

THE MATHENY SCHOOL REOPENING PLAN

I. Conditions for Learning – Minimum Standards

1. The Matheny School will adopt a policy for screening students and employees for symptoms of COVID-19 and history of exposure;
2. The Matheny School shall strive for social distancing within the classroom and on school buses. If The Matheny School is not able to maintain this physical distance, additional modifications will be in place, including physical barriers between desks and turning desks to face the same direction.
3. The Matheny School has established and adopted cleaning and disinfecting procedures, which meet hospital standards; however, we shall compare to “released” CDC protocol expected in late July and adopt whichever is the higher standard.
4. School staff and visitors are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the individual’s health or the individual is under two years of age.
5. Students are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings and are required to do so when social distancing cannot be maintained, unless doing so would inhibit the student’s health.
6. It is also necessary to acknowledge that enforcing the use of face coverings may be impractical for young children or individuals with disabilities The Matheny School will identify those students who can wear facemasks.

In addition to these minimum standards, the NJDOE has identified ten Critical Areas of Operation that schools must address in their restart plans:

1. General Health and Safety Guidelines:
 - A. In all stages and phases of pandemic response and recovery, The Matheny School will comply with Center for Disease Control (CDC), state, and local guidelines.
 - B. 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.

- C. The Matheny School shall incorporate provisions to facilitate hand washing at regular intervals (or use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer if washing with soap and water is not possible), such as designating certain times for students to wash hands (e.g. before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose /coughing/sneezing), use of signage to encourage handwashing or other provisions as per best practice.
2. Classrooms, Testing, and Therapy Rooms:
 - A. The Matheny School allows for social distancing to the maximum extent possible. When social distancing is difficult or impossible, face coverings are required, and face coverings are always required for visitors and staff unless it will inhibit the individual's health.
 - B. The Matheny School minimizes the use of shared objects, such as manipulatives, when shared items have to be used they are cleaned and sanitized between each user.
 - C. The Matheny School ensures indoor facilities have adequate ventilation to the greatest extent possible.
 - D. The Matheny School prepares and maintains hand sanitizing stations, and ensure students and staff will wash hands frequently.
 3. Transportation:
 - A. The Matheny School will maintain social distancing practices on buses to the maximum extent practicable and adopt best practices (as located in ***What BUS Transit Operators Need to Know About COVID-19***) for cleaning and disinfecting all vehicles used for transporting students. If maintaining social distancing is not possible, all students who are able must wear face coverings while on busses.
 - B. The Matheny School bus shall be cleaned at least weekly and between each usage. Usage shall be defined as:
 - a. Trip with students
 - b. Trip to deliver equipment or supplies
 - c. Trip for inspection or general maintenance
 - d. Trip for gas where another person other than the driver is a passenger

4. Student Flow, Entry, Exit, and Common Areas:
 - A. The Matheny School will have established processes and locations for student and staff health screenings. This will include providing physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, when appropriate, to help ensure that staff and students remain at least six feet apart.
 - B. When it is not possible to maintain physical distancing, The Matheny School will require the use of face coverings. The local department of health has recommended full PPE for teachers and therapists engaged in in person instruction and therapies, which involve positioning, lifting, completing ADLs and delivery of all therapeutic services.

5. Screening, PPE, and Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms:
 - A. The Matheny School will adopt a policy for safely and respectfully screening students and employees for symptoms of and history of exposure to COVID-19.
 - B. Students with symptoms related to COVID-19 shall be safely and respectfully isolated from others, in a single office with good ventilation or a VIP tent with good ventilation shelter, supervision, and an activity.
 - C. Staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 shall be safely and respectfully isolated from others, in a single office with good ventilation or a VIP tent with good ventilation shelter, and support.
 - D. Should The Matheny School become aware that an individual who has spent time in a district facility (or spent time with members of the Matheny School Community) tests positive for COVID-19, school officials must immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality.
 - E. Re-admittance to The Matheny School shall be dependent upon N.J.A.C. 6A:16 and relevant NJDOH guidance.
 - F. As per N.J.A.C. 6A:16 parents shall be encouraged to be alerts for signs of illness in their children and keep them home when they are sick.

