



Return to School Plan & Handbook

Published August 3, 2020

Updated August 12, 2020

Updated September 21, 2020

Updated October 5, 2020

Updated November 16, 2020

Updated February 16, 2021

Updated March 1, 2021

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Introduction	4
Graphical Overview	5
Conditions for Learning	6
Critical Area of Operation #1: General Health & Safety Guidelines	6
Critical Area of Operation #2: Classrooms, Testing, & Therapy Rooms	7
Critical Area of Operation #3: Transportation	8
Critical Area of Operation #4: Student Flow, Entry, Exit, & Common Areas	8
Critical Area of Operation #5: Screening, PPE, & Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms	9
Critical Area of Operation #6: Contact Tracing	11
Critical Area of Operation #7: Facilities Cleaning Practices	12
Critical Area of Operation #8: Meals	14
Critical Area of Operation #9: Recess/Physical Education	14
Critical Area of Operation #10: Extracurricular Activities & Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours	15
Leadership and Planning	15
Return to School Committees	16
District Return to School Committee Members	16
School Return to School Committee Members	16
Ad Hoc Return to School Committee Members	17
Scheduling	18
Hybrid Scheduling Model	19
Sample Schedules	19
K-5	19
6-8	20
Full-Time Distance Learning	20
Staffing	21
In-person and Hybrid Learning Environments: Roles and Responsibilities	21
Educator Roles Related to School Technology Needs	24
Athletics	24
Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and School Climate and Culture	25
Educator Well-Being	25
Trauma-Informed Social and Emotional Learning	25
School Culture and Climate	26
Utilizing the Strengths of Staff	26
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)	27
Wraparound Supports	28
Food Service and Distribution	28

Quality Child Care	28
Continuity of Learning	29
Ensuring the Delivery of Special Education and Related Services to Students with Disabilities	29
Technology and Connectivity	29
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments	30
Distance and Hybrid Learning Environment - Curriculum	30
Distance and Hybrid Learning Environment - Instruction	31
Distance and Hybrid Learning Environment - Assessment	32
Professional Learning	33
Professional Learning	33
Professional Learning Prior to the Beginning of the School Year	33
Professional Learning Throughout the School Year	33
Mentoring	34
Evaluation	34
References	35
Questions or Concerns	37

Introduction

On June 26, 2020, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) published its [Restart and Recovery Plan for Education](#) (NJDOE Guidance) a guidance document to assist New Jersey school districts to develop a Restart and Recovery Plan (Plan) to reopen schools in September 2020 that best fits the school district's local needs. The NJDOE Guidance presents information for New Jersey public school districts related to four key subject areas: Conditions for Learning; Leadership and Planning; Policy and Funding; and Continuity of Learning.

On July 14, 2020, the NJDOE published [anticipated minimum standards for full time distance learning](#). On August 3, 2020, the NJDOE published updates to [anticipated minimum standards for students wearing face coverings](#).

The Warren Township Schools Plan has been developed to be consistent with the requirements in the NJDOE Guidance with consideration to local needs in order to ensure schools in the district reopen safely and are prepared to accommodate students' unique needs during this unprecedented time.

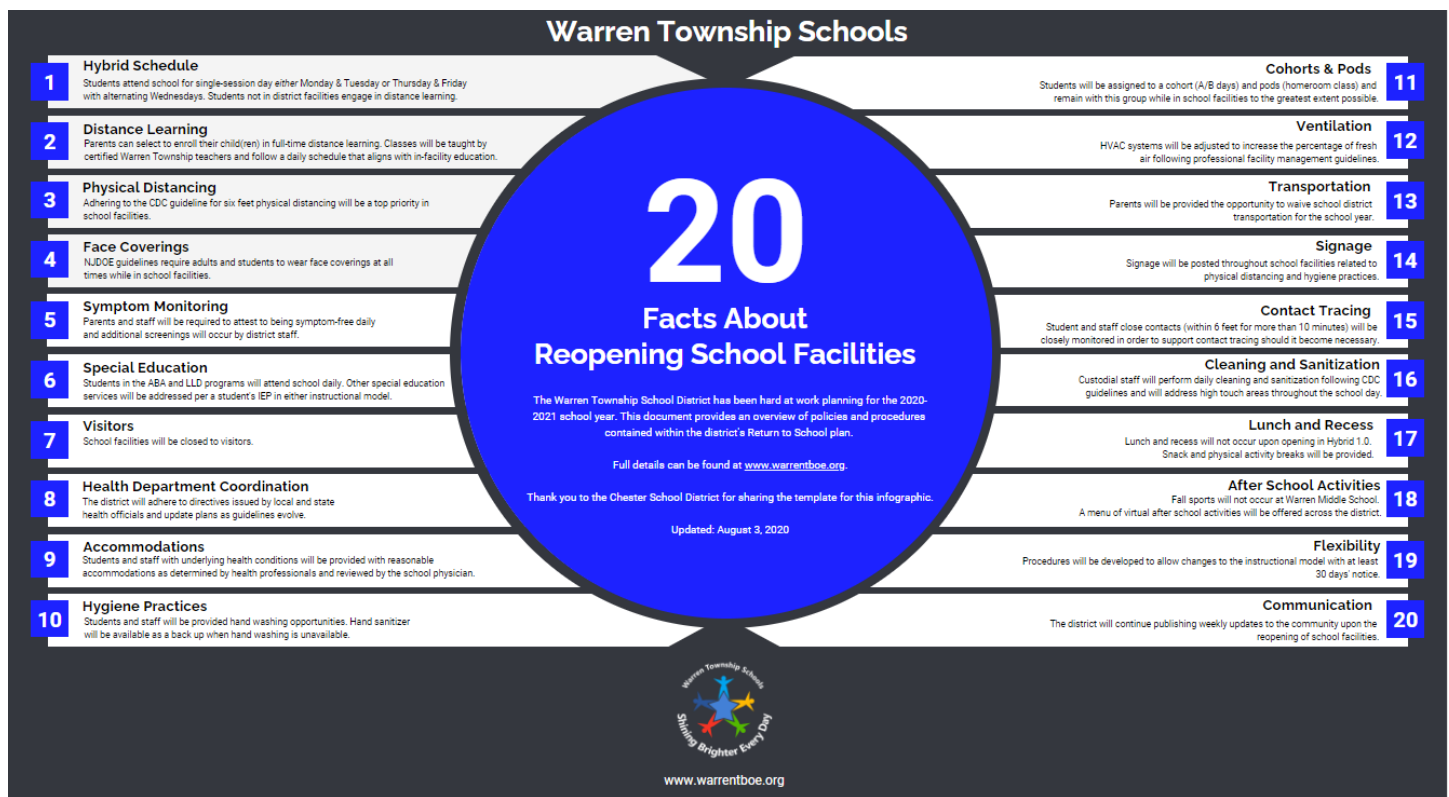
To ensure consistency across the State, the NJDOE Guidance speaks specifically to health and safety measures identified as "anticipated minimum standards." These "anticipated minimum standards" are items the NJDOE Guidance recommends a school district incorporate into the Plan as definite components related to health, safety, and operations. Through this established set of Statewide standards, the NJDOE can ensure the State's educational health does not come at the expense of public health. The "anticipated minimum standards" in the NJDOE Guidance are listed and have been incorporated into the school district's locally developed Plan.

The NJDOE Guidance also provides "considerations" that may help school officials in strategizing ways to adhere to the "anticipated minimum standards," but do not represent necessary components of the Plan. These "considerations" are listed in the school district Plan where appropriate.

The NJDOE Guidance requires a Board Policy to address several elements outlined in the NJDOE Guidance. Board of Education Policy 1648 – Restart and Recovery addresses the policies required in the NJDOE Guidance.

