



Back to School In-Person Return Plan

2021-2022
School Year



HICKSVILLE
Public Schools

Burns Avenue Elementary Dutch Lane Elementary East Street Elementary
Fork Lane Elementary Lee Avenue Elementary Old Country Road Elementary
Woodland Elementary Hicksville Middle School Hicksville High School

200 Division Avenue, Hicksville, NY 11801



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Message from the Superintendent Marianne Litzman

Dear School Community,

One thing the emergence of a global pandemic has made abundantly clear to all of us is the necessity to traverse a wide chasm of constant change.

Our opening of school this September will not be where we ended up last June. The chasm of change driven by the Pandemic widened over the summer. One thing we have learned and know for certain is that whatever we do will not satisfy all parties. However, we have heard all voices who shared their thoughts with us, either in person at public meetings, online during live streamed meetings, in letters sent to me and the Board of Education and in answering a survey. All voices are important and we are grateful for the opportunity to hear all sides.

Our Board of Education has accepted and approved the District Opening Plan for the full return of students on **September 1, 2021**. The plan was based upon guidance from the Center for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the New York State Education Department, and the Nassau County Department of Health and soon to come directives from Governor Hochul.

The District Opening Plan is a living document as we know we will have to react to changes in the Pandemic which are sure to come; could be better, could be worse. As a living document, we will return to discuss the plan as the landscape changes. Our priority is the safe return of all students. We will open our school house doors on September 1, 2021 to all students for in-person instruction. We are planning for a spectacular September.

Please see highlights of the plan below:

- Full In-Person Instruction for all students September 1, 2021
- All buildings open with regular daily schedule
- Universal masking indoors for all students and staff
- Mask breaks will be required
- Mask required on school buses
- No masks required outdoors
- Social distancing of 3 feet in all buildings
- No completion of health app or daily temperature taking
- Visitors will complete a health screening, have temperature taken and mask required
- COVID desk shields have been removed
- Contact tracing protocols remain in place
- Quarantined students will have access to remote, asynchronous learning
- All breakfast and lunch meals are free for all students
- Families should still complete free and reduced lunch applications
- Elementary playgrounds will be open for student use



- Athletics is returning to usual schedule
- No field trips for September
- Public events in September to be evaluated
- All existing 504 Plans remain in effect
- A Parent/Guardian with a health concern for their child regarding return to school may write a letter with documentation from the child's healthcare provider either to the building principal or Ms. Mishiev. School personnel will contact each parent/guardian for next steps
- All usual extra-curricular activities will be available to students
- Building principals will provide information particular to their school for Back to School
- The full opening plan follows

Should you have further questions about your child's school, day, please call your building principal.

We are all looking forward to welcoming your children back to school in a safe manner but more importantly with our hearts as our students learn best in school, with their teachers and administrators.

I am grateful for the thoughts shared with us by many members of our school community and look forward, walking together in gratitude and unity, supporting each other and our children.

I wish to thank the Board of Education for countless hours of deep thought and contributions in considering the District Opening Plan. We are all in this together and will continue to work together as we provide support for all our children who are trying to grow up in a Pandemic and will look to adults to help them navigate through difficult times. I am looking forward with hope and believe we shall overcome and provide an education for children in meeting their potential.

Sincerely yours,

Marianne Litzman
Superintendent of Schools



Communication/Family and Community Engagement

The Hicksville Public School District continues its commitment to effective communications with its parents, students and staff as we start the 2021-2022 school year. The Public Information Office (PIO) works closely with the Superintendent of Schools as well as the Board of Education in facilitating all aspects of communications as we prepare for an in-person return to school. These aspects include (English and Spanish):

- Letters to parents and staff
- Website postings and updates
- Emails, SMS text messages, and robocalls to school community through the District’s notification system
- Emails to staff dispensed through the Personnel, Facilities, and building level offices
- Social media posts
- News releases to the local weekly and online community publications
- Posters and signage district-wide

The District will be holding special meetings of the Board of Education in August to keep all community stakeholders informed of this plan and what school will look like returning in September. The District and the Board of Education also supports the Communications Advisory Committee which includes school community stakeholders to further strengthen our home-school partnership.

We will also continue to remind students of health and safety protocols with colorful visual posters and signage. To reduce anxieties students may feel about returning to in-person learning, the PIO will utilize the “Be a Hicksville Superhero” character and graphics campaign in all school buildings throughout the district. This campaign will include posters for school buildings and various collateral pieces to communicate hand washing, social distancing, and the proper wearing of masks.

Here are examples of the “Be a Hicksville Superhero” characters and posters







In summary, Hicksville Public Schools recognizes that regular and frequent two-way communication is an essential element of effective family and community engagement. The PIO will continue to be deeply involved in the communication process with our stakeholders as our schools reopen for in-person learning, staying flexible and available to address new issues and concerns promptly using all available avenues of communication and tools.



Health and Safety

All COVID 19 Pandemic Health and Safety guidelines, protocols and requirements set forth by the CDC, NYS Department of Health, Nassau County Department of Health and the New York State Education Department will be closely followed and adhered to by all schools and buildings within Hicksville Public Schools.

Healthy Hygiene

Practices will be taught and re-taught in all schools by building administration and teachers. A Parent/Student handbook and Staff Handbook will be published by the District in coordination with the District's Communication Advisory Committee and the Public Information Office. Adequate supplies to allow for frequent hand hygiene will be provided through the District Facility Office. Building administrators will convey the importance of this task to staff upon return from the summer break.

