

**NIAGARA FALLS
CITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMPREHENSIVE
DISTRICT-WIDE

SCHOOL SAFETY
PLAN**

Mark Laurie
Superintendent of Schools

ADOPTED: JUNE 2001

REVISED: JUNE 2025

City School District of the City of Niagara Falls

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The City School District of the City of Niagara Falls is committed to providing a safe environment for all staff and student students. Traditional safety measures are not enough; the District reviews policies annually not only from a district level but also from a school level to ensure the unique needs of each building are being addressed. The most important message we share with staff members and students is if you ‘see something, say something’.

To further our current safety measures, hundreds of staff members have been trained in mental health first aid. This training teaches how to identify signs of possible mental health issues and how to be supportive and responsive until professional help is established. The Trauma Institute through the State University of New York at Buffalo (S.U.N.Y.) trained staff members on trauma-informed care. Teachers and counselors in collaboration with the New York State Department of Substance Abuse Services shared a Public Service Announcement for all students, letting them know that help is available for any problem they may have. In addition, the District created magnets containing the crisis service hotline for teachers in grades 7th-12th grade to display in their classroom.

Our collaborations with community partners address safety protocols district-wide. The District continuously consults with Niagara Falls Police Chief to evaluate current policies, procedures and discuss best practices with the Board of Education.

The Niagara Falls City School District pledge be vigilant and progressive in the arena of school safety, School Resource Officers, cameras and other safety measures are in place to ensure the a safe environment for all staff and students. Below please find links to a parent resource for your information.

The Code of Conduct and District Comprehensive Safety Plan are both posted on the District website. www.nfschools.net. Both documents are posted under the “Parent & Guardian” tab on the homepage.

Mark Laurrie
Superintendent
Niagara Falls City School District

INTRODUCTION

The Board of Education is committed to providing every student in its schools the physical environment within which to study, learn and grow to the best of his/her ability and recognizes the right of every student and every member of the school staff to expect that he/she may go about his/her business any place on the school premises in an atmosphere that is orderly, safe and conducive to his/her putting forth best efforts.

The Board of Education is cognizant of increasing incidents of violence in public schools throughout the nation and will not tolerate violence of any nature on school property in school buildings or at school functions.

The Board of Education has determined that the tolerance level for misconduct of any nature that threatens the safe and orderly environment of the Niagara Falls City schools is zero. The Board expects that appropriate disciplinary action will be taken should such misconduct arise, to the extent that any person, found to be acting in a violent or threatening manner, to staff, students or visitors on or near school property, will be immediately subject to disciplinary action.

The authority of the Board of Education to authorize suspension and to make reasonable rules and regulations regarding discipline is granted under Section 3214 of the New York State Education Law and under Board Policy JDD. The Board of Education may involve such action as suspension after avenues of recourse to redress a problem have been tried and school personnel feel that a student's behavior is such that either the student population or the student himself/herself would be better served by the student's removal from school.

Students may be suspended if they engage in behavior that in any way endangers the health safety and/or welfare of others or if they engage in behavior which threatens to endanger the health, safety and or welfare of others. The length of the suspension will depend upon the gravity of the offense and the circumstances under which it took place.

Board of Education policies on school discipline have been developed and predicated on the belief that reasonable behavior should be the goal for each student. A student may be suspended from school for varying lengths of time for serious offenses which threaten and/or endanger the safety of others.

To address threats and minimize the effects of violent incidents and/or emergencies and to facilitate the coordination of the District with local and county resources in the event of such incidents and emergencies, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) Law. This Component of the Save Law (Section 2801-1 of the Education Law of the State of New York, Section 155.17) requires the Board of Education of every School District within the State, however created, to adopt and amend a comprehensive District-Wide School Safety Plan that addresses crisis intervention and prevention, emergency response and management.

This Plan was developed by a District-Wide School Safety Team established by the Board of Education in collaboration with students, parents, teachers, administrators,

school safety personnel, central school administration, legal counsel, local law enforcement and emergency response agencies.

The Superintendent and Board of Education of the Niagara Falls City School District support the SAVE legislation and encourage and advocate on-going District-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

SECTION I

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PLANNING GUIDELINES

Purpose and Statutory Authority

A. Statutory Authority

The District-Wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17, which became effective March 27, 2001. This Regulation requires each public school district and BOCES to develop a District-Wide school safety plan regarding crisis intervention and emergency response and management. The Commissioner's Regulation further requires school districts and BOCES to develop their plans in consultation with appropriate state and local emergency management agencies.

At the direction of the Niagara Falls City School District Board of Education, the Superintendent of the Niagara Falls City School District recommended for its approval a District-Wide Safety Team charged with the development and maintenance of the District-Wide School Safety Plan.

B. Identification of School Teams

The Niagara Falls City School District's District-Wide School Safety Team consists of the following members:

Roland Davis	Administrator
Derek Zimmerman	Administrator
Valerie Rotella-Zafuto	Administrator
Cheryl Vilardo	Administrator
Christine Barstys	Director of Teacher Resource Center
Marc Catanzaro	Dean
Michael Corsaro	Dean
Noelle Gaetano	Dean
Sophia Williams	Dean
Steven Kutis	Teacher
Lindsey Wrobel	Teacher
Daniel Weiss	NFT 801 President
Tomasina Cook	Parent
Charlotte Robinson	Parent
Cassidy Card	Student
Kulraj Lucky	Student
Innocense Scott	Student
Cherish Walker	Student
Gary Pochatko	Niagara Falls Fire Department Chief
Nicholas Ligamarri	Niagara Falls Police Superintendent
Bryan DalPorto	Director of Safety and Security

C. Concept of Operations

This Comprehensive District-Wide Safety Plan includes at a minimum:

Policies and procedures for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel as well as visitors to the school;

Policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel as well as visitors to the school, including consideration of zero-tolerance policies for school violence;

A description of the duties of hall monitors and any other school safety personnel, the training required of all personnel acting in a school security capacity, and the hiring and screening process for all personnel acting in a school security capacity.

This Comprehensive District-Wide Safety Plan is directly linked to the individual Building Level Emergency Response Plan for each of the school buildings. Protocols reflected in the District-Wide School Safety Plan will guide the development and implementation of the individual Building Level Emergency Response Plans.

In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies at an individual school will be by the Building Level Emergency Response Team.

Upon activation of the Building Level Emergency Response Team, the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee will be notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials will be notified.

Additional city, county and state resources could supplement the District efforts through existing protocols or emergency response actions, including post incident response.

D. Plan Review and Public Comment

Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation Section 155.17 (e)(3), this plan will be made available for public comment at least 30 days prior to its formal adoption by the Board of Education.