The requirements outlined in the NJDOE Guidance and incorporated into this Plan are controlled by Executive Order of the Governor of New Jersey and are subject to change. Updates to this plan subsequent to August 3, 2020 will be highlighted within the body of the document.

Graphical Overview



Conditions for Learning

“Conditions for learning must not only address students’ and educators’ basic physical safety needs, but also the social and emotional and environmental facts that can impact educators’ capacity to teach and students’ capacity to learn” (NJDOE, 2020, p. 8).

The NJDOE identified ten Critical Areas of Operation that school districts must address. The Warren Township School District plans for these areas are outlined below.

Critical Area of Operation #1: General Health & Safety Guidelines

The Warren Township Schools will meet the NJDOE’s anticipated minimum standards (NJDOE, 2020, pp. 17-18) for General Health and Safety Guidelines by:

- Establishing and maintaining communication with local and state authorities to determine current mitigation levels in Warren Township;
- Protecting and supporting staff and students who are at higher risk for severe illness, as defined by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), by providing options for telework and distance learning. These risk factors include older adults (aged 65 years and older) and individuals with disabilities or serious underlying medical conditions, which may include:
 - Chronic lung disease or asthma (moderate to severe)
 - Serious heart conditions
 - Immunocompromised
 - Severe obesity (body mass index, or BMI, of 40 or higher)
 - Diabetes
 - Chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
 - Liver disease
 - Medically fragile students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
 - Students with complex disabilities with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
 - Students who require accommodations under a Plan in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (504 Plan).
- Following CDC’s [Guidance for Schools and Childcare Programs](#); and
- Promoting behaviors that reduce spread:
 - Stay home when appropriate
 - Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
 - Face coverings
 - Signs and messages

In addition to meeting the anticipated minimum standards above, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Provide parents of all students with the option to enroll their children in distance learning for the 2020-2021 school year; and
- ~~Provide employees who do not meet the CDC definition of higher risk for severe illness with the option to continue telework where conditions allow for telework to successfully support or enhance the quality of programming or services.~~

Resources:

- Employees with questions or a desire to apply for work from home or other accommodations should contact Human Resources Coordinator Shannon Regan for assistance.

Critical Area of Operation #2: Classrooms, Testing, & Therapy Rooms

The Warren Township Schools will meet the NJDOE's anticipated minimum standards (NJDOE, 2020, pp. 18-21) for Classrooms, Testing, and Therapy Rooms by:

- Allowing for social distancing within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable;
 - When students cannot be seated at least 6 feet apart, additional modifications will be considered such as using physical barriers between desks and/or turning desks to face the same direction and/or having students sit on only one side of the table, spaced apart.
- Requiring face coverings for students unless doing so would inhibit the student's health;
- Requiring face coverings for visitors and staff at all times unless it will inhibit the individual's health;
- Complying with social distancing standards to the maximum extent practicable in all instructional and non-instructional rooms in school and district facilities;
- Limiting the use of shared objects when possible or cleaning them between uses;
- Ensuring adequate ventilation in indoor facilities:
 - Recirculated air must have a fresh air component;
 - Open windows, when possible, if air conditioning is not provided;
 - Maintain and change filter(s) for air conditioning units according to manufacturer recommendations;
- Preparing and maintaining hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol):
 - In each classroom (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer);
 - At entrance and exits of buildings;
 - Near lunchrooms and lavatories;
 - Children ages 5 and younger will be supervised when using hand sanitizer;
 - For classrooms that have existing handwashing stations, prepare stations with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers; and
- Providing opportunities for students to wash hands for at least 20 seconds at regular intervals, including before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing. When washing with soap and water is not possible, students will use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

In addition to meeting the anticipated minimum standards above, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use, to the greatest extent practicable, by ensuring adequate supplies to minimize the need for sharing to the extent possible;
- Keep each child's belongings separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas, to the extent possible;
- Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example, by opening windows and doors, when doing so will not present a health or safety risk to children or staff members using the space;
- Cohort students to include the same group of children each day;
- Allow minimal mixing between groups/cohorts;
- Allow outdoor learning and breaks where possible and when seasonally appropriate; and

- Create opportunities within the master schedule to ensure students have times to wash their hands

Critical Area of Operation #3: Transportation

The Warren Township Schools will meet the NJDOE's anticipated minimum standards (NJDOE, 2020, June 26, pp. 21-23; NJDOE, 2020, August 3, p. 3) for Transportation by:

- Maintaining social distancing practices on buses to the maximum extent practicable;
- Modifying the manner students are seated on a school bus such that there is one student seated per row on each side of the aisle, except in the case of students from the same home;
- Skipping a row between each child, when possible;
- Requiring the use of a face covering by all students upon entering the bus unless doing so would inhibit the student's health;
- Providing accommodations to students who are unable to wear a face covering according to that student's particular need and in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations;
- Encouraging the use of personal transportation to and/from school for students unable to wear a face covering; and
- Adopting best practices for cleaning and disinfecting school buses and other transport vehicles according to the [CDC guidance for bus transit operators](#).

In addition to meeting the anticipated minimum standards above, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Require students to sit in assigned seats on all school buses with an emphasis on filling the back rows first, and then progressing forward;
- Require drivers to practice all safety actions protocols as indicated for other staff;
- Assign bus routes to evenly distribute students riding school buses to the greatest extent possible;
- Open windows if possible;
- Hang signs to reinforce social distancing and hygiene rules;
- Consider health screenings for drivers;
- Provide hand sanitizer at the school bus entrance for each student to use when boarding;
- Require bus drivers to take personal hygiene actions (e.g., frequent hand washing) and provide opportunities to do so (such as having sufficient time between routes);
- Minimize demand on transportation resources by asking parents to commit to using or not using district buses for the 2020-2021 school year during the registration process; and
- Discontinue the use of a late bus at Warren Middle School until further notice.

Critical Area of Operation #4: Student Flow, Entry, Exit, & Common Areas

The Warren Township Schools will meet the NJDOE's anticipated minimum standards (NJDOE, 2020, pp. 23-24) for Student Flow, Entry, Exit, and Common Areas by:

- Establishing the process and location of daily student and staff health screenings; and
- Providing physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to help ensure that staff and students remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times.

In addition to meeting the anticipated minimum standards above, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Minimize interaction of students between drop-off and entrance to school facilities;
- Put in place protocols to limit contact between cohorts and direct contact with parents as much as possible during arrival and dismissal;
- Establish separate entrances and exits to school facilities where possible to do so without sacrificing security protocols;
- Limit visitors to those with essential reasons for entering school facilities only;
- Require visitors and parent/guardians to use their own pen for signing in/out where possible;
- Create “one-way routes” in hallways where possible;
- Maintain social distancing in hallways and common areas;
- Require the use of face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the student’s health;
- Minimize the number of non-essential interactions between students and staff throughout the school day;
- Create student cohorts as an effective strategy to limit exposure and contact;
- Limit commingling between classes or other district-set groups of students;
- Minimize large group gatherings;
- Create a system that allows for physical distancing;
- Provide hand sanitizer at school entrances;
- Put signage around school buildings to provide hygiene advice and reminders;
- Increase frequency of cleaning all surfaces, including walls (to the appropriate height based on age of students);
- Limit the number of students in the hallway at the same time by staggering release from classrooms;
- Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart (e.g., main offices); and
- Limit access to lockers at Warren Middle School.