- G. All personnel shall be encouraged to be alert for signs of illness in their students and themselves and follow policy congruent to N.J.A.C., and N.J.S.A, to keep our school community safe.
6. Contact Tracing: Contact tracing is the process used to identify those who have come in contact with people who have tested positive for many contagious diseases, including COVID-19. It is a long-standing practice and is an integral function of local health departments.
- A. The Matheny School administrators, school safety specialists, counselors, and any other staff deemed appropriate by the school, will be provided with information regarding the role of contact tracing in keeping school communities safe from the spread of contagious disease.
 - B. 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.
7. Facilities Cleaning Practices:
- A. The Matheny School adheres to existing required facilities cleaning practices and procedures, and any new specific requirements of the local health department as they arise.
 - B. When opened physically The Matheny School shall schedule for increased routine cleaning and disinfecting, especially of frequently touched surfaces and objects, and sanitize bathrooms daily and between each use as much as possible.
 - C. The following cleaners shall be used by The Matheny School as per CDC Guidelines: **DISINFECTANTS AND EPA REG # S**
 - i. BTC 885 (64-H) NEUTRAL DISINFECTANT CLEANER EPA REG # 87742-1 CONTACT TIME 10 MIN *
 - ii. GNR (FUZION) EPA REG # 67619-30 CONTACT TIME 1 MINUTE *
 - iii. HYDROGEN PEROXIDE CLEANER DISINFECTANT WIPES EPA REG# 67619-25 CONTACT TIME 2 MINUTES *
 - iv. CLOROX HEALTHCARE BLEACH GERMICIDAL WIPES EPA REG # 67619-12 CONTACT TIME 3 MINUTES*

v. THYMOX (BIOESQUE) EPA REG #1839-169 CONTACT TIME 4 MINUTE*

8. Meals:

- A. If we reopen on our regular premises it is expected that the Matheny School students will either eat in their own rooms or classrooms with food delivered contactless by the Kitchen to the entrance of each zone.
- B. Matheny has never typically used a family-style, self-service, and buffet-style dining to distribute food and will not entertain such delivery (even for special occasions). Social distancing will be evident the preparation, distribution, and consumption of all food.
- C. Cafeteria staff shall wash their hands immediately after removing gloves and after directly handling used food service items.

9. Recess/Physical Education:

- A. The Matheny School outdoor spaces shall be available as per agreement with the hospital and will be marked off to ensure separation between students
- B. Recess will be staggered by groups and staff must disinfect playground equipment and other shared equipment between uses.
- C. The Matheny School has no locker rooms when students change for swimming they do so in the bathrooms.
- D. The Matheny School shall work with The Matheny Hospital to avoid cohort mixing.

10. Extracurricular Activities and Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours:

- A. Usage of school rooms shall be approved by the Principal or Designee, after cleaning protocol is developed by School Facilities Manager.
- B. External community organizations that use school facilities must follow school guidance on health and safety protocols.

In addition to taking these steps to protect students' and educators' physical health, leaders must also consider the impact of social isolation on both educators and students. Based on input from New Jersey stakeholders and educators from across the country, the NJDOE recommends school district teams include the following elements in their reopening plans:

1. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and School Climate and Culture:
 - A. Social emotional learning (SEL) will be critical in re-engaging students, supporting adults, rebuilding relationships, and creating a foundation for academic learning.
 - B. To this end, The Matheny School has thoughtfully planned around the well-being of educators so they can support the social and emotional well-being and learning needs of their students, acknowledge and prepare for the potential trauma that staff and students have faced during the COVID-19 school closures, and recognize and empower educators' and staff's strengths.
 - C. We have the following aims:
 - a. Support/train staff to (be trauma sensitive) identify at-risk or concerning situations during virtual learning or at-home sessions
 - b. Support/train families/guardians -Offer options to video conference small groups of students/support persons on SEL
 - c. Facilitate coping with trauma and loss – helping staff and students

School culture and climate is reinforced through regular administrative and staff in-services and meetings (Facilitation of team building, appreciation, recognition and respect, collaboration and problem solving, identifying and sharing strategies and interventions)

- Educator well-being -> weekly supportive self-care power points
 - > Matheny HR EAP pamphlet from CONCERN
 - > Integrate self-care in-person when school resumes
- facilitate connections and reflection among students/families/staff
 - > Virtual weekly town halls
 - > Small group on-line meetings
 - > Surveys

- Support Educators

-> Imbed SEL into instruction

-> Educate staff on utilization of trauma informed procedures

CURRENT PLANNING

The Matheny School is already doing and will continue doing the following:

- Checking in regularly with families /staff - School Social Worker, School Nurse, Teachers and Therapists
- Providing educational materials on SEL (School Social Worker does weekly)
- Integrating SEL themes across the curriculum: the Curriculum Teams are moving to involve more trauma informed care throughout the school year
- Holding weekly meeting with Parent/Guardians

FUTURE PLANNING

- Developing community based partnerships (hook families up with one another)
- Establishing more substantial partnerships with outside entities and agencies
- Creating opportunities for staff and families to reflect (already doing this via weekly parent/guardian meetings)
- Educating and sensitizing staff and families to expressions of Grief/Trauma/Loss as well as Fear/Anxiety in our student population (can do some training via weekly SEL communication and/or by offering zoom meetings for parent/guardians and staff)
- Developing and implementing a more in depth SEL lessons to assist our students in building and maintaining a healthy and emotionally stable sense of every-day life.

2. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS):

- A. All students at the Matheny School are identified as requiring special education and requiring individual supports as per the IEP.

3. Wraparound Supports:

- A. The Matheny School continues to comprehensively address the academic, behavioral and social-emotional needs of its students with interventions both inside and outside of the school environment through our nurses, social worker and staff who have regular, on-going interactions with students, parent/guardians. Any identified needs are addressed with appropriate referrals made.

4. Food Service and Distribution:

- A. School meals are critical to student health and well-being and the Matheny School will ensure seamless and continuous feeding to meet our students' needs.
- B. The Matheny School will continually monitor the Department of Agriculture and Health for further guidance

5. Quality Child Care:

- A. The Matheny School involved parents/guardians in its reopening planning and considered their suggestions and needs in scheduling
- B. Childcare may be needed as schools reopen, particularly in instances where modified school schedules may increase the likelihood that families that otherwise would not utilize child care will now require it.
- C. The Matheny School has reached out to childcare providers to look into options for employees as working parents.

II. Leadership and Planning

Adjusting the school environment to ensure the health and safety of students and staff required a great deal of planning.

The Matheny School has created a **Restart Committee** to coordinate the overall reopening plan. These Committees should include district- and school-level administrators, school board members or charter trustees, local education association representatives, educators, parents, and students.

The Restart Committee has worked closely with the school's **Pandemic Response Team**, health departments, and others in municipal and county government to develop district plans that address the ten Critical Areas of Operation.

The **Pandemic Response Team** includes the following: Executive Director, Principal/Director, Certificated School Nurse, School Physician, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, School Social Worker, School Facilities Manager, Teachers and Parents.

Together both committees have addressed the following critical issues:

1. Scheduling:
 - A. Matheny's reopening plan involves the following options. Due to the ever-changing scope of the pandemic, the Matheny School proposes to open virtually for during the first marking period (with in person options available in both the home and hospital dependent upon both DOE and DOH approval). During September, the Matheny School will once again consider the recommendations of the Department of Health, CDC and NJDOE and involve stakeholders in determining the most appropriate option for implementation during marking period 2:

Continuum of Programmatic Options

Program Option	Issues/Concerns & Follow Up/Possible Solutions
100 % Virtual	<p>All parents who request 100% virtual option will receive services as per individualized agreement ratified by IEP. Virtual and remote opportunities shall be given as per availability of locus parentis and in accordance with the New Jersey Department of Education Guidelines</p>
Virtual with 1-1 in Person	<p><i>Dependent upon approval by the Office of Special Education Programs and Disputes:</i> The Matheny School shall offer 1-1 aide and 1-1 nurse assistance in the homes during virtual instruction and therapeutic times.</p> <p>This service shall be available along with virtual and remote opportunities given as per availability of locus parentis. The locus -parentis must be on premises when school services are given</p> <p>The continuation of this service is dependent upon agreement and level of comfort between parents, personnel, Matheny, sending district, Department of Health and Department of Education</p>
Virtual with in person therapies	<p><i>Dependent upon approval by the Office of Special Education Programs and Disputes:</i> The Matheny School shall offer 1-1 therapies in the homes during virtual instruction.</p> <p>This is a very rare option due to the 1-13 therapeutic caseload and is not recommended during times of high community spread. This option shall be phased in.</p> <p>The continuation of this service is dependent upon agreement and level of comfort between parents, personnel, Matheny, sending district, Department of Health and Department of Education</p>
Virtual Program (therapies and instruction) with in-person therapy	<p><i>Dependent upon approval by the Office of Special Education Programs and Disputes:</i> The Matheny School shall offer 1-1</p>