The District-Wide Plan will be adopted by the Board of Education only after at least one public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties.

Full copies of the District-Wide School Safety Plan will be posted on the District website within 30 days of adoption.

This plan shall be reviewed by the District-Wide School Safety Team on at least an annual basis and updated as needed. The required annual review will be completed, presented and adopted by the Board of Education on or before September 1 of each year. Furthermore, this plan was made available for public viewing and comment 30 days prior

to its adoption. A copy of the plan will be available in the District Clerk's Office at 630 66th Street, Niagara Falls, New York.

While linked to the District-Wide School Safety Plan, the Building Level Emergency Response Plans shall be confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under Article 6 of the Public Officers Law or any other provision of law in accordance with Education Law Section 2801-a.

SECTION II

RISK REDUCTION/PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

A. PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

PROGRAM INITIATIVES: Prevention

Non-Violent Conflict Resolution Programs

The Niagara Falls City School District continues to develop a comprehensive Pre-K-12 non-violent conflict resolution program built on existing and evolving programs. The program will be designed for age appropriate integration and consist of the following:

- a. Elementary Level: Introduce students to problem solving, anti-bullying, character education, and respecting differences through a focus on positive behavior when appropriate. Information will be shared from school counselors, social workers, and/or after school clubs.
- b. Preparatory School Level: Development of an information program that focuses on problem solving and anger management techniques. Continue character education and the development of leadership skills that will build a caring non-violent environment. Information/programs shared in health classes, during Academic Study Period (A.S.P), from school counselors, and/or after school clubs will concentrate on building character, mutual respect, appreciation for diversity, and a focus on positive behavior. Use of clinic counseling for students.
- c. High School Level: Continue character education and the development of leadership skills that will build a caring non-violent environment. Information/programs shared from school counselors, social workers, outside agencies, the Sources of Strength program, and other avenues will concentrate on building character, mutual respect, appreciation for diversity, positive behavior, leadership skills, and community service. Information regarding healthy habits are shared with all ninth graders and in health classes.

PROGRAM INITIATIVES: Intervention

Alternatives to Suspension

Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice is a philosophy based on a set of principles that guide the response to conflict and harm. The Niagara Falls City School District began the process of the 'Restorative Justice' practices beginning in the 2017/2018 school year. Trainings will continue for staff members at all levels.

Restorative justice's three main goals are:

Accountability: Restorative Justice strategies provide opportunities for wrongdoers to be accountable to those they have harmed, and enable them to repair the harm they caused to the extent possible

School Community Safety: Restorative Justice recognizes the need to keep the school community safe through strategies that build relationships and empower the community to take responsibility for the well-being of its members.

Competency Development: Restorative Justice seeks to increase the pro-social skills of those who have harmed others, address underlying factors that lead youth to engage in delinquent behavior, and build on strengths in each young person

Youth Court

Youth Court is a voluntary alternative to traditional school discipline as a result of an acknowledged violation of the Code of Conduct. The goal of Youth Court is to intervene in early anti-social, delinquent, and criminal behavior to reduce the incidence and prevent the escalation of such behavior. Youth Court strives to promote feelings of high self-esteem, social awareness, a desire for self-improvement and to foster a healthy attitude toward rules and authority.

Pride Programming

Specific elementary schools, the prep schools, and high school offer a Pride Program. The Prep schools and high school now offer an alternative day program. It provides a smaller learning environment where students can receive more individualized instruction and counseling support. This program is a temporary intervention with the goal of students eventually returning to full day programming.

Peer Mediation Programs

Peer mediation programs will be developed as follows:

- a. Elementary Level: Under the direction of a faculty advisor, introduce students to peer mediation by utilizing peer advocates from the middle school and high school levels.
- b. Preparatory School Level: Train peer mediators at each grade level to work with non-violent student problems. Under the direction of a faculty advisor, students participate in mediation sessions to de-escalate problems. Students may also act as peace advocates, discussing role-playing and distributing non-violent problem solving information to students throughout their home school.
- c. High School Level: Train and use student mediators to diffuse student conflicts. A faculty advisor may select students to be members of a consistent group that will diffuse non-violent student problems at the senior high level. A key role of this group will be to mentor middle school and elementary students in the use of peer mediation as a problem-solving tool.

Extended Day and Other School Safety Programs

The Niagara Falls City School District is committed to its extended day program to provide safe environments for after school learning and athletic activities. Some of the items include but are not limited to:

- a. After School Booster/Academic Progress - to provide extended time for learning skills, techniques, and strategies for targeted students.
- b. Intramural Sports and Modified Sport and Modified Sport Activities - provided in as many areas as possible.
- c. Clubs/Activities - expand existing club offerings that focus on positive character building.

Mental Health

The Niagara Falls City School District recognizes the need for mental health supports in schools and has developed various strategies to support students with mental health needs.

The Niagara Falls City School District has ensured that every student who is considering self-injurious behaviors, suicide, or is in crisis is aware of immediate support through the local crisis services hotline. This hotline number is posted in schools.

Staff have been offered training to be certified in Youth Mental Health First Aid. This training focuses on teaching staff about students that may be in crisis, how to support them, and get them to necessary school or support staff to better address their concerns. Additional trainings have been offered to staff members on trauma-informed care by the University at Buffalo.

The Niagara Falls City School District is in partnerships with the Niagara County Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, the Suicide Prevention Center – NY, University of Buffalo, and Niagara University to address components that deal with mental health. Additionally, students are exposed to curriculum that discusses identifying and appropriately addressing one's feelings through the Healthy Behavior, and Sources of Strength programs.

Staff are digitally provided printable pamphlets from Suicide Prevention-NY regarding information on suicide for parents/guardians, and educators. This information shares signs that a student may be at risk include the following F-A-C-T-S:

- FEELINGS like expressing hopelessness about the future, seeming sad and unhappy, being anxious and worried, or getting angry and aggressive.
- ACTIONS such as withdrawing from activities or friendships, doing risky, dangerous things like drinking & driving, or researching ways to die online.
- CHANGES in the normal mood and behavior of your student. In some ways, this may be what is easiest for you to notice. If you observe changes that concern you, reach out to others in the student's life (i.e., parents, teachers, friends, religious leaders, etc.) to see if they've also noticed changes.
- THREATS are sometimes direct like "I'd rather be dead". They can also be vague like "I just don't care about anything anymore."
- SITUATIONS are events that can serve as triggers for the suicidal behavior. These can include things like getting into trouble at home or school or with the law, experiencing some type of loss or facing a life change that may be too overwhelming for the student to deal with on their own.