Critical Area of Operation #5: Screening, PPE, & Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms

The Warren Township Schools will meet the NJDOE’s anticipated minimum standards (NJDOE, 2020, June 24, pp. 25-27 and NJDOE, 2020, August 3, p. 1-3) for Screening, PPE, and Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms by:

- Adopting [Warren Township Board of Education Policy 1648 - Restart and Recovery Plan](#) for screening students and employees upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure. Policies must include the following:
 - Staff must visually check students for symptoms upon arrival (which may include temperature checks) and/or confirm with families that students are free of COVID-19 symptoms;
 - Health checks must be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations;
 - Results must be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed; and
 - Any screening policy must take into account students with disabilities and accommodations that may be needed in the screening process for those students;
- Adopting procedures for symptomatic staff and students. Procedures must include the following:
 - Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 must be safely and respectfully isolated from others;
 - Follow New Jersey Department of Health [Communicable Disease Service](#) guidance for illness reporting;

- Immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality if the school district becomes aware that an individual who has spent time in a district facility tests positive for COVID-19;
- **Implement a Warren Township Board of Education Policy #1648 - Restart and Recovery Plan** to prepare for when someone tests positive for COVID-19 that includes written protocols detailing the district's COVID-19 related response for symptomatic students and staff. Protocols must include:
 - Establishment of an isolation space. Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 must be safely and respectfully isolated from others. Students should remain in isolation with continued supervision and care until picked up by an authorized adult;
 - Adequate amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) available, accessible, and provided for use;
 - Methods to assist in contact tracing including records of groups/cohorts, assigned staff, and daily attendance;
 - Continuous monitoring of symptoms; and
 - Readmittance policies consistent with New Jersey [Department of Health guidance and information for schools](#) and Department of Health/Communicable Disease Service's [Quick Reference Guidance on Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Home Isolation for Persons Diagnosed with COVID-19](#).
- Requiring parents to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and requiring parents to keep children home when they are sick;
- Requiring school staff and visitors to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health or the individual is under two years of age;
- Requiring students to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the student's health or in the exceptions listed below:
 - The individual is in extreme heat outdoors;
 - The individual is in water;
 - A student's documented medical condition, or disability as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP), precludes the use of face covering;
 - An emergency situation requires immediate safety steps;
 - During the period that a student is eating or drinking;
 - An individual is having trouble breathing or is unconscious, or a person is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance;
 - The student is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities;
 - During gym and music classes when individuals are in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet apart; or
 - When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.
- Denying entry to school/district facilities if a visitor refuses to wear a face covering for non-medical reasons and such covering cannot be provided to the individual at the point of entry.

In addition to meeting the anticipated minimum standards above, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Track illnesses in the district's student information system using the New Jersey Department of Health [Communicable Disease Service](#) guidance;
- Teach and reinforce the use of face coverings among all staff (excluding health exceptions);

- Ask students and employees to leave or not come into school if they test positive for COVID-19 or exhibit one or more symptoms of COVID-19, based on CDC guidance, that is not otherwise explained:
 - A fever of 100.4° 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.
- Encourage the same adult to drop off and pick up students;
- Train staff in screening protocols and practice with each other during scheduled professional development time;
- Provide two reusable face coverings to each staff member;
- Provide additional protection for staff members, such as school nurses, custodians, and some special education teachers, paraprofessionals and service providers, who will be in close contact with students or will handle waste materials;
- Remind individuals frequently not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently;
- Provide information to staff, students, and students' families on proper use, removal, and washing of face coverings;
- Consider face shields as an option for students with medical or other challenges that preclude the use of face coverings only;
 - If face shields are used without a face covering, they will wrap around the sides of the wearer's face and extend to below the chin;
- Consider the use of face coverings for students and educators who rely on facial cues where available;
- Provide students and staff face covering breaks throughout the day when physical distancing can be maintained and ideally outside or with windows open; and
- Expect families to provide face coverings for students;
 - Provide extra disposable face coverings for students who need them; and
 - Provide face coverings for students that are experiencing financial hardship and are unable to afford them to the greatest extent possible.

Critical Area of Operation #6: Contact Tracing

The Warren Township Schools will meet the NJDOE's anticipated minimum standards (NJDOE, 2020, pp. 27-28) for Contact Tracing by:

- Providing information to all school and district administrators, school safety specialists, counselors, and any other staff deemed appropriate regarding the role of contact tracing in keeping school communities safe from the spread of contagious disease; and
- Engaging the expertise of the school nurses to educate the broader school community on the importance of contact tracing.

In addition to meeting the anticipated minimum standards above, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Consult with local health department officials and school nurses to develop contact tracing protocols;
- Develop protocols regarding the notification of the local health department and staff, families, and the public if there is a positive COVID-19 case related to the an individual present in a school district facility;
- Identify the school or district's role in assisting the local health department in conducting contact tracing activities;
- Ensure adequate information and training is provided to school and district staff as necessary to enable staff to carry out responsibilities for contact tracing;
- Adhere to all applicable federal and state requirements regarding privacy of educational records (e.g. FERPA);
- Designate the school nurses as liaisons responsible for providing notifications and carrying out other components of contact tracing; and
- Provide communication systems that allow staff, students, and families to self-report symptoms and/or suspected exposure that could assist the district in providing prompt notification.

Critical Area of Operation #7: Facilities Cleaning Practices

The Warren Township Schools will meet the NJDOE's anticipated minimum standards (NJDOE, 2020, pp. 28-30) for Facilities Cleaning Practices by:

- Adhering to existing [required facilities cleaning practices and procedures](#), and any new specific requirements of the local health department as they arise;
- Developing a procedure manual to establish cleaning/disinfecting schedules, targeted areas to be cleaned, and methods and materials to be used;
- Routinely cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. This may include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops). Examples of frequently touched areas in schools:
 - Classroom desks and chairs;
 - Lunchroom tables and chairs;
 - Door handles and push plates;
 - Handrails;
 - Kitchens and lavatories;
 - Light switches;
 - Handles on equipment (e.g. athletic equipment);
 - Buttons on vending machines and elevators;
 - Shared telephones;
 - Shared desktops;
 - Shared computer keyboards and mice;
 - Drinking fountains;
 - School bus seats and windows;
- Following the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.);
- Sanitizing lavatories daily, or between use as much as possible, using protocols outlined by the EPA (2020, July 1).

In addition to meeting the anticipated minimum standards above, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Implement lavatory procedures to include:
 - Limiting the number of students who can enter at a time;
 - Designating staff members to enforce limited capacity and avoid overcrowding;
 - Utilizing no-touch trash cans;
 - Holding open lavatory doors with magnetic fire-alarm system to avoid touching handles, where available;
- Disable drinking fountains;
- Encourage staff and students to bring their own water and use touch-less water bottle refill stations;
- Develop procedures for how school buses will be cleaned and sanitized;
- Collaborate with transportation vendors to develop procedures and enforcement of cleaning and sanitizing procedures:
 - Develop a cleaning/sanitizing checklist to be completed by the personnel responsible for the cleaning. The checklist serves two purpose: 1) providing a roadmap for the steps that need to be taken to properly clean and sanitize the bus; and 2) certifying that the process has been completed as required;
 - Identify sanitizing agents that may be used, limited to products included on the EPA's (2020, July 1) list of products that have been shown to be effective against COVID-19;
 - Include two stages: 1) cleaning, which removes dirt and germs from surfaces; and 2) disinfecting, which kills germs on surfaces that remain after cleaning;
- Develop a process for routine cleaning and disinfecting of furniture, accounting for the materials used in furniture in each school building;
- Supply EPA-registered disinfectant for teachers and staff members so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks, remote controls) can be wiped down before use, to the great extent possible;
 - Develop protocols for the use of such disinfectant;
- Ensure adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfection practices;
- Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection supplies, including storing products securely away from children, and ensuring appropriate ventilation so students and staff are not exposed to toxins and fumes;
- Consider the addition of physical barriers, such as flexible plastic screens, between lavatory sinks especially when they cannot be at least 6 feet apart;
- Consider taping off every other sink in most locations;
- Clean and disinfect a school building after a person has been identified as COVID-19 positive:
 - Implement short-term closure procedures regardless of community spread if an infected person has been in a school building. If this happens, follow CDC recommended procedures:
 - Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use before cleaning and disinfection;
 - Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting;
 - If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, wait as long as possible;
 - Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area;
 - Clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, lavatories, and common areas) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces; and
- Provide training as necessary to personnel responsible for cleaning and sanitizing.