The Public Information Office will provide posters and informational signage to post in all schools. Building administrators will provide daily messages in their morning announcements to remind students and staff to:

- Stay home if they feel sick.
- Cover their nose and mouth with an acceptable face covering
- Properly store and, when necessary, discard PPE.
- Adhere to social distancing instructions.
- Report symptoms of, or exposure to, COVID-19.
- Follow hand hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection guidelines.
- Follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

Buildings will display signage and posters at entrances, restrooms, cafeterias, classrooms, administrative offices, auditoriums and custodial areas to remind students and staff to wear masks, social distance, and observe recommendations for hand washing and good hygiene. Written protocols will emphasize these procedures. Floor decals will define social distancing and directional arrows will facilitate foot traffic (sample exhibit 1).

HICKSVILLE COMETS

SOCIAL DISTANCING DECALS

Please keep in mind that the health and safety of our employees, students and those around us is our top priority, which is why we are continuing to adhere to all COVID-19 workplace regulations and guidelines from local and national government authorities.

NON-SLIP REMOVABLE VINYL DECALS

Our 7mm Non-Slip Removable Vinyl Decal is a great solution for your floors, walls, and windows. This material can be easily installed on a variety of interior and exterior surfaces, while being easily removed with minimal damage. It works on tile, wood, metal, concrete, commercial carpet and painted surfaces. It is ideal for wall and floor graphics, painted cinderblock, locker rooms, break areas and entryways within your facilities.

- Easy to Self-Install
- Clean Only with Non-Abrasive and Non-Solvent Solutions
- Last 6-12 months depending on local conditions

Size	CIRCLES		RECTANGLES				ARROWS
	12	16	10 X 14	12 X 18	18 X 24	36 X 24	
Qty per sheet	32	18	27	14	10	6	40

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FULL SHEETS	QUANTITY 1-4	\$299	QUANTITY 5-24	\$269	QUANTITY 25-99	\$239	QUANTITY 100+	\$199
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As recommended by the District-Wide Safety Committee, building visits by vendors, guests, contractors and guardians are by appointment only. Parents will use drop boxes located outside the building to drop off student belongings. All visitors entering the building will be required to complete a health screening and temperature check must maintain 3 feet of social distancing and wear a mask. Copies of the District's protocol will be sent to families and staff and made available at all buildings.

Hand Hygiene

Students and staff will practice good hand hygiene to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. The District will plan time in the school day schedule to allow for hand hygiene.

Hand hygiene will include:

Alcohol based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol will be provided throughout District buildings. Touchless hand sanitizing stations will be available as follows: One at the entrance to each elementary school, two at the Middle School (4th Street Entrance and Main Entrance), three at the High School (Main Entrance, Athletic Wing, Student Entrance), and one in each health office (Exhibit 2). On order are wall-mounted hand sanitizing dispensers for each classroom at all buildings. Alcohol based hand sanitizers are flammable, and will not be installed in hallways or available on school busses or any other area prohibited by FCNYS 2020 Section 5705.5.

Bathroom hand dryers have been disconnected and replaced with touch free paper towel dispensers. Soap and paper towels are available in elementary classrooms next to the classroom sink. Custodial staff will ensure that sanitizing supplies are replenished as needed.



Exhibit 2

Written protocols for sanitizing and disinfecting that follow Department of Health and CDC Guidelines have been provided to custodial staff.

Face Coverings

All students and staff will be required to wear face coverings on the school bus and throughout the school building and school day. Face covering breaks will be allowed during instruction when students are seated and socially distanced. Face covering breaks will be supervised by the adult in charge. Duration of face covering breaks will be coordinated district-wide and communicated to students in the handbook and during instruction. Face coverings are required when moving about the building. Face coverings will be removed for eating with students socially distanced. Adherence to face covering requirements will be supervised by the adult in charge in all settings. Masking will not be required outdoors.

Students and staff are encouraged to wear their own mask. The District will maintain an adequate supply of child and adult sized masks, should a student, staff member or visitor forget their mask. Similarly, a mask will be provided for any student prior to boarding the bus, if necessary. Currently, the District has 70,000 child size masks, 60,000 adult sized masks, and 11,000 pairs of gloves in stock. Additional supplies are on order. The Director of Facilities works closely with the District COVID Coordinator to insure there are ample quantities of PPE equipment for all District health professionals.

**Group Size**

With 3 foot distancing – classrooms will return to the usual number of desks during pre-COVID times.

There may be situations at the elementary level that may necessitate using other instructional spaces such as the all purpose rooms and gymnasiums. Individual building principals will communicate student assignments to parents later in August.

Building principals will establish designated areas for student drop-off and pick-up, limiting contact and entry of parents/ guardians into the building, limiting large group contact to the greatest extent possible.

Students will maintain social distancing when moving through the hallways. Signs on floors and walls will indicate distancing.

Where possible in-school movement will be reduced by keeping students within a defined area or classroom. This may include the necessity of eating lunch at student desks within a classroom at the elementary level and a combination of socially distanced seating in the secondary cafeterias and use of classrooms if necessary.

Special area teachers (e.g., music, art, physical education) may go to individual classrooms versus rotating all students through a shared space. Whenever possible, physical education and music classes will be held outside with social distancing.

