

# GATEWAY STEM ACADEMY PUBLIC PLAN FOR SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES

## PURPOSE:

Ensure that every student in the state of Minnesota receives an equitable education and has equal access to the learning they need coming out of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

*Gateway STEM Academy*

- Connection over content
- Less is more with Depth, Richness and High Cognitive Demand
- Designed flexibility
- Monitor, evaluate, and respond

## State of Minnesota

- Practice servant leadership
- Treat everyone with respect and dignity
- Do the right thing, especially when it is difficult
- Ask how your actions are reinforcing or removing structural inequity
- Promote the common good over narrow special interests
- Be accessible, transparent, and accountable
- Include voices from communities who will be most impacted

## OUR DISTRICT ENSURES:

- Educational Continuity
- Equity
- Equal Access for ALL students

## THREE SCENARIOS FOR 2022-2023

Gateway STEM Academy is planning for full time, in person learning for the 2022-2023 school year. We will continue with in person learning that was in place at the end of 2021-2022 school year, however we will plan for all three different scenarios based on previous guidance provided by the Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota Department of Health. These three scenarios may be used at any time during the 2022-2023 school year

based on recommendations or requirements from local public health experts and local school board approval:

- Scenario 1: In-person learning for all students
- Scenario 2: Hybrid learning with strict social distancing and capacity limits
- Scenario 3: Distance learning only

#### Scenario 1: In-person learning for all students

In this planning scenario, schools will organize to meet the needs of learners and the variety of spaces they will use to support learning, but will not be held to any physical distancing.

#### Scenario 2: Hybrid learning with strict social distancing and capacity limits

In this planning scenario, schools must limit the overall number of people in school facilities and on transportation vehicles to 50% maximum occupancy. Sufficient social distancing with at least 6 feet between people must occur at all times. If distancing cannot be achieved in a space or on a transportation vehicle, the number of occupants may be reduced. Schools may also include plans for contactless pick up and/or delivery of meals and school materials for days that students and staff are not in the school building, as well as implementation of a school-age care program for critical workers *as required by state and/or federal agencies*. This scenario may be implemented if COVID-19 metrics worsen at the local, regional, or statewide level. Scenario 2 may also be implemented within a school if they experience clusters of cases within a classroom or the school.

*Hybrid learning defined* – Hybrid is commonly used to describe classes in which some traditional face-to-face instruction has been replaced by distance learning activities. A hybrid class is designed to integrate face-to-face and distance learning activities so that they reinforce, complement, and elaborate on one another, instead of treating the online component as an add-on or duplicate of what is taught in the classroom. During classroom instruction time, students can be engaged in authentic, collaborative learning experiences. The distance learning components can include multimedia-enhanced content, learning practice, and channels for ongoing discussion. In some hybrid approaches, direct instruction that normally takes place in the classroom is “flipped” with intentional online learning tasks. Another method involves facilitating flipped, short mini-lessons for students to access online (asynchronously or synchronously).

#### Scenario 3: Distance learning only

This scenario may be implemented if local, regional, or statewide COVID-19 metrics worsen significantly enough to require the suspension of in-person learning.

*Distance Learning defined* – Students engaging in distance learning have access to appropriate educational materials and receive daily interaction with their licensed teacher(s).

It is important to note that distance learning does not always mean e-learning or online learning. It is critical to provide this learning in a format that can be equitably accessed by all students.

MDE expects that students who participate in distance learning have full access to appropriate educational materials. Districts and charters must maintain educational continuity for schools and programs. As a district or charter, you must ensure equity in your plans. School districts and charters must ensure equal access to ALL students.

Considerations include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring all students in the school or district will have equal access to the learning and required materials, including technology. If using an online learning system, ensure it can effectively support the district or school's unique learning and teaching needs, including the ability to provide differentiated instruction as well as one-on-one support for students who need it. Regardless of where the learning is happening, supports identified on a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan must be provided (more detail below). Individual Learning Plans for English Language Learners must also be followed.
- Consider student privacy when developing your distance learning plan. See the U.S. Department of Education's Protecting Student Privacy page, and their list of related resources.
- Providing training to staff, students, and parents/guardians on implementation of your distance learning model and the district or school's expectations.
- Programming options for school nurses, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, paraprofessionals, other school specialists and cultural liaisons.
- Tracking the attendance of both students and staff.
- Ensuring the distance learning model in use is secure and will not allow for the release of protected student or staff information.