Critical Area of Operation #8: Meals

The Warren Township Schools will meet the NJDOE's anticipated minimum standards (NJDOE, 2020, pp. 30-31) for Meals by:

- Staggering times students are in cafeterias to allow for social distancing;
- Cleaning and disinfecting cafeteria tables between each meal service, pursuant to the protocols outlined [here](#) by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- Spacing students at least six feet apart; and
- Requiring staff and volunteers to wash hands after removing their gloves or directly handling food service items.

In addition to meeting the anticipated minimum standards above, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Consider serving meals in classrooms or outside when possible instead of a group dining area;
- Serve meals in pre-packaged boxes or bags;
- Ensure students are not sharing food;
- Use disposable food service items;
- Encourage proper hand washing before and after eating meals;
- Support each school's Parent Teacher Organization in developing and monitoring vendors' compliance with district expectations for participation in Food Days; and
- Limit the use of parent volunteers to support Food Days implementation to the greatest extent possible.

Critical Area of Operation #9: Recess/Physical Education

The Warren Township Schools will meet the NJDOE's anticipated minimum standards (NJDOE, 2020, p. 31) for Recess/Physical Education by:

- Staggering recess. If two or more groups are participating in recess at the same time, they will have at least 6 feet of open space between them;
- Using cones, flags, tape, or other signs to create boundaries between groups;
- **Requiring students to wash** hands immediately after outdoor playtime;
- Staggering the use of playground equipment and establishing frequent disinfecting protocols;
- Completing an inventory of outdoor spaces (athletic fields, track, green spaces, open space, and local parks) and designating zones, using stations, and marking off areas to ensure separation among students (6 feet for physical distancing);
- Closing the Warren Middle School locker room to mitigate risk and prohibit students and staff from confined spaces with limited ventilation and/or areas with large amounts of high contact surfaces;
 - Encouraging students to wear comfortable clothing and safe footwear to school that allows for safe movement and is appropriate for the weather in order to participate in physical education without the use of a locker room;
- Limiting direct contact with equipment and not allowing the sharing of equipment;
 - Cleaning and disinfecting equipment between each use when it must be shared; and
- Designating specific areas for each class during recess to avoid cohort mixing.

In addition to meeting the anticipated minimum standards above, the Warren Township Schools will:

- No other actions identified at this time.

Critical Area of Operation #10: Extracurricular Activities & Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours

The Warren Township Schools will meet the NJDOE's anticipated minimum standards (NJDOE, 2020, pp. 31-32) for Extracurricular Activities and Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours by:

- Adhering to all applicable social distancing requirements and hygiene protocol during any extra-curricular activities; and
- Requiring any external community organizations that use school/district facilities to follow district guidance on health and safety protocols.

In addition to meeting the anticipated minimum standards above, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Maximize the use of technology and online resources to continue some extra-curricular activities without additional person-to-person contact;
- Restrict the use of indoor school/district facilities to district-sponsored extracurricular activities and groups;
- Limit public use of school facilities; and
- Cancel field trips, assemblies, and other large in-person gatherings.

Leadership and Planning

"Adjusting the school environment to ensure the health and safety of students and staff will require a great deal of planning. School districts should create Restart Committees to coordinate the overall reopening plan" (NJDOE, 2020, p. 11). "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...**If a school has an existing crisis response team, that team could serve as the Pandemic Response Team.**" (NJDOE, 2020, p. 47-48). **The school and district crisis response teams will coordinate with the school and district Return to School committees to meet these functions.**

The Warren Township Schools convened a COVID-19 Task Force on March 5, 2020 to: 1) review guidance from public health officials; 2) provide role-specific perspective to district decision-making; and 3) support communication of consistent messaging with various stakeholders. This Task Force continued meeting through the initial school facility closure period. On May 6, 2020, the Task Force was reformed into the Return to School Committee, tasked with working towards the vision to "safely return all students and staff members to the Warren Township Schools." In addition to the district committee, each school established a school-based Return to School Committee tasked with receiving and implementing district decisions and informing them as well. The Warren Township Board of Education created an Ad Hoc Return to School Committee that includes members of the Board who serve as representatives of it in addition to in their individual roles as parents. These various committees engaged the wider parent, student, and staff communities through the use of surveys throughout the school facility closure period in the spring and then monthly in the summer.

Return to School Committees

District Return to School Committee Members

Matthew Mingle	Superintendent	Chair Governance Subcommittee Chair
Derek Ressa	Director of Special Services	Wellness Subcommittee Chair
William Kimmick	Curriculum Director	Instruction Subcommittee Chair
Michael Pate	Supervisor of Buildings & Grounds	Facilities Subcommittee Chair
Patricia Leonhardt	School Business Administrator	Operations Subcommittee Chair
Lance Riegler	IT Director	Technology Subcommittee Chair
Nancy Andrews	Grade 5 Teacher, Angelo L. Tomaso School WTEA President	
Ron Berry	Security Compliance Manager	
Frances Blabolil	Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant, Central School	
Meredith Fishelman	Kindergarten Teacher, Mt. Horeb School	
Jan Donlay	Transportation Coordinator (through July 31, 2020)	
Cheryl Hall	Transportation Coordinator (beginning August 1, 2020)	
Jeffrey Heaney	Principal, Woodland School	
Cathy Lazas	Teacher, Warren Middle School (beginning December 16, 2020)	
Lisa Lontai	School Nurse, Warren Middle School	
Alyssa Pech	School Counselor, Central School	
Shannon Regan	Communications/Human Resources Coordinator	
Kristen Stoyanov	Instructional Specialist, Angelo L. Tomaso/Woodland Schools	
George Villar	Principal, Warren Middle School	

School Return to School Committee Members

	Angelo L. Tomaso School	Central School	Mt. Horeb School	Woodland School	Warren Middle School
--	----------------------------	----------------	---------------------	--------------------	-------------------------

Principal / Chair	Christine Smith	Alison Tugya	Scott Cook	Jeffrey Heaney	George Villar
Assistant Principal	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Maria Mensinger
School Counselor	Kelly Blessing Maire	Alyssa Pech	Kelly Stankiewicz	Alexandra Pranzo	Lauren Systo
Head Custodian	Phil Shimko	Dave Kuhlken	Lou Marscicano	Joe Sutherland	Martin Fonseca
Mental Health Liaison	Sara VonBartheld	Becky Hartman	Amy Brunswick	Edd Lee	Carol Brown
Librarian	Susan Jackson	Lindsay LaNeve	Chris Burkhardt	Amanda McGrath	Cynthia Cassidy
School Nurse	Jan Brennan	Sharon Carroll	Doris Zanchelli	Tara Taggart	Lisa Lontai
Teacher	Michelle Wegener	Patsy Iannacone	Jill Andrews	Adam Yenish	Jennifer Benn
Teacher	Elena Marinello	Emily Cartolano	Beth Maag	Jamie Sands	Joel Van Tine
Para-professional	Liz Bisson	Michelle Roth	Helen Moore	Lois Wagner	Janine Boyland
Secretary	Mary Cagnetta	Jane Auriemma	Genny Trenson	Anne Frank	Gina Berry

Ad Hoc Return to School Committee Members

Matthew Mingle	Superintendent Chair
Aaron Bellish	Board of Education (beginning January 1, 2021)
Chris Bellmann	Board of Education President (until December 31, 2020)
David Brezee	Chair, Board of Education Finance, Operations, & Security Committee
Lisa DiMaggio	Chair, Board of Education Curriculum, Instruction, & Technology Committee (beginning January 1, 2021)
Marc Franco	Chair, Board of Education Personnel & Negotiations Committee (until December 31, 2020) Board of Education President (beginning January 1, 2021)
William Kimmick	Curriculum Director
Patricia Leonhardt	School Business Administrator
Derek Ressa	Director of Special Services

The district utilized NJDOE guidelines to develop principles to guide decision-making:

- The district's Return to School Plan will prioritize the health and safety of students and staff members.
- In accordance with NJDOE guidance (2020, p. 47), the district's Return to School Plan will 1) encourage social distancing; 2) discourage student cohort mixing like those that occur for lunch periods, recess, and assemblies; 3) encourage and improve hygiene practices; and 4) take into consideration the impact on the mental health and wellness of students, staff, and the school community.
- The district's Return to School Plan will rely on the most up-to-date scientific data and professional recommendations available while providing flexibility and predictability to families and staff members to the greatest extent practicable.