Use of the restrooms will be staggered, allowing for social distancing. Bathrooms may be monitored by staff to ensure social distancing, that it is clean, and students are washing hands after use.

Individual student belongings will be kept separately by their desks. There will be no sharing of supplies.

Locker assignments at the secondary level will be minimized. Secondary principals will communicate the final plan for locker use later in August.

Elementary playgrounds will be open for student use during recess with proper safeguards in place. Use of the playground may be staggered to ensure social distancing.



COVID Closure for Cleaning and Disinfecting

If there is a report of a COVID positive case in school, the school district will notify the Nassau County Department of Health, and in accordance with Nassau County DOH and CDC cleaning and disinfecting procedures, the school district will follow the recommendations and guidance.

Depending upon when the case is reported and depending upon the severity of the outbreak, schools may close for 24-48 hours for cleaning and disinfection.

Remote learning will be done on the days when schools are closed in the case of an outbreak.

The school district will follow the CDC guidance for all cleaning and disinfecting, including the products that may be used.

Contact Tracing, Close Contacts and Quarantine Overview

The health and safety of our entire school community is a top priority. The use of masks will allow all of our students to return to in person instruction and participate in more activities safely.

The CDC has advised a change in the quarantine rule for K-12 students.

Guidance with **Exception:** In the **K–12 indoor classroom** setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

With correct and consistent use of masks we reduce the interruption of instruction due to exposure to COVID and other respiratory illnesses that decreased last year, such as flu, and colds.

Time spent at home due to illness will be reduced giving students and staff more consistent instruction.

Fully vaccinated staff and students are no longer required to quarantine following a COVID exposure.

The CDC has recommended that fully vaccinated staff and students be tested between day 3-5 following their exposure to COVID.

Both staff and students should stay home when sick and be tested.

We will continue to follow the NYS DOH and CDC recommendations for returning to school following illness.

Current protocols will be monitored and adjusted if transmission rates change, or upon the recommendation of the Department of Health.

COVID testing will be offered weekly to staff and students.

Information about vaccine resources will be made available to staff and students/parents who are eligible.

Contact Tracing

Hicksville School District will work in collaboration with the Nassau County Department of Health to identify students and staff who may need to quarantine following exposure to a COVID positive case. Confidentiality will be maintained.

The person who is positive is referred to as the case.



The people the case has been in contact with are considered the contacts.

Students or staff who have not directly been in contact with the positive case are considered contacts of a contact and will not be asked to quarantine.

Proper utilization of contact tracing will reduce the spread of COVID.

Using the CDC guidelines for identifying a close contact.

The district shall notify students (including the parent /guardian) and staff who are considered a close contact and ask them to quarantine for 10 days. They will be given the list of COVID symptoms to watch for, resources for referral to healthcare and testing. They will be encouraged to call their healthcare provider for further guidance. Those students and staff shall initiate remote instruction.

At the conclusion of the isolation of the positive case and the quarantine period of their contacts, they may return to school.

The COVID positive case must be 10 days after the start of symptoms AND fever free for 3 days (72 hours) without the use of fever reducing medications AND have resolution of symptoms for 3 days (72 hours) AND have a note from a healthcare provider allowing them to return to school.

The contacts may return after the period of quarantine AND have been fever free for the previous 3 days without the use of fever reducing medications AND are feeling well and fever free upon entrance to school.

Return to school will be in collaboration with Nassau County DOH and the school medical director, following any current guidelines that are established.

The school buildings shall be cleaned and sanitized as per the CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting.

Many of the nursing staff have taken the contact tracing class through Johns Hopkins School of Public Health.

COVID 19 Coordinators

Each school building will designate a school nurse as the building COVID 19 coordinator. The District head nurse will be the District-wide COVID 19 Coordinator.

Each school nurse along with the District Head Nurse has identified an isolation area for sick students and staff.

Management of Sick Individuals

The following protocols are in place:

When students or staff present to the nurse's office, they will be triaged and assessed by the school nurse.

If no fever and no symptoms of COVID, then the nurse will treat and proceed as she normally would.

If the person is presenting with fever &/or symptoms of COVID, that person will be immediately isolated, and parent /guardian notified to pick up the child as soon as possible.

When the person arrives for the student, they will wait outside the building, show ID, sign out the child and then the student will be escorted to the person outside.

Resources for care will be given to the person accompanying the student, as well as criteria for return to school.

**Criteria for return to school.**

If tested for COVID, may NOT return to school, until results are provided to the school.

If COVID negative, the student must be 24 hours fever free without the use of fever reducing medications, and if antibiotics prescribed, must have received the first 24 hours of doses, and a note from a healthcare provider with diagnosis allowing them to return to school. The note may be reviewed by Dr. Friedman, district medical director, PRIOR to return to school.

If COVID Positive, the student may return to school 10 days after the start of symptoms AND 3 days/72 hours fever free without the use of fever reducing medications AND 3 days of resolution of symptoms AND note from healthcare providers allowing return to school. This may be reviewed by Dr Friedman, district medical director.