Strategies for improving communication among students and between students and staff:

Students are encouraged to report school violence and any symptoms of potentially violent behavior to counselors, principals, student coordinators, psychologists and teachers or any other mentor without fear of retaliation.

Students are to report alleged cases of student harassment or discrimination by students or staff to an adult in the school such as an administrator, teacher, counselor, or psychologist. This is covered under the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA).

The Niagara Falls City School District has developed various strategies for the improvement of communication among students, and between students and staff. A teaching component for all grade levels, elementary, middle and secondary will be offered.

This teaching component will encompass the following subject areas: front line defense against bullying, harassment and gangs, anger management, peer mediation and involvement, developing social skills and citizenship, respect for life (character education).

Some programs currently in place include:

School Staff Assisted Peer Mediation – mediation between peers in conflict that is guided by trained staff members of the student's school.

School Resource Officers – Uniformed police officers in schools present to assist students.

School Safety Officers at every level.

Sandy Hook Promise's Say Something Anonymous Reporting System (SS-ARS)

This is a holistic program combining education about the warning signs of potential violence or self-harm with the tools to safely report concerns. This is the only anonymous reporting system in the U.S. that provides training along with a mobile app, website, and hotline. Details include:

- Operates 24/7/365 – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year
- Solely responding to messages (ie: tips) received by the *Say Something* Anonymous Reporting System
- Dedicated team of highly skilled and trained crisis counselors
- Fluent in multiple languages with translation support for over 600 languages
- Trained in suicide prevention, crisis management, and mental health support
- Skilled professionals with backgrounds in psychology, social work, and education
- Directed by a former law enforcement official with 20+ years of experience in anonymous reporting systems

The Niagara Falls City School District will continue to develop on-going strategies for improving communication between students and staff and the reporting of potentially violent incidents by the following:

- * Maintaining an electronic reporting system for reporting school incidents of school violence and inappropriate behaviors (V.A.D.I.R.)
- * Establish student help centers with a Designated Care Consultant (DCC).
- * Maintaining a system for anonymous reporting for areas of concern.
- * School staff members are to be given annual training and staff

development on the school safety plan and policies. Skills will be developed in the following areas: violence prevention and intervention, conflict resolution, recognition of early warning signs of potentially violent behavior, and procedures to assist victims of school violence.

- * Featured column in "Your Public Schools" highlighting programs throughout the District.
- * Student peer programs for the purpose of communicating the necessity and importance of student involvement.
- * The Niagara Falls City School District will also provide parents of our students and community members opportunities to understand the District's safety initiatives as well as opportunities to serve on committees, attend meetings on school safety and assist in school safety programs including the District-Wide Circle of Safety Task Force.

The Niagara Falls School District uses a proactive approach to help build a healthy school environment using the strengths and experience of our staff and students.

Beginning at the elementary level through high school, we will continue to build and focus on the elements needed to ensure a safe school environment. Some of these elements include (but are not limited to):

Elementary

- * conflict resolution skill building (intro)
- * positive behavior
- * caring environment
- * character education
- * peer mediation (intro)
- * mentoring
- * peaceful problem solving
- * after school programming
- * restorative justice
- * Second Step instruction

Preparatory School

- * conflict resolution skill building (continued)
- * leadership skills
- * caring environment
- * character education
- * positive behavior
- * community service
- * peer mediation
- * mentoring
- * after school programming
- * restorative justice
- * youth court

High School

- * conflict resolution skill building
- * leadership skills
- * caring environment
- * character education
- * positive behavior
- * community service
- * mentoring
- * after school clubs
- * youth court
- * P.A.S.S. (Positive Alternatives to School Suspension)
- * Big Picture
- * Pride for credit recovery

PROGRAM INITIATIVES: Post-Vention

Formal debriefing to develop an after-action report that evaluates results, identifies gaps or shortfalls, and lessons learned; and discuss how the school procedures may be modified, if needed, and specify who has the responsibility for modifying the plan. Additionally, communication with liaisons of law enforcement agencies and judicial system.

TRAINING, EXERCISES AND DRILLS

1. Policies and Procedures for annual school safety training for staff and students

In accordance with Project SAVE requirements, the Niagara Falls City School District will conduct annual training programs for staff members in violence prevention

and intervention. A cadre of staff members will be trained to develop skills for school violence prevention and intervention. This on-going training and staff development will include the District's safety plan and the District's policies on discipline and crimes committed on school grounds and/or against school staff. Trainings and drills are conducted in a trauma- informed, developmentally and age-appropriate manner.

Areas of Concentration

- a. School Violence Prevention Training
 - Recognition of early warning signs of potentially violent behavior
 - Crisis intervention
 - Conflict resolution
- b. School Violence Intervention Training
 - De-escalation techniques
 - Skills in managing disruptive individuals
 - Emergency response plans
 - Reporting of criminal incident
 - Building security
 - Management of student by-standers during student altercations

Members of the support staffs, safety staffs and crisis teams from each school building also receive training on the proper procedures for "Bomb Threats" and Violence Resistance.

Bus drivers and monitors receive safety training twice a year by Niagara Falls Coach Lines.

The District formed a Behavioral Assessment Team and oversees a threat assessment walk-through at each school.

In accordance with Project SAVE requirements, annual training in school safety for students will take place. Violence prevention and intervention strategies will be incorporated across the curriculum in all grade levels with concentrations of such teaching potentially being incorporated in health and physical education classes. Additionally, students will take part in annual crisis and early dismissal drills initiated and monitored by the District Safety Director in collaboration with law enforcement agencies.

2. Policies and Procedures for the review and conduct of lockdown, on-site shelter, evacuation, early dismissal drills and other exercises

Under the direction of the Superintendent who also acts as the District Chief Emergency Officer, the Niagara Falls City School District conducts Mock School Lockdown and/or on-site shelter drills in all of its buildings at various times throughout the school year. Schools are required to simulate an incident that would

warrant a lockdown and/or on-site shelter and respond accordingly. Individual school plans and information are to be finalized through the building level safety committee. At the conclusion of the drill, school administrators are required to maintain a log of the event containing information concerning time, cooperation and effectiveness to the District Chief Emergency Officer. Local Police and Fire Departments participate in these drills.

Every school building in the district also participates in safety evacuation and early dismissal drills. Schools are required to simulate an incident which would require evacuation of the school building to its "primary evacuation site," and respond accordingly. At the conclusion of the evacuation drill, school administrators are required to provide information concerning time, cooperation and effectiveness to the District Chief Emergency Officer. Existing plans will be revised in response to post incident critiques of these drills.

