complete, transparent, and professional communication centers around the idea that building a well-informed school community creates a stronger foundation for success in every goal we set.

The district will build upon its nine years of strategic and coordinated information-sharing to ensure that every member of the school community can access training, instruction, news updates, and urgent notifications specific to our COVID-19 pandemic operations. This communications plan is intended to be flexible; it can and will change as needs and circumstances evolve throughout the year.

The district has engaged school stakeholders and community members throughout the development of the COVID-19 Reopening Plan, including building and district administrators, teachers, support staff members, nurses, buildings and grounds staff, students, parents, Board of Education members, union representatives, and the Warren County Department of Health through surveys, meetings, discussion, and opportunities to submit feedback/ask questions. Specifically, the district’s return-to-school surveys garnered quantifiable data and open-ended feedback from more than 1,500 parent/guardian responses, nearly 450 student responses, and more than 200 faculty/staff responses. Our school community’s sentiments are reflected in this plan, and many of their ideas are incorporated herein.

The district’s full reopening plan is posted on the district website, at www.gfsd.org. The full text of this plan is provided in the language(s) spoken throughout the school community via a “translate” button on our website. This plan is also website-accessible to those with visual and/or hearing impairments.

Executive summaries, “key point” documents, infographics, and FAQ materials will be developed to break down and simplify the overall plan and its requirements, specific to student, staff, parent/guardian, visitor, and community member audiences. Some of these key messages will include:

- All students, staff members, and parents/guardians will be taught and re-taught how to follow new COVID-19 protocols safely and correctly, including but not limited to hand hygiene, proper face covering wearing, social distancing, and respiratory hygiene. Some communication examples from the CDC appear below.
- All parents/guardians will be taught and re-taught how to observe for signs of illness in their child that require staying home from school, in accordance with this plan’s Disease Containment section.
- The district will encourage all students, faculty, staff, and visitors through verbal and written communication (e.g., signage) to adhere to CDC and DOH guidance regarding the use of PPE, specifically acceptable face coverings, when a social distance cannot be maintained.



The district will use multiple communication tools and tactics to ensure multiply-redundant message saturation among all members of the school community. Some specific tools to be used include:

- E-mail messages, broadcast telephone messages, and emergency text messages will be sent using:
 - The district's School News Notifier system, which is available for any member of the public to subscribe to, free of charge;
 - eSchool Data, the district's student management database, with communication capacities for student, parent/guardian, and faculty messages; and/or
 - The Blackboard messaging system, with communication capacities for parent/guardian, faculty, and staff member messages.
- Social media graphics, messages, links, and information will be posted on the district's official Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram platforms.
- News stories, updates, links to background information/resources, and COVID-19 educational materials will be posted on the district's website at www.gfsd.org.
- Printed correspondence, hard-copy newsletters, and other paper-based materials will be mailed via the US Postal Service to student households as necessary and appropriate.
- Faculty, staff members, and students will use the Safe Schools platform to complete COVID-19-related training courses as necessary and appropriate.
- Faculty and staff members will be provided access to tools and professional development that supports effective two-way communication between parents/guardians, teachers, and students.

Staffing and Human Resources

As we continue to finalize our reopening plans, it will be critical for the district to think about certain areas that may require temporary staffing. These include but are not limited to part-time nurses, support staff, cleaners, transportation, and substitute teachers.

- The district will ensure that all individuals employed to teach in New York State public schools have a valid certificate.
- If necessary, there may be times where a certified teacher may be instructing in areas not covered by their certifications. This time will not exceed 10 classroom hours a week during the 2020-21 school year.

Medically Vulnerable/High-Risk Groups

Guidance from NYSED, CDC, and the NYS Department of Health states that there are several groups that are at increased risk for complications from COVID-19—a list that is likely to change as the pandemic evolves—and may need added or alternative provisions. The district will remain in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), federal and state family leave laws, and the terms and conditions outlined in the CBAs. In the Teaching & Learning section of this guide, student guidance on this topic is discussed.

- If a staff member believes they belong to one of these high risk groups, or lives with someone who is high risk, and it may affect their ability to safely return to in-person work, they should contact the Superintendent and Director of Personnel Development to discuss all available options.
- While it is important to recognize that the district's top priority is to have all staff and students teaching and learning in-person, the district also realizes that an in-person model may not be possible for some medically vulnerable or high-risk individuals. In this instance, the district will ensure compliance with ADA, State, and federal laws throughout the interactive process.
- During this process, based on the individual circumstance, information regarding federal paid leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) or Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) will be provided as applicable.

APPR

Glens Falls will work with our teachers to ensure that students are being taught as effectively as is practical to expect. We will fully implement our APPR plan to the extent possible, based on guidance from NYSED.

Extracurriculars, Athletics, and Childcare

While we recognize that extracurricular activities are an important part of a child's developmental experience, the dynamic nature of the COVID-19 pandemic presents unique challenges to providing extracurriculars at this time.

All school-sponsored field trips and extracurricular activities are suspended until further notice, due to risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Per NYSED and NYSDOH guidance, interscholastic sports are not permitted at the time of this plan's publication, and additional information on athletic activities is forthcoming.

On-site childcare in our school buildings, typically provided by the Glens Falls YMCA, will not be held at any school building until further notice. However, there will be off-site childcare provided by the YMCA at their building. In addition, there is a listing of local childcare providers located on the OFCS website by district at this link: https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/ccfs_template.asp

Appendix

Communication and Training Resources

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wash-cloth-face-coverings.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID19-symptoms.pdf>

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/cover-your-cough_poster.pdf

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread_poster.pdf

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/wash-your-hands-bubbles_poster.pdf

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/posters.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/campaign.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc>

Cleaning, Disinfection, and Health/Hygiene Resources

https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/03/cleaning_guidance_schools.pdf

https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/03/cleaning_guidance_general_building.pdf

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html>

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/handwashing-recommendations-alcohol-based-hand-sanitizer-use-in-schools.pdf>