



June 2024 LEARNING PLAN

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Position Statement: In April 2020, Governor Murphy issued an executive order that became P.L.2020, c.27. This law provides for the continuity of instruction in the event of a public-health related district closure so that LEAs can utilize virtual or remote instruction to satisfy the 180-day requirement pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9. In order to provide transparency and ensure that Matheny students continue to receive high quality, standards-based instruction, Matheny will annually submit its proposed program for virtual or remote instruction (Plan) to the New Jersey Commissioner of Education. This plan will be implemented during a closure lasting more than three consecutive school days due to a declared state of emergency, declared public health emergency, or a directive by the appropriate health agency or officer to institute a public health related closure. A chief school administrator or designee will consult with the Board of Education or Board of Trustees prior to implementing Matheny's plan of virtual or remote instruction. A day of virtual or remote instruction, if instituted under a plan approved by the New Jersey Commissioner of Education, is considered the equivalent of a full day of school attendance for the purposes of meeting State and local graduation requirements, awarding of course credit, and other such matters as determined by the New Jersey Commissioner of Education.

Matheny will include the statutory and regulatory requirements listed in the "LEA Guidance for Chapter 27 Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Programs for the 2023-2024 SY," in plans for virtual or remote instruction for the 2024-2025 school year. The 2024-2025 Learning Plan will be shared with all sending districts and will be posted on the school website for public viewing access along with the 2023-2024 Learning Plan that follows the same guidelines and regulatory requirements. The document shall be sent to district case managers and directors of special education via email. In the event of a transition to remote or virtual instruction, a list of identified essential employees will be sent to the county office. This Learning Plan is a living document and may be changed at any time with the direction of the Local Health Department and/or Directive of the Governor of New Jersey. Any change will be approved (sometimes retroactively) by the school board committee and authorized by the NJDOE via the County Office. In addition there may be times when students are excluded under N.J.S.A. 18A:40-7 (See Appendix A), or via doctors' orders. These situations will be addressed in conjunction with



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the Local Health Department (LHD) and the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and services provided virtually whenever possible to eliminate loss of learning and range of motion (This provision shall be included proactively in all Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

Population: The Matheny School, an Approved Private School for Students with Disabilities, serves day students ages 3-21 placed by sending districts or the state of New Jersey.

The original plan was created with adherence to The New Jersey Department of Education's Restart and Recovery Plan, "The Road Forward," The New Jersey Department of Health, and the Center for Disease Control's Guiding Principles. The new plan incorporates the 2022 Chapter 27 Guidance, the New Jersey Department of Health/DOE Guidance Contagious Disease 8/29/2022, and New Jersey Department of Health/DOE Guidance on COVID-19 8/29/2022 and was updated June 2023 and June 2024.

CONTINUITY OF LEARNING -

Matheny School is a student-driven and family-centered program, which uses researched-based practices, experience, and innovation to think outside the box to help every child get closer to career or college readiness. We promote independence in all our students through positivism, collaboration and teamwork and by providing age appropriate activities. Families and sending districts are cooperative parties in our committees and community. Adaptive techniques and instructional and assistive technology are used to provide universal and equitable access to any activity. The school is made up of Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech Language Specialists, Social Workers, Psychologists, Teachers, Paraprofessionals, School Nurses, Registered Nurses, non-instructional aides, and many other professionals with one goal – continued improvement in standards-based practices to reach students' expectations. While we are a school-based day program, many parents find the respite and full-time services provided by the hospital an invaluable complimentary service.

Matheny does not currently have any students classified as English Language Learners; however, translation services are available for families at IEP meetings and for all other communication needs.

Matheny employs Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in all instruction for all students. Our curriculum aligns with the New Jersey State Standards for Learning in both virtual and in-person instructional settings. Our staff have been trained and provided resource materials in UDL, Social Emotional Learning, Trauma Informed Care, and Culturally Responsive Teaching. The



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materials and resources provided are shared online for ease of access for all staff members to utilize as needed.

Matheny School is attached to a hospital which is open at all hours. Regardless of school closure, the building is maintained regularly by the school facilities manager and housekeeping staff.