COVID Positive Protocol

Once a student or staff member reports a positive COVID result,

1. Immediately notify the COVID Coordinator for the district, Gail Hunker, at ghunker@hicksvillepublicschools.org or 516-733-2149.
2. The COVID contact will notify the Nassau County DOH and inform administration.
3. After receiving guidance from the Nassau DOH, contact the students or staff who have been in contact with the positive case.
4. Advise the students, parents, guardians and staff members in contact with the case to advise 10 day quarantine.
5. Those involved initiate remote learning
6. After completing the required quarantine, those students and staff may return to school if they are feeling well, have not had a fever or symptoms of COVID, pass the health questionnaire and temperature check.
7. The positive case may return to school 10 days after the start of symptoms AND are fever free for 3 days/72 hour without the use of fever reducing medications, AND 3 days of resolution of symptoms AND healthcare provider note allowing return to school.
8. ANY student or staff member who has been tested for COVID MAY NOT return to school, until the results have been received and documentation provided to the school.
9. All decisions regarding return to school will be made in conjunction with the Nassau DOH and Dr Friedman.



Child Nutrition

The District will continue to provide students access to a healthy breakfast and lunch each school day. Breakfast and lunch will be in compliance with USDA/Child Nutrition guidelines for a complete meal. Meals will be prepared in compliance with all health and safety guidelines and USDA / Child Nutrition guidelines for a complete breakfast and lunch meal. Whitsons Food Service staff has been trained in food safety and sanitizing protocols.

Elementary students will use classroom sinks to wash their hands before meal service. Secondary students will use a combination of bathroom sinks and/or hand sanitizers before meal service.

In District students will access a grab and go breakfast upon arrival to be eaten in the classroom. Elementary and Middle School students will be provided lunch to be eaten in the cafeteria or classrooms. High School students will have access to the cafeteria where service will be socially distanced to the extent practicable. Cafeteria equipment, including tables and chairs will be sanitized in between periods. The sharing of food and/or beverages is discouraged. Whitsons will continue to prepare individual meals for students identified with allergies.

Like last year, breakfast and lunch meals are free for all students. This does not include a la carte purchases such as snacks and water. However, families are urged to complete a Free and Reduced Meal application sent to families in August each year and also available on the District's website and at each building. Applications are available in Spanish. Personnel are always available to assist in the application process. **All information on the application is confidential, i.e. not shared with any other governmental agency, and students who receive benefits cannot be identified.** Applications can be submitted for consideration at any time throughout the year.

To reduce the exchange of money, families are strongly encouraged to use My School Bucks for a la carte purchases, the District's pre-payment plan for meal service. Information on this program will be available on the District's website in September.



Transportation

The District has received the following assurances from its transportation provider:

Bus drivers and attendants will complete a daily health assessment and be temperature checked upon reporting to work. Any employee with a temperature of 100.0 or greater will not be permitted to work.

All bus drivers, attendants and monitors are required to wear masks.

The District's contract provider will provide their employees Personal Protective Equipment, including masks to be worn at all times. Drivers, attendants, and monitors have been trained on the proper use of PPE. Drivers will receive periodic refreshers on the use of PPE.

Students from the same family will be seated together. Students and staff will be trained and wear masks and social distance on the bus to the extent practicable. Students must wear a mask when entering the bus, while on the bus, and when exiting the bus. Students with disabilities will not be denied transportation should they be unable to wear a mask. Masks will be provided for students who forget to bring their own. As required, students will be trained and periodically retrained on the proper use of PPE, social distancing and the signs and symptoms of COVID 19.

To increase ventilation and air flow, passenger windows will be open 1 inch from the top as well as the roof hatch on weather permitting days.

All buses and vans will be cleaned and disinfected daily. High touch surfaces, for example, handrails, will be wiped down after each morning and afternoon run. Due to combustibility, hand sanitizer is prohibited on buses, however, hand sanitizer will be provided at the dispatch office, garages, and lunch rooms.

All students who qualify for transportation and attend in-district or private, parochial or special education programs will be offered transportation. Parents are strongly encouraged to consider alternate means of transportation to reduce density on buses if they are able to do so.



Social Emotional Well-Being

All district-wide and building-level comprehensive developmental school counseling program plans which were developed under the direction of the district's Supervisor of Guidance K-12 and certified school counselors were reviewed and updated to meet the current needs of students. Additional social workers have been hired to work with students. A Mental Health and Wellness Coalition composed of families, students, school district leaders, community-based service providers, teachers, certified school counselors, and other pupil personnel service providers including school social workers and psychologists will inform the comprehensive developmental school counseling program plan. The first meeting of the Coalition will be in September. An agenda item is Covid-19 and the impact on the school community. The discussion will include the Stress Diathesis Model which suggests that a person's response to the difficult parts of life (Covid-19) are shaped by three factors:

- Intensity of the Challenge - Discuss and describe the intensity of the Covid challenge so far
- Pre-existing vulnerabilities - Have you seen any pre-existing vulnerabilities in students (or adults) which may define their emotional response to Covid including sleep difficulties, etc.
- Compensatory resources that are available to parents, staff and students



Supporting Students and Staff

One of the biggest priorities as we navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic is the need to create supportive, responsive learning climates that will ensure students can thrive emotionally when they return to schools. This will involve tremendous teamwork. One of the most important things we can do at this time is to care for our students and families.

When we entered the pandemic, counselors, psychologists, social workers, teachers and administrators reached out and contacted every student and family to check in on their mental and emotional well-being. These individual connections will help us as we look to reopen schools. School counselors play a significant role in improving student achievement and serve as student and systems advocates. Through a comprehensive school counseling program of developmental, preventive, remedial, and responsive services, school counselors address academic development, career development, and the personal/social development of students.