Schools should provide materials for students to continue their learning. Each school would determine the most appropriate way to communicate and provide instruction for each student which could include some/all of the following:

- Paper packets or worksheets, which could be distributed daily by bus route or collected several times a week at a central location
- Textbooks
- Telephone instructions
- Online resources (take into account availability of broadband)
- Instruction via the school's learning management system (LMS)

## EQUITY

Minnesota defines educational equity as the condition of justness, fairness and inclusion in our

systems of education so that all students have access to the opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potential. The pursuit of educational equity recognizes the historical conditions and barriers that have prevented opportunity and success in learning for students based on their races, incomes, and social conditions. Eliminating those structural and institutional opportunities requires systemic change that allows for distribution of resources, information and other support depending on the student's situation to ensure an equitable outcome.

## OPERATIONS

### Gateway STEM Academy COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies Fall 2022

#### Face Coverings

- Face coverings are optional in all school settings including transportation.

#### Confirmed COVID-19 Cases

- Confirmed COVID-19 cases will continue to be reported to the Minnesota Department of Health.

#### Quarantine

- Learners or staff are required to quarantine, following the duration guidance specified in Minnesota Department of Health guidelines if they:
  - test positive for COVID-19.

If the CDC and/or Minnesota Department of Health issues new requirements at any point throughout the year, Gateway STEM Academy will make any necessary adjustments and communicate those with staff and families as soon as possible.

Extracurricular Activities: We continue to follow the guidance outlined by Minnesota Department of Health in conjunction with the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL).

## ACADEMICS

At Gateway STEM Academy, we focus on aligned academic activities with an integration of STEM experiences. In a personalized-competency based learning environment each learner is challenged and supported based on their learning progression. Learners meet the same common learning targets with the flexibility to determine how they demonstrate their learning.

We are fortunate that we have experienced all three models of instructional settings (in-person, hybrid, and distance learning) both planned and in an emergency emergency, over the past three years. Due to this experience, we are uniquely positioned to address an extended closing and continue learning for our students with the use of our digital learning platform, Google Classroom, supporting daily learning for the past three years, and the fact that over 70% of our students have Internet access in their home, learning will continue.

Following are considerations teachers will follow in planning for distance learning and hybrid models of instruction:

- Plan for daily interaction with students and provide students equitable access to learning materials.
  - Plan with other staff (interventionists, paraprofessionals, counselors/student advocates, sped staff, & EL staff) to support:
    - Accommodations & Modifications
    - Mental Health Support
- Anticipate Time Requirements - Recognizing that students learn at different paces, especially in an independent context, it is important to consider students who you picture as struggling through the assignment and design activities that they can complete in the time they would have been with you in class.
  - For primary and secondary grades: include an estimate of time needed to complete each activity.
  - Pre-K: 30-45 minutes (recommended)
    - Be mindful that families will need to provide support for these activities and plan accordingly
  - For Elementary: Here are the proposed recommendations for TOTAL amount of work time per grade level.
    - Kindergarten - 45 minutes - 1 hour
    - First Grade - 1-2 hours
    - Second Grade - 1-2 hours
    - Third Grade - 1.5-2.5 hours
    - Fourth Grade - 2-3 hours
    - Fifth Grade- 2-3 hours
  - For Secondary: Be mindful that students have multiple classes and plan accordingly. 2.5-3.5 hours for all classes combined
- Equity materials & Personalized Learning - Teachers will plan based on an equitable design of learning. Personalized learning, based on individual background knowledge and personal goals provides an equitable approach for all students.
- Learning Loss - Teachers will be assessing where students are in their learning progression and develop personalized learning goals.
- Assessment & Grading - We will continue to use iReady, district assessments, and grading will be based around evidence of learning.
- Students with Special Education & 504s - Students with disabilities will have equitable access to specialized instruction and related services so that they have access to general education standards and continue to demonstrate progress toward the general education standards and IEP goals.

- IEP teams will meet to discuss services for all three models of instruction - in-person, hybrid and distance learning.
- Despite the fact that many students with IEPs use iPads to support learning, there will be modifications in order to implement appropriate instructional strategies that comply with IEPs. Specialized Service staff will work with classroom teachers to support students that need modifications/accommodations to support learning in addition to providing instructional activities aligned with current IEP goals, services, and related services. Specialized Service staff will work with students and families on assistive technology needs.
- Staff will plan for the needs of students eligible for special education, child find activities, evaluations/re-evaluations, and IEP implementation.
- Student receiving academic interventions and English Language support - As much as possible, service delivery in distance learning will reflect and align with the service students receive in the classroom. For example, co-taught classrooms will continue to be co-taught and students will receive support and feedback from the EL teacher and intervention teachers along with the classroom teacher.
- American Indian, English Language Learners, Migrant & Homeless Students - We understand that students face unique challenges and need extra support. Our schools work to identify these subgroups and provide the individualized support that each student needs. We also understand that it is important to create strong partnerships with parents to help these students be successful.
- Staff Collaboration - Staff will develop common expectations and common communications by grade-level/team/department. When everyone knows what to expect, students and families can focus on the learning. Collaborative teams should meet consistently on a weekly basis and the meeting times should be communicated with building principals. These collaborative meetings should include special education staff, counselors/student advocates, GEL teachers, EL teachers, interventionists, paraprofessionals, and any other school personnel as needed.