The purpose of the lockdown, on-site shelter, evacuation and early dismissal drills is three fold:

- a. To provide a learning experience for staff and students in lockdown, seeking on-site safe areas and/or exiting a school facility in an orderly and safe manner.
- b. To develop an appreciation and understanding of the need for a safety prevention method to protect all parties involved in an emergency situation.
- c. To coordinate with local emergency services officials to improve the overall level of school emergency plans.

Additionally, the Superintendent of Schools and District Chief Emergency Officer are responsible for ensuring that fire drills are conducted in each school building at various times throughout the course of the school year.

See attached Operations Plan - page 3.

Other training can entail classroom activities, tabletop exercises, short briefings or presentations related to any aspect of the Building Level Emergency Response plan that shall increase the awareness and preparedness of staff and students.

Formal debriefing of actual events and drills will be conducted to analyze results, identifies gaps or shortfalls. As a result of the debriefing, school procedures may be modified, if needed, and specify who has the responsibility for modifying the plan.

3. Description of the duties, hiring and screening process and required training of school safety personnel

All employees of the Niagara Falls City School District including school safety personnel must successfully complete the application process and meet the minimum qualifications as described in the job specifications. This process includes a filing of an application with a recent resume, an interview, a physical examination including blood work and a screening for substance abuse using a hair sample and a local background check. In accordance with Project SAVE regulations, all potential candidates will also need to be fingerprinted and approved prior to being hired.

School Resource Officers

Certified police academy trained Niagara Falls Police Officers are assigned to Niagara Falls High School, Gaskill Preparatory School, LaSalle Preparatory School. Niagara Falls Police Officers are assigned to the Preparatory Schools. These officers are going through the Basic School Resource Officer Course - a forty-hour block of instruction designed for law enforcement officers. Three areas of instruction: functioning as a police officer in the school setting, working as a resource and problem solver, and the development of teaching skills. These officers, in conjunction with the District Chief Emergency Officer, are establishing a rapport with school staff and students to promote a safe atmosphere of learning. Various workshops are presented during the school year by the safety department to include training on violence intervention techniques and procedures.

School Safety Officers

School Safety Officers perform customized work involving the responsibility for assistance in a safety program for school personnel, students and school property. The work is performed under the direct supervision of a school principal.

School Safety officers are School District trained personnel in the areas of school security, public relations, violence prevention, crises intervention techniques, education law, and violence intervention. Officers are responsible for assisting in maintaining a safe and orderly environment in all areas of a school and must assist in monitoring the safety and security of pupils, school personnel and school property during the school day and during special events on school property.

Each officer must have a high school diploma or a high school equivalency diploma and paid experience in monitoring, safety and or security related work with preference given to individuals performing these duties in a school building. Additionally, all individuals must pass a functional capacity test administered by the Board of Education prior to appointment.

The District Chief Emergency Officer provides on-going training during the school year. Candidates are screened by the Human Resource office to ensure they meet the guidelines of the position. Recruitment is open-ended to include persons of both genders and any person without a criminal record.

Building Level Emergency Response Team

Building Level Emergency Response Teams are trained yearly and placed at each building site in the Niagara Falls City School District. They are comprised of the school's staff including administrators, teachers, custodians, secretaries and support staff. Their responsibility is to respond to all emergencies that affect the school. They are to assist in providing for the protection and safety of the school's population.

In addition, the Niagara County Sex Offender Registry is available online at the District website through a link to the Niagara County Sheriff's Office. Information is also available to parents/guardian at the schools if it cannot be accessed from home.

4. CPR/AED Training

There are staff members in each school building who are trained and required to maintain certification in CPR/AED. They include physical education teachers, registered nurses, and health associates. Each building is equipped with AED machines located in prominently marked locations.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL SECURITY

1. Policies and Procedures Relating to School Building Security and Routes to and from School:

The Niagara Falls City School District's policies and procedures for building security are formulated to address the potential for violence in our schools. The District's goal is to create and maintain a safe and secure learning environment for students, teachers and staff.

The placement of school security officers and resource officers is based on the areas of greatest need during school hours and after school activities. All buildings in the Niagara Falls School District are equipped with some level of security technology. These include video surveillance systems and electronic door openers.

The Board of Education has implemented a Metal Detector Policy and Canine Narcotics Search policy allowing random searches for weapons and/or drugs.

All policies and procedures are documented and approved by the school district administration and legal counsel.

Entrance to Buildings:

- a. Public Entry to the building is permitted from the main entrance only.
- b. Every door is accessible as an exit.
- c. All visitors to school buildings must report to an assigned area to be registered into the facility.
- d. All visitors must sign in and show identification upon reporting to reception area, they must also explain their purpose.

VITAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY INFORMATION

Each Building Level Emergency Response Plan will include information regarding:

1. School population
2. Number of staff
3. Transportation needs
4. Business and home telephone numbers of key officials of each educational agency.

The Building Level Emergency Response Teams will ensure that this information is updated routinely and is accurate.

See the BUILDING LEVEL EMERGENCY RESPONSE
PLAN CHAIN OF COMMAND
BUILDING ADMINISTRATION

B. EARLY DETECTION OF POTENTIALLY VIOLENT BEHAVIORS

School psychologists work in conjunction with parents, administrators, teachers and school counselors, social workers, deans in researching, identifying and disseminating information regarding potentially violent behaviors. Additionally, the schools work closely with counselors to assist students who have exhibited violent behaviors and their families. As mandated reporters, staff members have the authority to contact Child Protective Services (CPS) to hotline a student if further investigation is needed.

The Niagara Falls City School District will:

Facilitate training for staff and students on specific policies regarding reporting of threats and conflicts, weapons, appropriate clothing and the clearly defined roles and responsibilities of all persons involved in the school setting.

Announce and post the school's safety policies against violence in visible areas of the school.

There are early warning signs in most cases of violence to self and others. Certain emotional and behavioral signs that, when viewed in context, can signal a troubled student. Teachers should be given a checklist of these signs that can be used to signal a student that may need help. The more signs a student exhibits, the more likely he/she may need intervention.

The United States Department of Education's "Early Warning, Timely Response" document presents a checklist of early warning signs that may be used to signal that a student may need intervention. Such signs may include:

- Social withdrawal
- Excessive feelings of isolation
- Excessive feelings of rejection
- Being the victim of violence
- Feeling of being picked on
- Low school interest or poor academic performance
- Expression of violence in writing or drawing including use of social media
- Uncontrolled anger
- Patterns of impulsive, chronic hitting and bullying
- History of discipline problems
- History of violent and aggressive behavior
- Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes
- Alcohol and drug usage
- Affiliation with gangs
- Inappropriate access/use of firearms
- Serious threats of violence.

This information will be made available to teachers, counselors, social workers, and parents.

If a teacher or administrator feels help for a student is warranted, it will be discussed with the appropriate school personnel to determine the next step.