As indicated in the **Hicksville Comprehensive School Counseling Plan K-12** https://hs.hicksvillepublicschools.org/high_school/guidance_department/guidance_plan, school counselors coordinate services with social workers and psychologists. The standard for personal/social development is to provide a foundation for personal and social growth as the students' progress through school and into their adult life. "Personal/social development includes the acquisition of skills, attitudes and knowledge that help students understand and respect self and others, acquire effective interpersonal skills, understand safety and survival skills, and develop into contributing members of our society." Hicksville's school counseling program:

- Reaches every student
- Is comprehensive in scope
- Is preventative in design
- Is developmental in nature
- Is an integral part of the educational program for student success
- Is conducted in collaboration with all stakeholders
- Uses data to drive program decisions
- Monitors student progress

School counselors, social workers and psychologists district-wide completed the following two day trainings in preparation for the reopening of schools in September:

Day 1: Creating Suicide Safety in Schools (CSSS): This workshop empowered the Hicksville mental health support staff to establish realistic short-term plans for effective suicide prevention and response planning. All participants spent time planning and problem-solving for specific actions needed for suicide-safer schools. The workshop's format included didactic presentations coupled with small workgroup discussions, checklists, group planning documents, and exposure to free and low-cost resources that meet best practice recommendations and/or evidence-based practice standards. Creating Suicide Safety in Schools incorporates key aspects of the Social-Ecological Prevention Model, public health perspectives, and recommendations for school-based suicide



prevention practices. All participants were provided with a resource binder created by the Suicide Prevention Center of New York.

DAY 2: Lifelines Postvention-Responding to Suicide and Traumatic Death. This training assisted school crisis teams review current procedures for suicide and other traumatic deaths in the school community. The strategies presented were designed to respect the critical role of the school in the recovery process and provide support, control, and structure to maintain order while assisting in the grieving process of school community members. The workshop was based on the Lifelines Postvention Model which is on the National Best Practices Registry of the Suicide Prevention Resource Center and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Practical templates and step-by-step guidelines were presented in the context of foundational theories such as: grief concerns of children and teens, contagion prevention and crisis intervention. This theoretical background prepared crisis teams to respond to the broad variety of needs that arise as a result of tragic events. Participants were able to:

- Describe the competent community model of response to traumatic death in the school community.
- Clarify the role of the school administrator in postvention.
- Outline the roles and responsibilities of the crisis team.
- Clearly define the roles of other members of the school community including: teachers, parents, students and community providers.
- Customize templates and tools to meet the unique needs of their school
- Develop a process for responding compassionately and appropriately when faced with the death of a student.

A draft of the Hicksville Public Schools Crisis Safety Plan was reviewed and updated by District-wide psychologists, social workers and school counselors.

Mindfulness: Since the 2017/2018 school year, secondary school counselors, psychologists and social workers were trained in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). The course was modeled after the MBSR program, founded in 1979 by Jon Kabat-Zinn at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center and was based on a practice known as mindfulness, a way in which to observe one's inner experiences and to intentionally work with the difficulties encountered in life rather than avoiding them. The cultivation of attention, awareness, acceptance, and compassion, key elements of mindfulness, have been shown to promote optimal health in mind, body and relationships.

MBSR has a foundation of over 35 years of clinical research exploring the effectiveness of Mindfulness and the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Program. Some of the many positive benefits associated with its practice include:

- Better ability to cope with stressful situations
- More positive states of mind
- Reduced anxiety and emotional distress
- Increased ability to relax
- Reduced chronic pain
- Lowered blood pressure
- Better quality of life

In addition, mindfulness practice has been demonstrated to positively influence:



- Overall brain function including attention and emotional reactivity.
- The nervous system
- Stress hormones
- The immune system
- Health behaviors, including eating, sleeping and substance use.

Secondary physical education teachers were trained in mindfulness and developed 5 session lessons and incorporated the practice in their physical education classrooms. Middle school counselors, social workers and psychologists provided push-in lessons that focused on social-emotional learning lessons and mindfulness lessons. This practice will continue into the 2021/2022 school year. School counselors, social workers and psychologists will also continue to use the techniques learned in their trainings to continue to support their students.

All district-wide school counselors, social workers and psychologists will participate in trainings in MBSR techniques during the 2021/2022 school year.

ENL/Bilingual Parent & Student University: The goal of the ENL/Bilingual Parent & Student University is to meet jointly with all ELLs and their parents and siblings in order to strengthen the home-school connection for an historically at-risk population. The PSU consists of a series of three to four workshops throughout the school year, the common goal of which focuses on having ELL parents understand the “nut and bolts” structure of an American school system, from report cards to working with guidance counselors to interacting with teachers and administration. Materials and presentations are provided in several languages that represent our largest ELL subgroups. An outgrowth of the PSU was the creation of evening English language classes for parents. As we navigate through the Covid-19 pandemic, we will continue to virtually meet with parents and students. The ENL/Bilingual Parent & Student University will resume in person if all the restrictions are lifted.