Normal School hours for students are 9:30 am - 4:00 pm

CONDITIONS FOR IN-PERSON LEARNING -

- Classrooms will be configured to class sizes in accordance with the New Jersey Department of Education N.J.A.C. regulations and as advised by the local health department to prevent increased viral load in each classroom.
- The Matheny School has maintained heating and ventilation systems, open windows whenever possible, and maintained filters for A/C units.
- Air scrubbers have been installed in all student occupied classrooms, bathrooms, treatment spaces, and therapy spaces.
- Additionally, Matheny staff are required to use personal protective equipment (PPE) and other infection control methods to ensure highest levels of student and staff safety when necessary and under advisement of the CSN (whether or not dictated by the Local Health Authority). Safe hand hygiene techniques such as hand washing are strongly encouraged at all times.
- Visits to the building from non-students and staff are allowed during school hours. Visitors to the school, who have not been fingerprinted by the Department of Education or who do not work for Matheny are escorted through the hallways by Matheny School employees and sign in and out of the building in the school office. Visitors to the hospital are expected to sign in at the main desk.
- Each student has his/her own school and art supplies, and manipulatives to reduce shared/communal contact.
- Each student will have his/her own technology device (iPad and/or Laptop).
- Signs informing students and employees of proper hand-washing have been installed throughout the school building.
- School lunch is served to all eligible students here at Matheny. Lunch is served individually to each student. Students may eat in the dining hall, classrooms, hallway, and/or other designated areas in the school.
- Student progress is monitored through data collection, teacher observation, teacher and therapist notes, and other methods during in-person instruction at Matheny. Quarterly reports are provided to parents/guardians, as well as monthly and bi-monthly parent



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communication between teachers, therapists, and parent/guardians. Annual reviews, re-evaluations, 30-day reviews, and other IEP meetings are held regularly and as needed to evaluate student progress with the IEP Team.

While the sending districts are responsible for the transportation of students, there may be instances when students may be driven by their parent. Matheny owns and operates school buses for evacuation and safety procedures as required. We also use the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) for assistance in transportation.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and resulting transition to virtual learning, school trips ceased to provide for the safety of students and staff. As in-person instruction resumed for the 2022-2023 school year, trips were considered by the Continuity and Conditions of Learning Committees once it was deemed safe for students to travel by the local Department of Health, in accordance with standards established by the CDC and the Department of Health Guidance through the Department of Education. These trips are important for Community-Based Instruction, Structured Learning Environments and Person Centered Approaches to Transition (PCAST). In the 2023-24 school year, these trips will resume fully with the lifting of masking and infection control mandates. School trips will continue to be considered and safely executed during the 2024-25 school year.

In the 2023-24 school year, beginning in July 2023, High School classes resumed a rotating schedule. Students attend each class with the teacher specialized in subject matter for each core content area; Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, and Math. This model will continue for the 2024-25 school year and moving forward.

PCAST, Transition, and Project Based Instruction classes have resumed at Matheny for in-person instruction. These classes are designed with community involvement for students and will be monitored and assessed for safety as the programs progress and students can be immersed into community centers for learning. Students are currently working on Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills in alignment with the New Jersey State Standards in these classes with adaptations to the program for health and safety within the Matheny campus and in the community.

Social and emotional health of staff and students is integrated into instruction and daily routines at Matheny. Staff have participated in virtual and in-person yoga and mindfulness meditation. Students and staff are encouraged to utilize the nature trail on campus for exercise and mindful



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connection with nature to increase mental and physical well-being. Matheny also offers services through Quantum EAP for staff seeking outside mental health assistance.

Sanitation

- Dispensers with alcohol-based hand sanitizers are installed in all classrooms, at entrances and exits of buildings, and near bathrooms.
- Classrooms are cleaned, sanitized/disinfected each day following student dismissal.
- Custodians use electrostatic and fogging disinfectant machines and/or basic spray bottles.
- Maintenance of the air-scrubbers with filter cleaning and replacement.

Student and Staff Health During a Pandemic Response

The Matheny School has developed a Pandemic Response Team to coordinate all efforts connected to COVID-19-related decision-making. The Pandemic Response team will work closely with local health departments, and others in municipal, county, and state government to implement the plans based on current COVID-19 conditions.

BEFORE SCHOOL: Parents or locus parentis (person operating in place of the parent) must take their child's temperature before sending to school. If the child has a fever of 100.4°F or above, they cannot be sent to school. Caregivers must monitor their children for signs and symptoms of illness everyday and keep them home if they: 1) Have tested positive (viral test) for COVID-19

2) Have symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal infections (e.g., cough, fever, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea) per NJDOH, 8/29/2022 recommendations.

In addition to the bullet points.

Caregivers will need to answer "NO" to the questions below before sending their child to school.

- Do you or any members of your household have symptoms of COVID-19 including a fever of 100.4°F or higher?
- Are you or any members of your household under evaluation for COVID-19?
- Have you or any members of your household been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last five days?
- Have you or any members of your household had close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID in the last 10 days?



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If caregivers have any of the above situations please keep your child home and call the Nursing Services Office at 908-234-0011 ext. 1217.

School personnel will take each child's temperature prior to entering the school building. School nurses will document any observance of signs/symptoms. Symptomatic individuals will be immediately isolated with supervision and arrangements will be made to send them home safely.

Staff members will also take their temperatures each day before entering the school. Any staff member with a temperature of 100°F or above will not attend. Staff members are instructed to not report to school if they cannot meet these guidelines.

Contact Tracing: The Matheny School will collaborate with the local health department and engage our school nurses and will follow contact tracing policies and procedures, as well as educate the broader school community on the importance of contact tracing.