Interpersonal violence prevention education will be taught as appropriate.

The District Superintendent will set specific time for the building principal(s) in conjunction with the Niagara Falls City School District Professional Development Plan to organize activities of particular concern.

C. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION

79th Street Elementary - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Playground, Surrounding Streets.

Cataract Elementary School - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Factories, Surrounding Streets including Niagara Falls Boulevard, proximity to Interstate Highway.

Gaskill Preparatory School - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Surrounding Streets.

Geraldine J. Mann Elementary - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Playground, Surrounding Streets.

Harry F. Abate Elementary - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Playground, Surrounding Streets.

Hyde Park Elementary - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Playground, Surrounding Streets.

Kalfas Magnet School - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Playground, Factories, Surrounding Streets.

LaSalle Preparatory School - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Athletic fields, proximity to Niagara River, Factories, Surrounding Streets.

Maple Avenue Elementary - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Playground, Athletic Field, Surrounding Streets.

Niagara Falls High School - Boiler Room, cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Science rooms, Performing Arts Center, Athletic fields, Factories, Surrounding Streets.

Niagara Street Elementary - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Playground, Surrounding Streets.

Community Education Center - Boiler Room, Indoor Swimming Pool, Cafeteria Equipment, Playground, Park, Factories, Surrounding Streets including Niagara Falls Boulevard, Proximity to Interstate Highway.

Administration Building - 66th Street - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Playground, Park, Factories, Surrounding Streets including Niagara Falls Boulevard, proximity to Interstate Highway

See Building Level Emergency Response Plan: School Building Information

SECTION III

RESPONSE

A. NOTIFICATION AND ACTIVATION (Internal and External Communications)

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR CONTACTING LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS IN THE EVENT OF A VIOLENT INCIDENT

1. Chain of Command - The Chain of command has been established by the Niagara Falls City School District, starting with Mark Laurrie, Superintendent/District Chief Emergency Safety Officer and flows down the levels of authority and responsibility of the Central Office staff. At the school level the building principal or his/her designee shall initiate the appropriate response action when there is a violent incident.
2. Sequential Response Action - A sequential response action is activated in the event of any violent incident. After verification has been made by school staff, notification to local law or fire agencies is made. Notification is done by telephone by dialing 911 or through an alarm system connected directly to the police department. School personnel are trained by the Central Safety Committee on procedures to follow when contacting law enforcement agencies. This training is done annually by the District Chief Emergency Safety Officer in all schools for Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade.
3. Information System - In the event of an emergency or impending emergency, the Superintendent/designee will notify all principals/designees of buildings within the District via telephone, District Radio Systems, telefax or Email, to take the appropriate action. Additionally, in the event telephone lines are inoperable, the Superintendent/designee will communicate with the principals/designees of buildings through use of the School Messenger Program that includes text messaging, cellular phone calls and emails. Additionally, the Superintendent/designee shall contact the local media.

See Niagara Falls City School District Building Level Emergency Response Plan:

Chain of Command Building
Administration Emergency
Response Actions Emergency
Resource Information Sections I-
VI

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR CONTACTING PARENTS, GUARDIANS OR PERSONS IN PARENTAL RELATION TO THE STUDENTS OF THE DISTRICT IN THE EVENT OF A VIOLENT INCIDENT

In all cases of violent incidents or other emergencies, the principal or his/her designee, must notify the parent or guardian by telephone or a personal contact before the students are sent home. In the event the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the student shall be held at school or in an alternate staff supervised sheltering location until the end of the school day.

See Niagara Falls City School District Building Level Emergency Response Plan:
Emergency Response Actions
Parent Spouse Notification Plan

PUBLIC INFORMATION

In any situation where normal school activities are disrupted, it is crucial for the Niagara Falls City School District to recognize its obligation to inform the public of the problem and how the District is responding to it.

The Niagara Falls City School District utilizes public information on a regular basis during the winter months to announce school cancellations and dismissals due to inclement weather. The same rationale, with increased sense of importance applies to other less common types of hazards.

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

The Superintendent of the Niagara Falls City School District will serve as the primary emergency public information officer during most emergencies and the Administrator for School Business Services will be the alternate when the Superintendent is not available. The overall functions of the public information officer will be:

1. To provide correct information to the public on what is occurring and what the School District is doing in response;
2. To prevent erroneous information from being disseminated;
3. To represent a positive image for the school district, and demonstrate that the District is responding to the situation in an organized and competent fashion;
4. To coordinate with other agencies that may be responding to the situation to ensure that the public is receiving a clear and consistent report of official information;
5. To act as a liaison between the media/public and School District Officials who are involved in decision-making and the operational response to the emergency;
6. To organize the District's response to parents as they inquire either via telephone or in person as to the health and safety of their children.

B. SITUATIONAL RESPONSES

MULTI-HAZARD RESPONSE PLANS FOR TAKING ACTIONS IN AN EMERGENCY

The Districts multi-hazard response plans for taking actions in emergencies are included in the appended sections of the Building Level Emergency Response plan pertaining to Criminal Offenses, Natural Hazards, Technological Hazards, Explosion and Fire, Systems failure, Medical Emergencies.

Criminal Offenses

- Bomb Threat
- Civil Disturbance
- Hostage Taking/Kidnapping
- Intrusion
- Suspected Student with a Weapon on Campus
- Suicide

Natural Hazards

- Severe Thunderstorm/Tornado
- Winter Storm
- Hurricane/Tropical Storm
- Flood
- Earthquake

Technological Hazards

- Mail Handling Protocol
- Anthrax/Biological Threat On-Site
- Biological Threat Off-Site
- Air Pollution Aircraft
- Crash Energy
- Supply Loss Gas
- Leak
- Hazardous Material Incident-On-Site
- Hazardous Material Incident-Off-Site
- Radiological Incident
- Water Emergency

Explosion and Fire

- Explosion/Fire Emergency
- Systems Failure
- Building Structure Failure
- Electrical System Failure
- Heating System Failure
- Transportation Fleet Loss
- Sewage System Failure

Medical Emergencies

School Bus Accident (Off-Site)

Procedural Guidelines for Medical Emergencies (Mental Health)

Response Protocol Plans for Responding to Implied or Direct Threats of Violence and Acts of Violence by Students, Teachers, other School Personnel and Visitors

When faced with acts of violence and/or implied or direct threats of violence the staff member involved shall:

Assess the situation and make determination if emergency assistance is required.

If emergency assistance is required, the staff member involved shall immediately request emergency assistance from the office.

If emergency assistance is not required the staff member involved shall refer the student to the principal who shall immediately suspend the student for a short-term or long-term suspension. The procedure for which may be found in the District Wide Code of Conduct.