Elementary Guidance: The goal of the elementary guidance program is to incorporate social-emotional learning, mindfulness and teach coping skills in the classroom. This program creates a supportive forum for students to talk about feelings, express concerns, share ideas, and problem solve. Throughout the past school year, topics that were taught in the classroom included empathy, bullying prevention, kindness, self-esteem, friendship, integrity, and managing emotions. The elementary school counselor was also trained in the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, which was introduced as a district-wide initiative this past school year. The Olweus Program is designed to improve peer relations and make schools safer, more positive places for students to learn and develop.

The elementary counselor also created a guidance website for each of the seven elementary schools and incorporated the guidance program into remote online learning. The counselor created weekly health lessons for all elementary students which included social and emotional topics with interactive activities that students could do with their parents. These lessons incorporated components of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. The counselor collaborated with teachers, psychologists and social workers and contacted parents and students who were struggling. Resources for social-emotional activities and mindfulness activities were provided on the counselor’s website for each of the seven elementary schools.

A second elementary guidance counselor has been hired for the new school year to support this important work.



<https://sites.google.com/hicksvillepublicschools.org/hpselemguidance/home>

K-5 Olweus

The Olweus program engages students in social and emotional as well as cognitive learning in the classroom. The online manuals provide ideas and topics for lesson plans to discuss bullying-related topics as well as peer relations, communications, promoting assistance, respecting differences, understanding visible and invisible disabilities, and building a positive classroom climate.

School counselors, psychologists and social workers have compiled some wonderful resources on our school website, specifically mental health resources. Links to Community and Mental Health Resources, Long Island Counseling Centers, and guide from New York State Office of Mental Health that focuses on talking to children about COVID-19 -it's a parent resource that provides tips in 6 different languages, including Spanish. The link to Support Services provides the email address of the elementary psychologists and social workers in each building.

NYSED Mental Health Resources

[Benefits.gov: Finding the Right Help During the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)

[LI Counseling Centers Hospitals Hotlines](#)

[NYS Office of Mental Health Managing Stress during COVID \(Spanish\)](#)

[#WeThriveInside: Helping Kids Through COVID-19 and Beyond](#)

[LI Food Pantry Flyer](#)

[Food Distribution Centers](#)

[Mental Health Resources for Children and Families](#)

[Nassau County Mental Health Help Line: 516-277-8255 \(TALK\)](#)

[Nassau County Mobile Crisis Team Website](#)

Start with Hello

Start with Hello Week is run through the Sandy Hook Promise, a national non-profit organization founded and led by several family members whose loved ones were killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 14, 2012. *Start With Hello* promotes connectedness, kindness, and inclusion among students. This program teaches students to make a difference among their peers and raises awareness to help them identify students who are showing signs of social isolation. It is a fun, easy, & impactful way to create an environment that values each individual at the school. "Start with Hello" teaches students the skills they need to reach out and include those who are in need. This program teaches students in grades 6– 12 to help their peers in a fun and meaningful way.



They take small but powerful actions to promote inclusion and to support students who are showing signs of loneliness or social isolation.

High School Assembly Programs

August 25

Freshman Orientation - small group streaming assemblies

State of me - Personal Identity & Understanding Others

- Evaluate and embrace their own unique talents and abilities.
- Encourage students to try new things and make new friends.
- Motivate them to embrace the differences in others and help them feel accepted.

STATE OF ME will help students recognize, embrace, and fire up the possibilities inside them to excel and reach their potential. They will seek to value the differences in those around them. We can let those differences divide and separate us or we can respect each other, work together and use those unique differences to make this world a better place to be.

October 13 - Schoolwide Streaming Assembly

Go Viral - Kindness-Social Media-Digital Citizenship

GO VIRAL challenges students to make “real” connections. Students will be motivated to be “real” within the social media world. They’ll be challenged to post more encouraging and comforting comments. They’ll be inspired to seek out face to face encounters and go viral with kind words and a smile. They’ll be given the tools needed to lift one another up and champion each other’s accomplishments.

GO VIRAL will motivate students to build authentic relationships. Students will be inspired to improve themselves and look for the value in others. They will begin to establish an identity that others will look up to, and will work hard to become a role model for others to follow. GO VIRAL – think about it - Imagine what the world could be like if we can go viral with our positive actions and attitudes. Let’s work together to make our positivity not only be contagious but to GO VIRAL!



Freshman Orientation

Here is a sample program for a freshman who attends orientation on the 25th:

SESSION	GROUP 1 - MOLOF
Introduction: 9:05-9:10 Auditorium	Introduction: 9:05-9:10 Auditorium
1. 9:15-9:50	Guidance - 232-233
2. 9:55-10:30	Activities - Cafe B
3. 10:35-11:10	Tour
4. 11:15-11:50	Lunch - Patio
5. 11:55-12:35	Code of Conduct - Auditorium
6. 12:30-1:05	Campel Productions

Students will be grouped by counselor in 8 groups and follow a rotation.

For any grade 10 student who was exclusively remote last year, we will be offering, by invitation only, a similar program that includes a tour and assembly.



Hicksville Middle School

Students at the Middle School will be welcomed back to an extended advisory period as an orientation during the first two days of school. Students will begin each day with more than 2 hours devoted to the acclimation and reacclimation process.

Over the two days there will be six sessions that will address student needs. The sessions will consist of building tours, teacher introductions and ice breaker activities for students to get to know their classmates, as well as two assemblies where administrators will introduce themselves and familiarize students with the administrative team, the rules and expectations for the building. Students will be assigned lockers, receive agendas, and have ample time to meet their teachers and their peers. There will be time for students to ask questions and get acclimated to the building and their teachers.