The NJDOE recommends several critical issues for leadership and planning. The Warren Township School District plans for these areas are outlined below.

Scheduling

The schedule for the 2020-2021 school year includes the option of hybrid in-person/distance learning or full-time distance learning, per parental preference. Regardless of the model selected, public schooling will be provided for at least 180 days in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A-7F-9.

"Districts' reopening plans must account for resuming in-person instruction in some capacity. Scheduling decisions should be informed by careful evaluation of the health and safety standards and the most up to date guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), as well the stakeholder input on the needs of all students and the realities of each unique district." (NJDOE, 2020, p. 11). "As districts begin implementing in-person and hybrid learning models, they must also be prepared to shift back to virtual learning models if circumstances change and those guidelines can no longer be met. School districts should strive to share their scheduling plans with staff, families, and students at least four weeks before the start of the school year in order to allow families to plan child care and work arrangement" (NJDOE, 2020, p. 49).

"According to N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3, a school day shall consist of not less than four hours, except that one continuous session of two and one-half hours may be considered a full day in kindergarten. District and school policies for attendance and instructional contact time will need to accommodate opportunities for both synchronous and asynchronous instruction, while ensuring the requirements for a 180-day school year are met" (NJDOE, 2020, p. 49).

"Hours of instructional time are not defined as a student's time spent in front of a teacher or in front of a screen, but time engaged in standards-based learning under the guidance and direction of a teacher. The NJDOE recommends districts prioritize flexibility and creative planning to maximize opportunities to learn with considerations for what is developmentally appropriate for a student's grade level and accommodate the varying levels of parent and guardian support during at-home instruction" (NJDOE, 2020, p. 49).

“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 classroom receive instruction” (NJDOE, 2020, p. 50).

While the NJDOE does not have any anticipated minimum standards in this section, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Ensure that district policies are reviewed and confirmed to support in-person and remote instruction;
- Develop schedules that support a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction that allow for contact time between educators and their students, as well as time for students to engage with their peers;
- Evaluate instructional activities based on what is developmentally appropriate for each grade band;
- Identify small groups and keep them together (cohorting) to ensure that student and staff groupings are as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same staff (all day for young children, and as much as possible for older children);
- Limit mixing between groups to the greatest extent possible; and
- Provide teachers common planning time;

Hybrid Scheduling Model

The hybrid scheduling model assigns students to one of two cohorts. Cohort A attends in-person schooling each Monday and Tuesday. Cohort B attends in-person schooling each Thursday and Friday. The cohorts alternate in-person schooling on Wednesdays.

The schedule will be adjusted to balance the number of in-person days between the two cohorts to the greatest extent practicable.

Cohort C includes students in the district's ABA, LLD, SEED, and select self-contained special education programs. These students attend in-person schooling five days per week. Effective October 19, 2020, all students in Grades K, 1, and 2 will attend in-person school five days per week. Effective March 1, 2021, all students in Grades 3 will attend in-person school five days per week. Effective March 15, 2021, all students in Grades 4-5 will attend in-person school five days per week. Students in Grades 6-8 will continue attending in-person school in the Cohort A/B model described above.

Effective November 30, 2020, students in the integrated preschool program will attend in-person school according to the full traditional schedule.

Sample Schedules

K-5

<u>Monday / Tuesday</u> (Hybrid A In Person / Hybrid B Distance)		<u>Wednesday</u> (Alternating Hybrid Day)	<u>Thursday / Friday</u> (Hybrid B In Person / Hybrid A Distance)	
Content	Minutes		Content	Minutes

Morning Meeting	15	Hybrid Groups will be present in school every other Wednesday and follow the daily schedule.	Morning Meeting	15
Math	45		Math	45
Writing	40		Writing	40
Reading	45		Reading	45
Social Studies / Science	25		Social Studies / Science	25
WIN	25		WIN	25
Play / Snack Break	25	The hybrid rotation calendar will be adjusted to balance each group's scheduled in-person and distance learning days.	Play / Snack Break	25
Arrival / Dismissal / Transitions / Handwashing	50		Arrival / Dismissal / Transitions / Handwashing	50
Lunch and Travel Break	50		Lunch and Travel Break	50
Specials (At Home)	45		Specials (At Home)	45

6-8

<u>Monday / Tuesday</u> (Hybrid A in Person / Hybrid B Distance)		<u>Wednesday</u> (Alternating Hybrid Day)	<u>Thursday / Friday</u> (Hybrid B in Person / Hybrid A Distance)	
Content	Minutes		Content	Minutes
Homeroom / Morning Meeting	15	Hybrid Groups will be present in school every other Wednesday.	Homeroom / Morning Meeting	15
Math	40		Math	40
ELA	40		ELA	40
Movement / Break	30		Movement / Break	30
WIN	25		WIN	25
Science	40		Science	40
Social Studies	40	The hybrid rotation calendar will be adjusted to balance each group's scheduled in-person and distance learning days.	Social Studies	40
Transitions / Arrival / Dismissal	40		Transitions / Arrival / Dismissal	40
Lunch and Travel Break	50		Lunch and Travel Break	50
World Language (At Home)	30		World Language (At Home)	30
Specials (At Home)	30		Specials (At Home)	30

Full-Time Distance Learning

Full-time distance learning is authorized by Warren Township Board of Education Policy #1648.02 - Remote Learning Options for Families.

“In addition to the methods and considerations explicitly referenced in the guidance for scheduling students for in-person, remote, or hybrid learning, families/guardians may submit, and school districts shall accommodate, requests for full time remote learning” (NJDOE, 2020, July 24, p. 1).

The Warren Township Schools will meet the NJDOE’s anticipated minimum standards (NJDOE, 2020, July 24, pp. 1-3) for full time remote learning options by:

- Permitting all students with the option of full time remote learning;
- Defining procedures that a family/guardian must follow to submit a request for full time distance learning, including requests to begin the school year receiving full time remote learning and requests to transition from in-person or hybrid services to full time remote learning during the school year;
 - Define deadlines for submitting a request and the district’s expected timeline for approving requests;
 - Identify points of contact for questions and concerns;
 - Describe information or documentation that the family/guardian must submit with their request; and
 - Determine if an IEP meeting or an amendment to a student’s IEP is needed for full time remote learning.
- Afford students participating in full time distance learning the same quality and scope of instruction and other educational services as any other student otherwise participating in district programs;
- Ensure that every student participating in distance learning has access to the requisite educational technology, and the provision of special education and related services to the greatest extent possible;
- Endeavor to provide supports and resources to assist families/guardians, particularly those of younger students, with meeting the expectations of the district’s distance learning option;
- Report to the NJDOE data regarding participation in full time distance learning, as required;
- Monitor provisions for issuing educational technology throughout the school year, and other provisions necessary to prevent lapses in student access to remote instruction as district or family circumstances evolve; and
- Communicate updates with families:
 - Summaries of, and opportunities to review, the district’s full time distance learning policy;
 - Procedures for submitting full time distance learning requests;
 - Scope and expectations of full time distance learning;
 - The transition from full time distance learning to in-person services and vice versa; and
 - The district’s procedures for ongoing communication with families and for addressing families’ questions or concerns.