Illegal actions shall be reported to the police by the principal or designee.

In all cases of suspension, the principal or his/her designee must notify the parent or guardian by telephone or a personal contact before the student is sent home. In the event the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the student shall be held at school, but out of classes, until the end of the school day.

See also Niagara Falls City School District Building Level Emergency Response Plan:

Sequential Actions for "Suspected Student with a Weapon on Campus."

Response Protocol Plan for Implied or Direct Threats of Domestic Violence

In conjunction with the Family Violence Intervention Project, a protocol has been developed for school officials to follow in response to suspected student domestic abuse/violence incidents that will ensure student safety through notification of appropriate law enforcement and community service providers.

See Niagara Falls City School District Building Level Emergency Response Plan:

Emergency Response Protocol Plans for Other Than Implied or Direct Threats of Violence

The following are the steps to be taken in a crisis response. These are planned reactions to any unexpected event.

1. School Staff: After receiving any information that might compromise the health, safety and/or welfare of any member of the school community, an administrative team member should be contacted. All facts and information shall be provided to the administrative team member.
2. Administrative team: The team will make an honest and critical appraisal of the situation. All crucial players involved will be mobilized if needed. This will include: law enforcement, teachers, students, parents and guidance counselors.
3. A building safety audit may be performed: Checking lockers and classrooms, metal detectors or K-9 dogs, extra security personnel on campus.
4. All involved persons will be interviewed. The degree of the situation will be evaluated to determine if further action is necessary. The local newspaper, radio and television will be contacted and advised of the situation.

See Niagara Falls City School District Building Level Emergency Response Plan:

Chain of Command
Emergency Response Actions
Emergency Resource Information

Arrangements for Obtaining Emergency Assistance From Local Government

In the event of an emergency, the Building Principal/Designee (which includes classroom teachers in the event of a classroom emergency) contacts the Main office or 911 for Fire or EMS Response. Additionally, the County Emergency Management Coordinator may be contacted at (716) 438-3471. The Incident Commander will authorize the request for assistance from other county agencies.

See Niagara Falls City School District Building Level Emergency Response Plan:

Emergency Resource Information

Procedures for Obtaining Advice and Assistance from Local Government Officials

In the event of an emergency, the Building Principal/Designee serves as the Incident Commander. Should advice and/or assistance from local government officials be required, the Incident Commander will direct/authorize the request for assistance from other local officials/agencies. The Incident Commander will personally make inquiries and requests and/or designate another member of the safety team to do so.

Additionally, the Incident Commander may contact the County Emergency Management Coordinator at (716) 438-3471.

The District has identified and compiled resources for an emergency if the nature of the emergency necessitates advice and/or assistance from local government officials.

See Niagara Falls City School District Building Level Emergency Response Plan:

Emergency Resource Information

Resources which may be available in an emergency include the following:

Red Cross, Fire Department, Police, NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, NYS Dept. of Transportation, NYS Department of Health, state emergency Management Office.

Procedures to Determine and Coordinate Direct School District Resources and Manpower Available For Use in an Emergency

To determine and coordinate appropriate use of direct School District Resources and manpower during emergencies, maintenance department staff members must be consulted by the Incident Commander/designee:

See Niagara Falls City School District Building Level Emergency Response Plan:

Chain of Command

Maintenance Department Chain of Command

Custodian and Main Office Phone Numbers

See also:

Emergency Resource Information

Maintenance Department Equipment and Vehicles

Transportation Information

Individual School Building Resource Information

Protective Actions

School Cancellation:

See Niagara Falls Building Level Emergency Response Plan

Chain of Command

Command Posts

Delayed Start:

Delayed start two hours from traditional start time

For example, elementary level 8:45 am/Delayed Start 10:45 am.

Early Dismissal

See Niagara Falls Building Level Emergency Response Plan

Emergency Response Actions

Evacuation

See Niagara Falls City School District Building Level Emergency Response Plan
Emergency Response Actions
Appendix C; Critical Incident Media Notification Plan.
Appendix D; Parent/Guardian Notification Plan.

Sheltering

See Niagara Falls City School District Building Level Emergency Response Plan
Emergency Response Actions
Critical Incident Media Notification Plan
Parent/Guardian Notification Plan

SECTION IV

RECOVERY

A. District Support for Buildings

Each Building has put a Post Incident Response Team into place which includes members of the faculty and staff as well as school nurses, psychologists, and guidance counselors. These individuals are to use their professional expertise and follow the District's post incident response guide in the period following an incident.

The Niagara Falls City School District will provide resources and support to the Building Level Emergency Response Teams in any of its schools which are affected by threatened or actual violent incidents or other emergencies as required.

A post incident debrief meeting will take place after any simulated or actual event occurs. This meeting will analyze all aspects of the event and how it was responded to in order to identify gaps, shortfalls and areas of needed improvement. Based on the results of this meeting, adjustments and changes of role responsibilities may occur to better respond to future incidents.

Each Post Incident Response team should consider the following steps:

1. Consult with administrators to see if involvement is necessary
2. Acquire facts and circumstances regarding the incident
3. Determine the target population
4. Assist the building administrator with dissemination of information to staff, parents and students
5. Assign team members to individual tasks
6. Provide crises team services
7. Plan for ending involvement.

See Niagara Falls City School District Emergency Management Operations Plan
Appendix E - Post Incident Response.

B. Mental Health Services

The Niagara Falls City School District through its Central Administrative Staff will insure that any of its schools which are affected by threatened or actual violent incidents or other emergencies have access to federal, state and local mental health resources. This guidance and assistance will be coordinated by a designee from the Superintendent's office assigned to the task.

Recognizing the importance of Mental Health, the Niagara Falls City School District offers a number of Mental Health Support Services for teachers, staff and students. Examples include, but are not limited to;

- ☐ Mental Health First Aid Training for staff members
- ☐ Trauma Informed Care Training
- ☐ B.E.S.T (Basic Emotional Skills Training)
- ☐ Restorative Practices

Any school affected by a threatened or actual violent incident or other emergency will be required to have its Building Level Emergency Response Team meet with the District Chief Emergency Officer to evaluate the response and recovery efforts and provide suggestions for modifications and/or improvements. A report of this meeting will be required to be presented to the Board of Education at a designated time and all team members will be invited to attend.

APPENDIX I

Response Protocol Plan for Implied or Direct Threats of Domestic Violence

In conjunction with the Family Violence Intervention Project, the following protocol has been developed for school officials to follow in response to suspected student domestic abuse/violence incidents that will ensure student safety through notification of appropriate law enforcement and community service providers.