Advisory periods will also be used to initiate the “Start With Hello” program which promotes inclusion and teaches students to create an environment that values each and every individual at the school while encouraging students to make connections with their peers in a fun and meaningful way.

**September 1 & 2 Modified Schedule*
7:35 to 7:50 H*O*M*E Base (Check in)**

September 1, 2021

Times	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
8:00 to 8:30	Admin Presentation	Building Tour	Welcome/Agendas
8:40 to 9:10	Welcome/Agendas	Admin Presentation	Building Tour
9:20 to 9:50	Building Tour	Welcome/Agendas	Admin Presentation

September 2, 2021

Times	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
8:00 to 8:30	Admin Q & A	Start w/Hello/	lockers
8:40 to 9:10	lockers	Admin Q & A	Start w/ Hello/Help
9:20 to 9:50	Start w/ Hello Help	lockers	Admin Q & A



September 1 & 2

Period	Duration
1	9:53-10:15
2	10:18-10:40
3	10:43-11:05
4	11:08-11:41
5	11:44-12:17
6	12:20-12:53
7	12:56-1:29
8	1:32-1:54
9	1:57-2:20

Defining the modules:

Module	Activities
Welcome	Use time to make introductions/Icebreakers in shared document
Administrative Assembly	Escort students to the auditorium /teacher can utilize time for Prep
Administrative Q & A	Escort students to the auditorium/teacher can utilize time for Prep
Building Tour	Escort students on a 10-15 minute tour/return to classroom to address questions
Lockers	Use the time to distribute lockers/ visit locker bank/troubleshoot question or problems
Start w/Hello/Help	Use module to introduce Start w/ Hello/participate i icebreakers and activities/ answer student questions/ resolve student technology issues/concerns



Technology and Learning

Except for Pre-K students, students will have a one-to-one device to access Google.

Teachers will continue to receive training in the following technology and applications:

Seesaw - Students show their learning using built-in annotation tools to capture what they know in Seesaw's digital portfolio. Teachers gain insights by deeply understanding student thinking and progress enabling them to teach more effectively. Families gain a window into their student's learning and engage with school happenings.

Kami - Students enjoy annotating text and editing documents using Kami's Google Classroom integration. Using the child-centered app, students can annotate on ebooks, publisher-supplied PDFs, worksheets, etc. Students can be creative as they draw freely and annotate with a selection of colors, shapes and text sizes. Teachers can markup, discuss and provide feedback using Kami's text, audio, and video annotation tools. These collaborative tools encourage active, real-time participation in the classroom.

Screeencastify- Teachers make learning more personal by recording full and/or bite-sized lessons, assignment solutions and explanations and verbal student feedback.

iPad - An iPad is a tablet computer. All iPads can connect using Wi-Fi and perform Internet functions such as web-browsing and emailing.

Chromebook - A chromebook is a laptop that is used primarily by students to perform a variety of tasks with most applications and data residing in the cloud rather on the machine itself.

Field Trips

At the moment, there will be no field trips outside of the school district in September; However, principals may approve educationally appropriate virtual field trips.



Physical Education – In-Person Elementary and Secondary

According to the CDC recommendations, masks will be worn at all times when indoors. Students will come prepared for physical education classes. All physical education classes, whenever possible, will be taught outdoors at both the elementary and secondary levels. Students will be prepared to go outside (just as currently specified for recess) as long as the temperature exceeds 40 degrees and when outdoors, students will not be required to wear masks. All shared supplies and equipment will continue to be sanitized accordingly after use by the physical educators after class.

Driver Education

Working closely with the East Meadow Driving School, we will continue to follow the NYS recommended guidelines with regards to the “In Car” portion of the driver education program. Students will complete the ‘in car’ portion of the class under parental supervision. Parents will be provided with the necessary guidance and curriculum to complete the ‘in car’ training. After completion parents will sign documents over the school for verification that all objectives have been met. The Lecture portion of the class will be provided remotely via ‘Zoom’ classes. Upon satisfactory completion of both the lecture (all lectures must be attended) and the parental documents students completed and received we will then issue the MV285 which allows students to schedule a road test and also provide a discount for insurance.

Athletics

NYSPHSAA Sports

New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) will start the Fall Season as planned.

We will be returning to regularly scheduled play both game and practices. The Fall Season will officially start on August 23rd for Football and August 30th for all other fall interscholastic teams. No masks will be required for outdoor events, practices, games or for spectators.

The following guidelines which will still be in effect include:

- Facemasks must be worn as tolerated by student athletes indoors.
- Facemasks must be worn by spectators for indoor events
- No weekly testing of athletes
- Testing is voluntary and will be available at the Administration building each week.



Special Education

Summary

The back to school plan for students with Disabilities will adhere to IDEA provision of FAPE (Free and Appropriate Education) in the LRE (Least Restrictive Environment). The federal disability law allows for flexibility in determining how to meet the needs of individual students.