<p>consult</p>	<p>therapies as support when needed for parental and caregiver training to augment and provide better facilitation during virtual and remote opportunities</p> <p>The continuation of this service is dependent upon agreement and level of comfort between parents, personnel, Matheny, sending district, Department of Health and Department of Education</p>
<p>Hybrid on Location (with Limited Room) one room limit</p>	<p>This is not recommended due to issues with code, cleaning, educational and therapeutic best practices</p>
<p>Hybrid on Location (Starting Second Marking Period)</p>	<p>Dependent upon County Level Department of Health Approval and the customization of 8 classroom spaces and two bathrooms.</p> <p>The Matheny School shall have a hybrid model of instruction with a three-week cycle in the high school and a four-week cycle in the elementary and preschool.</p> <p>Groupings of two to three students shall be taught and receive therapies in half day cohorts to mitigate possible transference via “viral load” on assigned weeks. Differing cohorts shall attend physically on either Monday-Tuesday or Thursday-Friday Wednesdays and weekends shall be used for “deep clean exercises” All students not physically on location will continue to receive virtual and remote services</p>
<p>Hybrid at an offsite location</p>	<p>Dependent upon County Level Department of Health Approval and approval from the School Board Committee and Support from Matheny Board of Trustees to release endowment monies a new site shall be purchased.</p> <p>The Matheny School shall have a hybrid model of instruction with cycles to accommodate the maximum provision.</p>

- B. All programmatic options are consistent with N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3, that each student is provided at least four hours of instructional contact time per school day, or one continuous session of two and one-half hours for kindergarten students (such instructional may be achieved through in-person, synchronous remote, or asynchronous remote activities). Participation in remote activities may be dependent upon parent, guardian or locus parentis.
- C. The Matheny School's Scheduling decisions have been 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 family, they shall be continued to be defined as per individual IEP and continued changes in demand (for virtual and IEP Services) and supply of workforce and available space as determined by DOH and reasonable accommodations as per human resources
- D. The Matheny School polices for attendance and instructional time may require modifications for the 2020-2021 school year (as per the IEP and parental request). At any time The Matheny School shall be prepared to pivot as per executive order of the Governor of New Jersey.
- E. The Matheny School will implement a schedule for the 2020-2021 school year that includes in-person instruction in some capacity and provides public school facilities (as per our school calendar) for at least 180 days in accordance with N.J.S.A 18A:7F-9.

2. Staffing:

- A. Regardless of the environment, The Matheny School will, clearly communicate with teachers regarding expectations and support for student learning.
- B. School reopening plans and decision-making throughout the school year will consider unique needs of each staff member, such as access to technology, social and emotional health, and child-care concerns.
- C. Staff roles will also have to expand to accommodate new health and safety regulations.
- D. The Matheny School will consider leveraging staff to monitor student movement, hallway traffic, and maintain safety according to guidelines. Instructional and non-instructional staff schedules may also include designated time to support school building logistics required to maintain health and safety requirements.

3. Athletics:

- A. The Matheny School does not do regular athletics as we are a APPSD School

III. Policy and Funding

1. Fiscal Challenges:

- A. The COVID-19 pandemic has created a variety of fiscal challenges related to the delivery of instruction and related services to students. Readyng facilities, purchasing supplies, and transporting and feeding students will look drastically different in the upcoming school year than in past years. Policy and funding considerations include:

- a. Purchasing: The Matheny School will likely need to purchase items not needed in the past (e.g., personal protective equipment or cleaning supplies) and experience increased demand for previously purchased goods and services.
- b. The Matheny School shall collaborate to create new arrangements that will allow them to purchase items at a lower cost by either purchasing through an established State contract or through a cooperative purchasing consortium.

2. Use of Reserve Accounts, Transfers, and Cash-flow:

- A. To the greatest extent possible, The Matheny School will make expenditures from various accounts or over-budgeted line items to meet unanticipated costs and to manage their cash flow.

- B. Additionally, The Matheny School will be mindful that certain budget actions require the Commissioner’s approval. These requirements are statutory and cannot be waived by the NJDOE, and districts should not presume that such approval will be automatic.

3. Costs and Contracting:

- A. The Matheny School may participate in the federal E-rate program, which provides schools and libraries with funding support for high-speed broadband connectivity and internal connections, to the extent possible.
- B. The Matheny School, with the encouragement of the NJDOE, will use cooperative contracts available from the State of New Jersey, New Jersey School Boards Association, County Cooperative Contracts, and County Educational Services Commissions to procure technology and connectivity services.