## STUDENT AND FAMILY SUPPORTS

Regardless of whether we are in-person, hybrid or distance learning, we know the importance that family and student relationships will have at the start of the year. More importantly, with the impact of COVID-19, unemployment, economic uncertainty and the racial justice movement, we know that all of our students have experienced trauma at one level or another.

Our priorities will be on Social Emotional Learning, Mental Health, and Family Engagement.

### Social Emotional Learning

Social emotional learning (SEL) is broadly understood as a process through which people build awareness and skills in managing emotions, setting goals, establishing relationships and making responsible decisions that supports their success in school and in life. SEL develops cognitive social competencies, such as self-awareness, self-management and social awareness, according to the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). Developing such competencies in students fosters positive social skills, reduces

conduct problems, diminishes emotional stress and improves academic performance.

Gateway STEM Academy feel it is important to not only educate staff and students on trauma informed practices, but also practice and live it. We will continue to be building and enhancing our relationships we have with students and families. We will encourage staff members to focus their time on our guiding principle - connections over content - and give them permission to prioritize social emotional learning. Additionally, leadership teams will determine in what ways they will support social emotional learning for students.

#### Mental Health Supports

Gateway STEM Academy believes the mental and emotional well-being of our learners is a priority. Several staff in the district have experience with Trauma informed instruction and are available to provide professional development as needed. Additionally, our student support teams and counselors are able to provide support and resources to families experiencing mental health concerns.

#### Family and Community Engagement

The purpose of family engagement in public preK-12 education is to ensure that schools and districts provide all families with the information and opportunities necessary to meaningfully participate in and shape their children's educational experience. It guarantees inclusion of diverse perspectives and lived experiences, and is grounded in the belief that families and their broader communities play a key role in providing children with a purposeful and effective learning experience that values their linguistic, heritage, and cultural attributes.

#### Bullying and Harassment

Gateway STEM Academy will take immediate and appropriate action to investigate what occurred when responding to reports of bullying or harassment. If parents and families believe their child has experienced bullying, harassment, or intimidation related to the COVID-19 outbreak, they should contact Gateway administration.

#### English Learners

Gateway STEM Academy has a legal and ethical responsibility to provide access to academic content and to facilitate student progress towards English language proficiency (ELP). In order to meet the needs of English learners, schools have found that during hybrid instruction there are three main areas of focus: connections with families, relationships with students, and collaboration among teachers providing instruction.

#### Partnerships with Community

We will work with our community partners, such as the food shelf, library, etc. and determine how to best meet the needs of families within our community.

#### Students Experiencing Homelessness and Housing Instability

Gateway STEM Academy will ensure that these students will have the following.

- Equitable access to education
- Gateway's Parents Liaison will work with school staff and parents to identify and support students who fall in this category.
- Access will be provided either digitally, and if they do not have internet or unable to attain free internet, materials will be provided in a paper format.

#### Students Receiving Special Education Services

Case managers and IEP teams will develop a Continuous Learning Plan for each child.

### EDUCATOR SUPPORT AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

#### Mental Health and Well Being

While it is important to focus on the social emotional wellness of students, school staff have been impacted. Returning staff will have different emotions and abilities to adjust to the transition back to school, meet changing expectations, and manage increased student needs. Staff may also be dealing with their own worries and anxieties for themselves and their families. Some may be grieving losses of family members, colleagues, or students who are no longer with the school or who have succumbed to the illness. Social emotional learning and self-care starts with adults in school buildings, and leaders should consider making resources available and build well-being activities into daily routines for all staff. Staff experiencing more difficulties may need positive coping mechanisms, additional mental health services, or crisis support.

A COVID-19 wellness/mental health resource page will be created on the staff resources page. The employee assistance plan, with all its resources, will be highlighted on the staff resources page for employee access. Telehealth options will also be described on the resources web page.

#### Teacher Development and Evaluation

PLC's may operate seamlessly under any of the 3 scenarios. Teachers with 3 or more years of experience may be deemed proficient with fewer than 3 observations providing the 1st takes



place before winter break and a final takes place to review individual teacher goals in the spring. Observations may take many forms based on the desires of the teacher and the administrator (may be in-person, virtual or an alternative format). Teachers with less than three years of experience must complete 3 observations.

#### Professional Learning

Staff will also have continued professional development on the following topics throughout the year based on their personalized needs:

- Equity
- Design Learning
- Depth of Knowledge
- Competencies & Rubrics
- Performance Assessments
- Social Emotional Learning
- Trauma Informed Learning