Definitions

- A. "Family or household members" for the purpose of these protocols includes adults or minors who are:
 - 1. Legally married to one another, separated (legally or otherwise) or divorced;
 - 2. Related by blood, including parent and children;
 - 3. Related by marriage (including in-laws);
 - 4. Parents of the same child or children;
 - 5. Living together;
 - 6. Having, or formerly had, a significant dating relationship; or
 - 7. Designated as such by law (foster family).
- B. "Domestic Violence" occurs where a family or household member commits or attempts to commit one or more offenses against another member consisting of the following:
 - 1. Bodily injury or fear of imminent bodily injury;
 - 2. Sex offenses;
 - 3. Aggravated criminal contempt or criminal contempt relating to the violation of an Order of Protection or other valid court order;
 - 4. Criminal trespass;
 - 5. Aggravated harassment;
 - 6. Kidnapping or unlawful imprisonment;
 - 7. Assault, attempted assault, reckless endangerment, menacing, harassment, and disorderly conduct;
 - 8. Endangering the welfare of a vulnerable elderly person;
 - 9. Coercion; and
 - 10. Endangering the welfare of a child.

Administrative Procedures

- A. Upon suspected or direct receipt of information from any source concerning domestic abuse/ violence as it relates to a student(s), the faculty or staff member receiving the information will immediately notify his/her building administrator. In the event the building administrator is unavailable, the faculty or staff member will inform the building administrator's designee.

B. The Building administrator or his or her designee shall take action as noted in the following procedures upon receipt of information from faculty, staff or students:

1. Notify law enforcement officials by calling 911 in the event of an imminent emergency or contacting the Domestic Violence Unit of the Niagara Falls Police department at 286-4570;
2. Determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is an abused or maltreated child and if so, report such abuse to the New York State Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-342-3720;
3. Assess the need for medical attention and contact the school nurse;
4. Contact parent/guardian or family member(s) where appropriate;
5. Contact school counselor or School Social Worker
6. Contact District Chief Emergency Officer;
7. Contact Central Office Superintendent or Designee

For information regarding child abuse and neglect in an educational setting, please refer to:

District Policy #7530 – Child Abuse and Neglect/Maltreatment.

APPENDIX II

Niagara Falls City School District

Public Employer Health Emergency Plan

Date of Approved Plan

This plan has been developed in accordance with NYS legislation S8617B/A10832.

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Promulgation

This plan has been developed in accordance with the amended New York State Labor Law section 27-c and New York State Education Law paragraph m of subdivision 2 of section 2801-a (as amended by section 1 of part B of chapter 56 of the laws of 2016), as applicable.

This plan has been developed with the input of the NIAS, ASC, NFT, CSEA, TAUL, STU unions, as required by the amended New York State Labor Law.

No content of this plan is intended to impede, infringe, diminish, or impair the rights of us or our valued employees under any law, rule, regulation, or collectively negotiated agreement, or the rights and benefits which accrue to employees through collective bargaining agreements, or otherwise diminish the integrity of the existing collective bargaining relationship.

This plan has been approved in accordance with requirements applicable to the agency, jurisdiction, authority, or district, as represented by the signature of the authorized individual below.

As the authorized official of **Niagara Falls City School District**, I hereby attest that this plan has been developed, approved, and placed in full effect in accordance with S8617B/A10832 which amends New York State Labor Law section 27-c and New York State Education Law paragraph m of subdivision 2 of section 2801-a (as amended by section 1 of part B of chapter 56 of the laws of 2016), as applicable, to address public health emergency planning requirements.

Signed on this day: _____

Signature: _____

By: Mr. Mark Laurie
Title: Superintendent

Record of Changes

Date of Change	Description of Changes	Implemented By

Purpose, Scope, Situation Overview, and Assumptions

Purpose

This plan has been developed in accordance with the amended New York State Labor Law section 27-c and New York State Education Law paragraph m of subdivision 2 of section 2801-a (as amended by section 1 of part B of chapter 56 of the laws of 2016), as applicable. These laws were amended by the passing of legislation S8617B/A10832 signed by the Governor of New York State on September 7, 2020, requires public employers to adopt a plan for operations in the event of a declared public health emergency involving a communicable disease. The plan includes the identification of essential positions, facilitation of remote work for non-essential positions, provision of personal protective equipment, and protocols for supporting contact tracing.

Scope

This plan was developed exclusively for and is applicable to **Niagara Falls City School District**. This plan is pertinent to a declared public health emergency in the State of New York which may impact our operations; and it is in the interest of the safety of our employees and contractors, and the continuity of our operations that we have promulgated this plan.

Situation Overview

On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared a pandemic for the novel coronavirus which causes the COVID-19 severe acute respiratory syndrome. This plan has been developed in accordance with amended laws to support continued resilience for a continuation of the spread of this disease or for other infectious diseases which may emerge and cause a declaration of a public health emergency.

The health and safety of our employees and contractors is crucial to maintaining our mission essential operations. We encourage all employees and contractors to use [CDC Guidance for Keeping Workplaces, Schools, Homes, and Commercial Establishments Safe](#). The fundamentals of reducing the spread of infection include:

- ☐ Using hand sanitizer and washing hands with soap and water frequently, including:
 - ☐ After using the restroom
 - ☐ After returning from a public outing
 - ☐ After touching/disposing of garbage
 - ☐ After using public computers, touching public tables, and countertops, etc.
- ☐ Practice social distancing when possible
- ☐ If you are feeling ill or have a fever, notify your supervisor immediately and go home
- ☐ If you start to experience coughing or sneezing, step away from people and food, cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm or a tissue, the latter of which should be disposed of immediately
- ☐ Clean and disinfect workstations as required in cleaning checklists

- Other guidance which may be published by the CDC, the State Department of Health, or County health officials

Planning Assumptions

This plan was developed based on information, best practices, and guidance available as of the date of publication. The plan was developed to largely reflect the circumstances of the current Coronavirus pandemic but may also be applicable to other infectious disease outbreaks.