4. To ease the burden on schools, the NJDOE plans to leverage existing and pending federal and state legislation, regulations, and guidance to predict the potential impact on districts and provide targeted assistance. At the direction of the leadership and approval from the school board committee, The Matheny School may avail itself of all possible resources that may be:

- A. Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund – The federal “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security” (CARES) Act established the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund to provide direct money to school districts and provide funding to support areas impacted by COVID-19. Under the law, \$310.4 million has been allocated to New Jersey, the majority of which will in turn be provided to school districts through sub-grants.
- B. Federal Emergency Management Agency – Public Assistance – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers the Public Assistance

program, which reimburses 75 percent of eligible expenses that are a direct result of the declared emergency (in this case, the COVID-19 outbreak). Districts can apply for assistance through the website maintained by the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management. While there is currently no deadline, the NJDOE encourages districts to apply as soon as possible.

- C. State School Aid – In the wake of the COVID-19 public health emergency, State revenues have declined precipitously. This revenue loss necessitated modifying the State school aid proposal for the upcoming school year that had been released on February 27, 2020, but the total amount appropriated for K-12 State aid is essentially unchanged from the 2019-2020 school year. While districts should use the most recent State aid figures for planning purposes, that information is not final, but represents a proposal that could be modified by the Legislature when it considers the extended FY20 budget, which must be adopted by July 1, 2020 and the FY21 State budget, which must be adopted by September 30, 2020. The NJDOE will provide more detailed accounting guidance after the appropriations act is adopted.

IV. Continuity of Learning

Ensuring continuity of learning is critically important during this time of great stress for families, educators, and students. The degree to which districts will be able to return students to brick and mortar education remains uncertain. The NJDOE anticipates that many students likely made less than one full year of academic growth during the 2019-2020 school year. The move to a fully virtual learning environment happened quickly and created significant challenges for staff and students, particularly students already considered at-risk prior to the pandemic. Districts should work closely with their stakeholders to ensure decisions are made collaboratively and transparently and prioritize safely returning students who are most in need of in-person instruction. This may include, but is not limited to, students with disabilities, English language learners (ELL), homeless youth, and low-income students.

With these caveats in mind, the NJDOE recommends districts focus on the following areas when crafting their reopening plans to ensure continuity of learning:

1. Ensuring the Delivery of Special Education and Related Services to Students with Disabilities:
 - A. The Matheny School shall continue to meet their obligations to students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible, any significant changes in program will be shared with sending districts and discussed with changes to the IEP.
 - B. Specific strategies and considerations for students with disabilities will be critical points of discussion for every return-to-school scenario at the Matheny School.
 - C. The Matheny School will continue to monitor the NJDOE updates for any additional guidance for school districts and receiving schools with any additional guidance from the United States Department of Education (USDE) on implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

2. Technology and Connectivity:
 - A. The Matheny School strives to ensure that every student has access to a device and internet connectivity.
 - B. At the completion of the technology inventory, devices shall be ordered to ensure that each student has access to an iPad.
 - C. The Matheny School is upgrading its Wifi capability to better facilitate virtual instruction and tele-therapy. At this moment in time we have 4 data plan iPads and three hotspots rotating through two hospital wings. If the hospital increases the availability of the Locus Parentis we shall increase the number of Data plan iPads and hotspots available to both hospital units. We have also provided equipment to students at home.
 - D. With assistive technology and manipulatives we are moving away from shared equipment and towards individualized equipment.
 - E. The Matheny School continues to prioritize the provision of technology as specified in “C” above.

3. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments:

- A. In planning curriculum, instruction, and assessment for reopening, The Matheny School will focus on building staff capacity 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). The Matheny School will continue to develop plans that are innovative, cultivate a clear sense of shared purpose and goals, encourage collaboration among educators, and foster an effective partnership approach with students' family members and caregivers.
- B. Professional Learning – The Matheny School will continue providing, as it always has, professional learning that will better equip leaders, staff, substitutes, students, and parents/caregivers 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. Most professional development has moved to the Zoom Platform
- C. Career and Technical Education (CTE) – The Matheny School as an APSSD does not have a CTE Program, It does however have a Structured Learning Experience program and have a CBI program. Although it is expected that these programs will have limited out of school locations during the next school year our SLE team is looking into maximizing safe options.

Closing: Mapping the Road Back for education at the Matheny School requires a collaborative, comprehensive, and careful approach to reopening the school as well as school flexibility to pivot should health conditions change. Still, parents, students, and educators are resilient and with the guidance offered by our school community we shall be able to successfully develop and refine plans that allow us to reopen our school in a way that protects students' and educators' and their families' physical health while providing high-quality education and therapies.