Reasonable Accommodations: The Matheny School will provide reasonable accommodations for staff and students at higher risk for severe illness and promote behaviors that reduce spread, such as social distancing, frequent hand washing and the use of face coverings.

All individuals in the building will be required to wear face coverings (accommodations will be made for those that cannot wear masks due to medical conditions). A face shield or goggles shall be worn by staff in addition to, but not in place of, a mask. If a mask with a valve is worn, it must be covered with an additional mask. Reusable cloth masks are not permitted. Appropriate masks and PPE shall be provided by Matheny.

Teachers, parents, district case managers, and staff will be alerted to any updates in the schools' plan or procedures via email, letters, and/or the "Remind" app Alert System.

CONTINUITY OF LEARNING: Virtual Instruction

When students are not able to attend classes in-person due to illness or quarantine, instruction will continue to focus on meeting the educational and social-emotional goals and objectives as outlined in each student's IEP. Instructional periods of 40-minute blocks still occur between 10:00 am and 12:10 pm and between 1:25 pm and 3:30 pm. Between 3:30-4:00 all students have WALL (Wellness Activities for Life and Learning) these activities help students prepare for transition to the home environment while working on SEL and Life-Skills.



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Teachers, therapists and social workers work collaboratively with parents/locus parentis via phone and email to address and revise the implementation of accommodations in the home or hospital setting. Therapists document services via the Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) and documentation notes in Paradigm. Matheny supervisors provide updated instructional plans to sending district case managers on an ongoing basis. Matheny shall notify the sending district case managers if there are any required changes to the IEP. The sending district is responsible for conducting in-person or virtual IEP meetings (or provide notice), evaluation, and other meetings to identify, evaluate, and/or reevaluate students with disabilities. Matheny staff members participate in all in-person and virtual IEP meetings held by the sending district to which they are invited between 12:15 pm and 1:15 pm so as not to interrupt instruction or regularly scheduled therapy treatment. If a student is unable to attend virtual instruction, the teachers and therapists communicate with parent/guardians via email or documented communication via phone. Five day notification to districts still will apply after absence.

Students that learn virtually due to illness or quarantine will have instruction and scheduled assignments provided utilizing Google Suite for Education and Zoom Professional for instruction, communication, and assignment submission. All related services and independent activities will also be delivered remotely (unless a change is made after January 11, 2023) using either Zoom and/or another digital medium as deemed appropriate. Students with 1-1 paraprofessionals who have a signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) by the district and parent may have the 1-1 in person at either the hospital wing or home (subject to availability and guidance from the Department of Health). Students who are assigned a 1-1 who do not have a signed MOA shall have their 1-1 attend all the sessions virtually.

A student learning virtually due to illness or quarantine will have all course subjects and assignments commensurate with an in-person school day. Assignments and instruction will meet/exceed the four hour requirement. Grading and monitoring of student progress will remain aligned with regular grading procedures. Student progress will be determined by benchmark assessments, progress reports, progress monitoring during instruction, and the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) assessment.

Since the synchronous and asynchronous virtual learning model is aligned with the in-person learning model, and all models utilize the Google Suite for Education, it is expected that the Matheny School shall be able to make a quick and efficient shift to the all virtual model in the event of a district-wide closure.



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Technology surveys were sent to all families at the start of the Pandemic. All students without a device were assigned an iPad and all teaching staff and therapists were assigned a MacBook Air 2020 M1 Processor device. Individual technical support is provided by The Matheny School. Any emerging technology issues are addressed by teachers and therapists (i.e., one-to-one assistance on how to successfully access technology, providing alternate supports, such as email assignments, and paper copies when possible). A technology coordinator is also available for immediate, live support. For families without internet access, paper copies for all subjects will be mailed directly to the child's home and we have 4 satellite enabled iPads and six hotspots in case of internet outage available upon request to provide internet service for virtual instruction.

Attendance is determined and recorded by participation in live instruction, submission of synchronous and asynchronous written assignments, participation in individual therapy sessions, and reporting of illnesses through the school health services office. Any lapses or changes in attendance or participation are immediately addressed with both student and parent/locus parentis via communication from the teacher, social worker, school nurse, or Matheny school administration. Additionally, any lapses or changes in attendance will be communicated to the case manager at the sending districts, as required by NJ administrative code and statute and the tuition contract. Adjustments are made if necessary to foster or increase student participation.



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Appendix A:

N.J.S.A. 18A:40-7. Exclusion of pupils who are ill

When there is evidence of departure from the normal health of any pupil, the principal of the school shall upon the recommendation of the school physician or school nurse exclude such a pupil from the school building, and in the absence from the building of the school physician or school nurse, the classroom teacher may exclude the pupil from the classroom and the principal may exclude the pupil from the school building.

L. 1967, c.271 18A40-7, eff. Jan 11 1968