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. District 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” (NJDOE, 2020, p. 54).

While the NJDOE does not have any anticipated minimum standards in this section, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Implement updated NJDOE guidance, as it becomes available, related to mentoring, educator evaluation, and certification.

In-person and Hybrid Learning Environments: Roles and Responsibilities

“In a fully in-person or hybrid learning environment districts should leverage staff to monitor student movement, hallway traffic, and maintain safety according to guidelines. Instructional and non-instructional staff schedules can include designated time to support school building logistics required to maintain health and safety requirements” (NJDOE, 20202, p. 55).

While the NJDOE does not have any anticipated minimum standards in this section, the Warren Township Schools will reaffirm the following guidance.

Instructional staff should:

- Reinforce physical distancing protocol with students and colleagues;
- 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 distance 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;
- Assist with school building and safety logistics when there is additional capacity or limited time spent with students; and
- Support colleagues in making necessary curricular adjustments and continuously improving the quality of instruction in distance and hybrid environments.

Mentor teachers should:

- Plan for 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 distance learning 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;
- Maintain logs of mentoring contact;

- Consider all health and safety measures when doing in-person observations; and
- 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 distance learning environment and inform in-person instruction;
- Provide time for staff collaboration and planning;
- Prioritize vulnerable student groups for face-to-face instruction;
- Identify teachers and teacher leaders that may provide support to staff to continuously improve instruction in a distance learning 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 distance learning;
- 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 distance learning 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 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 students' 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 distance learning models;
- Collaborate in determining expectations for differentiated instruction and rigor in hybrid and distance learning models;
- Support families in connecting with teachers and other services they need to be successful in navigating the distance learning environment; and
- Ensure the designated preschool administrator is involved in the planning so development activities and supports are in place for preschool and supports transition to kindergarten.

Educational services staff members (eg, school counselors) should:

- Lead small group instruction in a distance learning environment;
- Facilitate the distance learning component of synchronous online interactions;
- Manage online platforms for small groups of in-person students while teacher is in distance learning environment;
- Assist with the development and implementation of adjusted schedules;
- Plan for the completion of course requests and scheduling, where appropriate;
- Assist teachers with providing updates to students and families;

- Support embedding of SEL into lessons;
- Lead small group instruction to ensure physical distancing;
- Consider student grouping to maintain single classroom cohorts; and
- Consider alternative methods for one-on-one interactions avoiding in-person contact where possible.

Support staff members (eg, paraprofessionals) should:

- Lead small group instruction to ensure physical 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;
- Caption pre-recorded instructional videos from general education teachers;
- Provide real-time support during distance learning 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;
- Lead small group instruction in a distance learning environment; and
- Facilitate the distance learning component of synchronous online interactions.

Regarding substitutes, the district will:

- Develop contingency staffing plans in case of sudden long-term absences and/or vacancies;
- Develop roles and responsibilities for substitute teachers in both distance learning and hybrid settings;
- Designate substitutes to a single school building or grade level to avoid too much movement between schools, to the greatest extent possible; and
- Identify areas where additional staff may be necessary: school nurses, counselors, psychologists.

Educator Roles Related to School Technology Needs

To ensure all staff supporting distance learning are prepared to provide or support instruction, the district will:

- Designate staff members to provide ongoing support with technology to students, teachers, and families;
- Survey families to determine technology needs/access; and
- Provide district technology devices and connectivity to all who need it.

Athletics

Warren Middle School athletics are cancelled for the fall season (cross country and soccer). The Athletic Coordinator will continue developing proposals for restarting athletics in future seasons.

In addition to the Critical Areas of Operation described above, the NJDOE recommends districts include the following elements in reopening plans. The Warren Township School District plans for these areas are outlined below.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and School Climate and Culture

Social-emotional learning will be critical in re-engaging students, supporting adults, rebuilding relationships, and creating a foundation for academic learning.

Educator Well-Being

“It is important that leaders thoughtfully plan for how to best support the well-being of educators. As educators’ social-emotional state improves, they will better be able to support the social-emotional well-being and learning needs of their students. Districts must account for the well-being of their educators and staff as they develop their reopening plans” (NJDOE, 2020, p. 33).

While the NJDOE does not have any anticipated minimum standards in this section, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Provide time and space for individuals to process traumatic events, re-establish connections with each other, and receive support that prompts their headline, as needed;
- Prioritize educator self-care and wellness at the start of the 2020-2021 school year, to the greatest extent practicable;
- Support educators’ access to mental and behavioral resources and encourage them to utilize these resources; and
- Create opportunities for staff to regularly practice and reflect on their social and emotional competencies.

Trauma-Informed Social and Emotional Learning

“Districts must organize and prepare for the next school year acknowledging the potential trauma that staff and students have faced during the COVID-19 school closures. The full impact of the pandemic and the collateral consequences from isolation, fear, and economic hardship have yet to be fully realized. In addition, students and staff returning for the 2020-2021 school year will be faced with new and intimidating routines and circumstances. We must address these challenges head-on to ensure that social and emotional learning are infused into everyday school life” (NJDOE, 2020, p. 33).

While the NJDOE does not have any anticipated minimum standards in this section, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Make deliberate efforts to communicate the importance of social-emotional learning and how it relates to student success in school to students and families;
- Consider staffing needs that would be most appropriate in addressing the trauma and social and emotional well-being of students as they return to school;
- Facilitate opportunities for connections and reflection among students, families, and staff;
- Provide professional development to support educators’

- Integration of SEL in their teaching, including the skills to foster positive learning environments and techniques for embedding SEL into instruction (in-person and remote and/or distance instruction);
- Understanding and utilizing trauma-informed practices; and
- Protocol for identifying and supporting students who may be experiencing social-emotional, behavioral, and mental health challenges;
- Establish systems that promote supportive staff-student relationships to ensure that all students have at least one caring staff member who checks in regularly with them and who their family is able to connect with for any needed supports;
- Be proactive in preparing access to mental health and trauma supports for adults and students;
- Create opportunities for staff and students to regularly practice and reflect on their social and emotional competencies;
- Have careful conversations with staff and students to discuss the past, current, and future impacts of COVID-19 on themselves and the world around them; and
- Prepare to support an influx of students who may need counseling support.

School Culture and Climate

“Creating a positive school climate and culture will address the issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic and improve the conditions for learning for all students in any type of in-person, hybrid, or virtual instructional models. To optimize the learning process, students and staff need to feel cared for, reengaged, and acclimated to the school community, so schools can deliver instruction most effectively” (NJDOE, 2020, p. 35).

While the NJDOE does not have any anticipated minimum standards in this section, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Prioritize the health and emotional well-being of staff and students above all else;
- Assess the school climate to identify vulnerabilities and plan to implement evidence-based strategies to address identified needs; and
- Plan to provide and sustain instruction on social norms, relationship building, and behavioral expectations beginning at the start of the school year.

Utilizing the Strengths of Staff

“While educators are facing a ‘new normal’ as they work to support the academic, social emotional, and health needs of students, many of the strategies that should be applied to address these challenges are not new. Schools should recognize and empower the strengths of educators and staff and their significant role in the context of SEL” (NJDOE, 2020, p. 36).