Every aspect of the back to school plan addresses FAPE consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those providing special education and services. Programs and services offered will be documented in the Individualized Education Plan and provided to students with disabilities as well as communications with parents. The use of interpreters and Propio will address meaningful parent engagement in the parent's preferred language or mode of communication regarding the provision of services to each child. Plans for monitoring and communicating student progress and a commitment to sharing resources will include progress monitoring and progress reports. Elementary grade students will receive a progress report three times a year and ungraded students will receive a progress report four times a year. All secondary students will receive progress reports four times a year. Contact teachers speak with parents on an ongoing basis. Students will have access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology including assistive technology to meet the unique disability related needs of students. Testing accommodation rooms will be established to meet the requirements of testing accommodations.

Elementary Instruction

I. **Grades K-5 (Ungraded, Non-Integrated (Graded 15:1), ICT, Resource Room and Related Services Only Students)**

K-5 integrated co-teaching and non-integrated students will receive specially designed instruction by a special education teacher, as per their IEP mandates. All students will receive their related services within the school day.

II. **Grade K-5 (504 Plan Students)**

Grades K-5 students with a 504 Plan will follow the schedule of general education students and receive all related services in school.

[Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools](#)

Secondary Instruction

I. **Grades 6-12 (ICT, Non-Integrated, Resource Room and Related Services Only Students) (Regents Track)**

6-12 ICT and non-integrated students will receive specially designed instruction by a special education teacher, as per their IEP mandates. All students will receive their related services within the school day.

II. **Grades 6-12 (504 Students)**

Grades 6-12 students with a 504 Plan will follow the schedule of general education students and receive all related services in school.



III. Work Sites (High School Ungraded Students)

High School Vocational 3 students participate in career readiness at job sites outside the school district, under the direction of a special education teacher and teaching assistant support. Due to COVID-19, students will participate in career readiness training within the school building for the first quarter. Each quarter the district will evaluate and determine if the conditions allow for a return to the job sites, outside the school district.

Related Services

(Speech and Language, Counseling, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Vision Services, Hearing Services, Audiological Services, Behavior Intervention Services)

Related Services will be provided to all students in school, as per their IEP documents.

Testing Accommodations

Students will be provided with testing accommodations, per their IEP or 504 documents. The testing accommodations will be provided with the use of Teaching Assistants, as in previous years.

Parent Involvement and Communication

I. Committee on Special Education (CSE) and 504 Meetings

CSE and 504 meetings will be offered in-person or over the Google Meet Platform, based on family preference.

II. Initial Referrals to Special Education, 504 and Evaluations/Re-evaluations

Students referred to the Committee on Special Education or 504, will evaluate and collect the necessary data to proceed with the evaluation within the mandated time frame.

III. Contact Teachers K-12

Contact teachers are special education teachers assigned to each student to be the bridge between school and home. Contact teachers will review all IEP/504 documents on their caseload and ensure that students are receiving their programs, services and accommodations. Contact teachers for special education students are always teachers of the student. Contact teachers participate in students' CSE meetings and collaborate with parents on an ongoing basis. Contact teachers of 504 students will introduce themselves to the student, family and the teachers of their 504 students. Contact teachers of 504 students ensure that accommodations are provided to students and attend their annual 504 meeting.

IV. Social Workers and Psychologists

Social Workers and Psychologists will provide counseling services to students with an IEP and/or a 504. Services will be provided individually or in a group, per student IEP or 504 documents. Social Workers and



Psychologists connect with families on an ongoing basis to ensure that students are meeting with success and supporting students who are experiencing challenges.

V. Northwell Health School Based Mental Health Services Partnership

The school district and Northwell Health will be providing services to our school community with a focus on long-term success. The partnership cultivates a collaborative relationship between the district mental health staff (social workers and psychologists) and Northwell Health psychiatrists and licensed mental health professionals. The coordination of services aims at improving the overall wellbeing and academic success of students in need.

VI. Parent Counseling and Training (PCT)

Parent Counseling and Training (PCT) is a related service provided to parents of students classified with Autism. PCT is a monthly meeting held after school in the evening for parents. PCT meets monthly for an hour, with relatable topics for parents of students classified with Autism and/or those parents who would benefit from the additional support at home. PCT may be held through the Google Meet Platform, to support a wider range of parents who may require the service.

VII. SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committee)

The Special Education Advisory Committee meets after school hours to discuss various topics impacting the community, as they relate to Special Education. This forum enables families and the school district to participate in an open dialogue about the challenges and opportunities that are available to students with disabilities. The SEAC will be held in-person four times a year.



Staffing

I. TEACHER and PRINCIPAL EVALUATION SYSTEM (EDUCATION LAW 3012-D: APPR)

The District fully intends to implement its currently approved APPR Plan during the 2021-2022 school year.

If necessary, the District will determine whether it will follow the process to seek an APPR variance for the 2021-2022 school year.

II. CERTIFICATION, INCIDENTAL TEACHING, AND SUBSTITUTE TEACHING

CERTIFICATION

All teachers are duly certified for their Board appointed teaching positions. The district consistently ensures that teaches assignments align with their NYS teacher certification status.

INCIDENTAL TEACHING

In consideration of the 2021-2022 ability of the Superintendent to assign a certified teacher to teach a subject not covered by their certificate for a defined period of time, the District will consider this option if necessary during the school year.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHING

The District requires its substitute teachers to possess a valid teaching certification.

The District recognizes that it has the ability to hire substitute teachers who possess only a high school diploma, if the Superintendent certifies that a good faith effort to hire certified substitute teachers has been unsuccessful. This option will be explored with the Board of Education, if necessary.