While the NJDOE does not have any anticipated minimum standards in this section, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Utilize district communications channels to continually communicate with families and staff about the application and importance of SEL;
- Evaluate staff capacity and student needs when determining essential personnel;
- Facilitate and/or host opportunities for students, staff, and families to connect and reflect;

- Provide school leaders and teachers with resources on SEL and trauma;
- Connect with students and families to provide any needed supports;
- Embed SEL skills and strategies in remote learning with students;
- Provide students with opportunities to connect with other students (within learning and socially);
- Be aware of any changes in student behavior and report concerns pursuant to district policy;
- Evaluate school policies and protocols to ensure systems are in place to support students' social-emotional needs;
- Establish the vision of making sure all students have at least one caring staff member checking in on them;
- Prioritize needed professional development for staff;
- Collaborate with outside entities and agencies in order to establish partnerships to provide mental health and trauma supports to adults and students;
- Ask student support staff members to provide professional development to colleagues on areas of expertise and attend professional development to obtain greater understanding;
- Ask student support staff members to support school leaders in establishing protocols for identifying and supporting students' social-emotional needs and provide training to school staff on utilizing protocols;
- Ask student support staff members to take on leadership roles in supporting student-staff relationships and connections;
- Ask student support staff members to support students and families with accessing school and community supports and develop materials to communicate these services;
- Ask teachers to attend professional development to enhance skills and share strategies they have found to be successful with colleagues;
- Ask teachers to familiarize themselves with any resources shared by school leaders or counselors to support students' social-emotional needs in the school and community;
- Create opportunities for staff to regularly practice and reflect on their social and emotional competencies;
- Establish the expectation that all school staff should work to support students to do the same;
- Provide school staff with training and support on facilitating difficult conversations and then empower them to engage students in these dialogues; and
- Ensure that systems are set up to identify staff or students who may be struggling and best support their needs.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

MTSS is a systematic approach to prevention, intervention, and enrichment for academics and behavior that offers educators and families a mechanism to identify individual students who need extra support.

While the NJDOE does not have any anticipated minimum standards in this section, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Consider whether MTSS provides structures and resources to enhance existing district practices and procedures in the areas of universal screening, collaborative problem-solving teams, family engagement, and data-based decision making.

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.

While the NJDOE does not have any anticipated minimum standards in this section, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Consider whether the wraparound supports recommended provide structures and resources to enhance existing district practices and procedures in the areas of mental health supports, primary health and dental care, family engagement, and academic enrichment/expanded after-school learning.

Food Service and Distribution

School meals are critical to student health and well-being especially for low-income students. The NJDOE considers it a moral imperative to ensure the seamless and continuous feeding of students during all phases of school reopening.

While the NJDOE does not have any anticipated minimum standards in this section, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Continue partnering with community organizations and Watchung Hills Regional High School to ensure that students in need of food supports have access to them.

Quality Child Care

Child care will be needed as schools reopen, particularly in instances where modified school schedules may increase the likelihood that families who otherwise would not utilize child care will now require it.

While the NJDOE does not have any anticipated minimum standards in this section, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Involve the district's contracted before- and after-care provider - AlphaBest - in leadership and planning meetings;
- Connect AlphaBest with community partners to consider additional service provision;
- Communicate modified school schedule information with local officials and childcare providers;
- Anticipate that children will need additional social emotional supports and coping strategies during drop-off and throughout the day, particularly children who are in an unfamiliar setting with new peers and new adults; and
- Utilize Employee Wellness programs to promote healthy lifestyles, particularly mental health, for staff.

Continuity of Learning

“Ensuring continuity of learning is critically important during this time of great stress for families, educators, and students” (NJDOE, 2020, p. 13).

The NJDOE recommends districts focus on the following areas when crafting their reopening plans to ensure continuity of learning. The Warren Township School District plans for these areas are outlined below.

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

“Under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and New Jersey state special education regulations, students with disabilities are entitled to special education and related services, such as accommodations and modifications to instruction, speech-language services, occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), and counseling...Consistent with guidance from the United States Department of Education, districts must continue to meet their obligations to students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible” (NJDOE, 2020, p. 74).

While the NJDOE does not have any anticipated minimum standards in this section, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Address the return to school facilities of medically fragile students and students with physical or health impairments who may require accommodations and modifications as part of a 504 Plan;
- Engage IEP teams to:
 - Review student data/student progress to determine whether critical skills were lost during the period in which distance learning was being provided to students and determine the need for additional services to address learning loss;
 - 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; and
 - Develop procedures to complete overdue and/or incomplete evaluations to determine eligibility for special education services; and
- Prioritize students receiving services through the district’s Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)/Autism, Language Learning Disability (LLD), Behavioral Disabilities (BD) or SEED (Social-Emotional Educational Development), and other self-contained special education programs to return to full in-person instruction.

Technology and Connectivity

“Each school district should strive to ensure that every student has access to a device and internet connectivity” (NJDOE, 2020, p. 75).

While the NJDOE does not have any anticipated minimum standards in this section, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Conduct a needs assessment to determine the number of students that will require district-provided devices and/or internet access to access distance learning;
- Consider the attendant needs associated with deployment of needed technology, including student and parent trainings 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;
- Utilize the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Education SuperHighway (ESH) K-12 recommended bandwidth for online learning;
- Track participation rates in distance learning;
- Pilot software applications or Web-based technology that will be used to plan, implement lessons, and assess efficacy throughout the learning process; and
- Provide training and/or technical assistance to teachers, parents and guardians who are not experienced in distance learning methods, including use of technology.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments

“In planning curriculum, instruction, and assessment for re-opening, a key focus for districts should be on building capacity of their staff to deliver highly effective instruction in hybrid environments as well as preparing them to address any learning gaps that might prevent students from meeting grade-level New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS)” (NJDOE, 2020, p. 76).

While the NJDOE does not have any anticipated minimum standards in this section, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Build its reopening plan around the following critical tenants:
 - All students deserve equitable access to a high-quality education. The type of learning experiences that are appropriate will vary based on grade band and content area;
 - This unique time provides opportunities for innovation;
 - Strong instruction, student engagement, and effective assessment are interdependent and benefit from a strong feedback loop between administration, educators, students, and families;
 - Anxiety may be reduced by developing a shared sense of purpose, providing clear expectations and comprehensive support systems, building strong relationships, and allowing for flexibility/adaptability;
 - Thoughtful planning is necessary to provide support for instructional shifts;
 - Encourage collaboration between educators to ensure consistency across grades and content areas; and
 - Provide sufficient time to prepare necessary incorporation of new instructional techniques.

Distance and Hybrid Learning Environment - Curriculum

“As we plan to enter the 2020-2021 school year, educators will be tasked not only with delivering curriculum, but also structuring the curriculum to account for the loss of learning that may have resulted from the extended school building closures. This loss includes not only the skills necessary to access grade-level material, but also content knowledge. To accelerate students’ progress during the upcoming school year, administrators and educators will be tasked with identifying what unfinished learning needs to be addressed. Accelerated learning focuses on providing students with grade-level materials, tasks, and assignments along with the appropriate

supports necessary to fill the most critical gaps in learning. Accelerated learning seeks to help educators utilize classroom time as efficiently as possible” (NJDOE, 2020, p. 77).

While the NJDOE does not have any anticipated minimum standards in this section, the Warren Township Schools will:

- Prioritize the most critical prerequisite skills and knowledge for each subject area and grade level;
- Train teachers and leaders to evaluate students’ unfinished learning and provide acceleration support;
- Plan an approach to diagnosing students’ unfinished learning in that prerequisite content knowledge and those prerequisite skills;
- Adapt the curricular scope and sequence/pacing for each subject area and grade level to accommodate where teachers might need to provide acceleration support; and
- Monitor students’ progress on grade-appropriate assignments and adjust supports for teachers and leaders based on student results.

Distance and Hybrid Learning Environment - Instruction

“As school districts prepare for the upcoming school year, instructional plans that are flexible, promote innovation, and take advantage of the strengths of school leaders, teachers, students, and family and community members will be best suited to adapt to changing learning environments as may be necessary” (NJDOE, 2020, p. 78).

While the NJDOE does not have any anticipated minimum standards in this section, the Warren Township Schools will:

- 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, distance learning platforms) and expectations for interactions (e.g., connecting with students and their families) to ensure all students have access to high-quality instruction:
 - Engage school leaders, teachers, counselors, media specialists, paraprofessionals, child study team members and other staff as well as family and community members in conversations regarding instruction;
 - Recognize that the unique needs of preschool, early elementary, elementary, and middle school students will affect how and when educators and students engage in learning experiences;
 - Understand how trauma and other challenges related to students’ social and emotional needs can impact learning; and
 - Partner with local library and community organizations and agencies to facilitate access to resources, where appropriate.
- Design for student engagement and foster student ownership of learning:
 - Leverage students’ strengths;
 - Consider fostering student voice and choice to promote engagement and independent learning;
 - Use scaffolding to meet the unique needs of all students and accelerate learning without reducing rigor or sacrificing grade-level material;
 - Identify effective methods to differentiate student learning (e.g., small group instruction); and
 - Provide effective feedback that helps students anticipate and be successful on next steps.
- Develop students’ meta-cognition:

- Incorporate time for self-reflection, pre-assessments at the start of units, and formative assessments throughout units;
- Set reasonable expectations;
- Build collaboration skills;
- Build in time to help students develop skills such as self-regulation, time management, goal setting, and effective teamwork;
- Provide clear and flexible expectations:
 - Type and length of activities;
 - Interactions;
 - How students will demonstrate learning; and
 - Resource selection;
- Recognize the impacts that home environments may have on learning as students reacclimate to in-person learning and adjust to new instructional models and schedules; and
- Use a “show me” what you have learned approach when possible.
- Collaborate with school leaders and educators to determine what types of supports are needed for effective pedagogical approaches during remote or hybrid instruction:
 - Leverage technology in service to learning (e.g., learning management systems, teacher-created videos and screencasts; tools for students to demonstrate learning, collaborate with peers and experts, digital instructional resources);
 - Provide consistent support via IT team;
 - Design learning experiences that:
 - Building student understanding by linking together concepts within and across grades; and
 - Provide direct instruction, student practice, and enrichment activities;
 - Build capacity of and provide support to family members to enable them to become learning partners;
 - Provide regular time to collaborate with colleagues for coordination of assignments, cross-curricular planning, and common lesson design; and
 - Develop and build skills essential in this ever-changing, evolving world.
- Assess the district’s data on how English language learners experienced instruction during distance or hybrid learning, particularly for newcomer students and students with lower English language proficiency levels.

Distance and Hybrid Learning Environment - Assessment

The NJDOE defines four types of assessments for district consideration (2020, p. 80):

- Pre-assessment: Assesses a student’s strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills prior to instruction of new units.
- Formative: A planned, ongoing process used by all students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become self-directed learners.
- Interim: A comparison of student understanding or performance against a set of uniform standards within the same school year at periodic intervals, frequently at the end of a grading period. It may contain hybrid elements of formative and summative assessments, or a summative test of a smaller section of content, like a unit or semester.

- Summative: A comparison of the performance of a student or group of students against a set of uniform standards to measure a student's achievement at the end of instruction.

"Summative assessments are not appropriate for evaluating the needs of students and planning instruction; therefore, educators should focus on locally developed pre-assessments and formative assessments upon returning to school. In the absence of spring 2020 summative assessment data, school districts should identify alternate sources of prior assessment data which may complement data driven decision-making regarding remediation efforts. Online pre-assessments and formative assessments should be leveraged in either a fully distance or hybrid learning environment to support the evaluation of student strengths and areas for improvement, and to inform next steps, including determining whether remediation is required for an entire group of students or on an individual student basis" (NJDOE, 2020, pp. 80-81).

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. Among the most critical focus areas are training to address the learning loss for the most vulnerable populations (students with disabilities, English language learners, students without proper technology or internet access, etc.), and preparing and supporting educators in meeting the social emotional, health, and academic needs of all students" (NJDOE, 2020, p. 82).

While the NJDOE does not have any anticipated minimum standards in this section, the Warren Township Schools will adhere to the recommendations (pp. 82-84) in the areas of professional learning, mentoring and induction, and evaluation, as follows:

Professional Learning

Professional Learning Prior to the Beginning of the School Year

- Identify the consistent technology that will be used throughout the district in distance learning and provide training in the use of all platforms;
- Provide accessible and user-friendly resources or training for parents/caregivers and community members for safe use of the technology; and
- Ensure that novice provisional teachers, teachers new to the district, and other new staff have sufficient training in the technologies that will be used.

Professional Learning Throughout the School Year

- Develop training schedules and staff collaboration time in accordance with the needs of the district;
- Develop professional learning experiences that ensure high quality instruction for all students;
- Grow each educator's professional capacity to deliver developmentally appropriate, standards-based instruction remotely;
- Respond to input and collaboration of stakeholders, including all staff, parents/caregivers and community members gained through surveys; and
- Develop professional development plans (PDPs) for teaching staff and administrators.

Mentoring

- Provide induction for all novice provisional teachers and teachers new to the district;
- Provide one-to-one mentoring to novice provisional teachers by qualified mentors;
- Ensure that mentors can provide sufficient support and guidance to novice provisional teachers working in a distance learning environment;
- Provide mentoring in both hybrid and distance learning environments; and
- Use online collaborative tools to remain connected.

Evaluation

- Modify the annual evaluation training to highlight procedures and processes which would be impacted due to potential hybrid scheduling;
- Develop observation schedules with a hybrid model in mind;
- ~~• Convene a District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) meeting to review evaluation policies and procedures which may be impacted by a hybrid or distance learning system;~~
- Engage the School Improvement Panels (SciPs) in reviewing evaluation policies and procedures that may be impacted by a hybrid or distance learning system, informing professional learning, mentoring, and other evaluation-related activities which occur in individual schools; and
- Consider the requirements and best practices involved with provisional status teachers, nontenured educators, and those on Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) including extra observations, extra observers, and assuring more frequent feedback.

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2020, April 14). *What bus transit operators need to know about COVID-19*.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/bus-transit-operator.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2020, May 29). *Childcare, schools, and youth programs*.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2020, June 25). *People who are at increased risk for severe illness*.
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-increased-risk.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fneed-extra-precautions%2Fpeople-at-higher-risk.html
- New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). (2020, June 26). *The road back: Restart and recovery plan for education*. <https://nj.gov/education/reopening/NJDOETheRoadBack.pdf>
- New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). (2020, July 24). *Clarifying expectations regarding fulltime remote learning options for families in 2020-2021*.
<https://nj.gov/education/reopening/updates/docs/7.24.20%20RtR%20Fulltime%20Remote%20Update.pdf>
- New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). (2020, August 3). *Update to conditions of learning, health and safety, "Critical Area of Operations #5: Screening, PPE, and Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms" and "Critical Area of Operation #3: Transportation."*
<https://www.nj.gov/education/reopening/updates/docs/RestartUpdateFacecoverings080320.pdf>
- New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH). (2020). *How to report a disease*.
<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/reporting/>
- New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH). (2020, May 4). *Quick reference: Discontinuation of transmission-based precautions and home isolation for persons diagnosed with COVID-19*.
https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/COVID-QuickRef_Discont_Isolation_and_TBP.pdf
- New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH). (2020, June 19). *COVID-19: Information for schools*.
https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/covid2019_schools.shtml
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (2020, April 19). *Guidance for cleaning and disinfecting public spaces, workplaces, businesses, schools, and homes*.
https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-04/documents/316485-c_reopeningamerica_guidance_4.19_6pm.pdf
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (2020, July 1). *List N: Disinfectants for use against*

SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19).

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>

Questions or Concerns

Questions or concerns regarding an individual student's needs should be directed to the child's teacher, school counselor, or school nurse as appropriate.

Questions or concerns related to this handbook should be directed to covid19@warrentboe.org.