The following assumptions have been made in the development of this plan:

- The health and safety of our employees and contractors, and their families, is of utmost importance
- The circumstances of a public health emergency may directly impact our own operations
- Impacts of a public health emergency will take time for us to respond to, with appropriate safety measures put into place and adjustments made to operations to maximize safety
- The public and our constituency expects us to maintain a level of mission essential operations
- Resource support from other jurisdictions may be limited based upon the level of impact the public health emergency has upon them
- Supply chains, particularly those for personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies, may be heavily impacted, resulting in considerable delays in procurement
- The operations of other entities, including the private sector (vendors, contractors, etc.), non-profit organizations, and other governmental agencies and services may also be impacted due to the public health emergency, causing delays or other disruptions in their services
- Emergency measures and operational changes may need to be adjusted based upon the specific circumstances and impacts of the public health emergency, as well as guidance and direction from public health officials and the governor
- Per S8617B/A10832, 'essential employee' is defined as a public employee or contractor that is required to be physically present at a work site to perform their job
- Per S8617B/A10832, 'non-essential employee' is defined as a public employee or contractor that is not required to be physically present at a work site to perform their job

Concept of Operations

The Superintendent of **Niagara Falls City School District**, their designee, or their successor holds the authority to execute and direct the implementation of this plan. Implementation, monitoring of operations, and adjustments to plan implementation may be supported by additional personnel, at the discretion of the Superintendent.

Upon the determination of implementing this plan, all employees and contractors of **Niagara Falls City School District** shall be notified by the Email, and District Messaging System (Auto-dialer, Youtube channel, social media platforms) with details provided as possible and necessary, with additional information and updates provided on a regular basis. All district employees, parents and guardians, and the Board of Education will be notified of pertinent operational changes by way of the Email, and District Messaging System (Auto-dialer, Youtube channel, social media platforms). Other interested parties, such as vendors, will be notified by phone and/or email as necessary. The Superintendent or his/her designee will maintain communications with the public and constituents as needed throughout the implementation of this plan.

The Superintendent of Schools of the **Niagara Falls City School District**, his/her designee, or his/her successor will maintain awareness of information, direction, and guidance from public health officials and the Governor's office, directing the implementation of changes as necessary.

Upon resolution of the public health emergency, the Superintendent of Schools of **the Niagara Falls City School District**, his/her designee, or his/her successor will direct the resumption of normal operations or operations with modifications as necessary.

Mission Essential Functions

When confronting events that disrupt normal operations, **Niagara Falls City School District** is committed to ensuring that essential functions will be continued even under the most challenging circumstances.

Essential functions are those functions that enable an organization to:

1. Maintain the safety of students, employees, contractors, and our constituency
2. Provide vital services
3. Provide services required by law
4. Sustain quality operations
5. Uphold the core values of **Niagara Falls City School District**

The **Niagara Falls City School District** has identified as critical only those priority functions that are required or are necessary to provide vital services. During activation of this plan, all other activities may be suspended to enable the organization to concentrate on providing the critical functions and building the internal capabilities necessary to increase and eventually restore operations. Appropriate communications with students,

employees, contractors, our constituents, and other stakeholders will be an ongoing priority.

Essential functions are prioritized according to:

- ☐ The time criticality of each essential function
- ☐ Interdependency of a one function to others
- ☐ The recovery sequence of essential functions and their vital processes

Priority 1 identifies the most essential of functions, with priority 4 identifying functions that are essential, but least among them.

The mission essential functions for the **Niagara Falls City School District** have been identified as:

Essential Function	Description	Priority
Superintendent of Schools	Oversees and plans. Assigns critical functions assuring compliance with all CDC, DOH and NYSED requirements. Establishes communication with staff and parents to execute and standardize district goals. Establishes contacts to provide outside organizations with information relative to District plans to procedures. Communicates with the Board of Education directly.	1
Administrator for School Business Services	Reports to the Superintendent of Schools directly. Coordinates and supports the goals of the District with the Superintendent of Schools and other District Administrators and Supervisors. Oversees the functions of the Business Office. Communicates directly with Superintendent and administration to assist with planning and daily functions to achieve District goals..	1
Administrator for Human Resources	Reports to the Superintendent of Schools directly. Coordinates and supports the goals of the District with the Superintendent of Schools and other District Administrators and Supervisors. Oversees the functions of the Human Resources Office. Communicates directly with Superintendent and administration to assist with planning and daily functions to achieve District goals.	1

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction	Reports to the Superintendent of Schools directly. Coordinates and supports the goals of the District with the Superintendent of Schools and other District Administrators and Supervisors. Oversees the creation and implementation of Curriculum, Instruction, remote and distance learning and professional development. Communicates directly with Superintendent and administration to assist with planning and daily functions to achieve District goals.	1
Administrator for Information Services	Reports to the Superintendent of Schools directly. Coordinates and supports the goals of the district with the Superintendent of Schools and Director of Administrative Services. Communicates directly with the Superintendent and administration to assist with all technology planning and functions, including hardware, software, systems and network, ensuring that the needs of the district are being met.	1
School Administrators	Coordinates functions delegated by the Superintendent of Schools. Assign tasks to facilitate and accomplish district goals. Communicates regularly with the Superintendent and District level Administrators. Oversee school based instructional and non-instructional personnel. Ensure critical functions are being performed as necessary. Provides regular progress reports on daily activities necessary to accomplish district goals. When directed by the Superintendent of Schools, School Administrators are responsible for communicating and updating employees in district policy. This includes instruction, assessment, technology and maintenance, and scheduling and any changes to these duties. Monitor and request building safety equipment and supplies as needed.	1
District Medical Director	Reports to the Superintendent of Schools directly. Coordinates and supports the medical/health goals of the district with the Superintendent of Schools and District Administrators. Communicates directly with the Superintendent and administration. Assists with CDC, DOH and NYSED regulations including oversight of NYS recording requirements and Nursing Staff.	1

Director of Facilities	Reports to the Superintendent of Schools directly Coordinates functions with the Superintendent of Schools, District Administrators, Administrators and Staff. Responsible for maintenance activities, custodial duties including ordering supplies, training, scheduling to meet the needs of the district. Instructs and informs staff of district policy and procedures including personal protection, cleaning procedures and methods of reporting and receiving issues and concerns that may affect or enhance safety procedures. Responsible for communication and updating employees in cleaning regimen /schedules and constant changes to these duties. Maintains a current inventory of supplies and safety equipment and provides staff and services as needed. Inventory includes maintaining a cache of necessary supplies and equipment through reordering and replenishing stock so as not to fall short of critical supplies. Adjusts schedules to meet current needs, updates and trains staff on proper handling and use of tools and chemicals as per the manufacturer, CDC, DOL and DOH requirements. Coordinates deliveries and ensures delivery agents know and follow district policy when on site. Schedules outside maintenance activities. Ensures third party contractors know and follow all school, CDC, DOL and DOH policies while on school district property.	1
Food Service Administrator	Reports to the Superintendent of Schools and Administrator for School Business Services directly. Coordinates and supports the child nutrition goals of the district with the Superintendent of Schools and District Administrators. Communicates directly with the Superintendent and administration. Assists with NYSED regulations including oversight of all kitchen/Food Service Staff. Initiates and Implements all Nutritional, health and safety food service protocols.	1

Custodian on Special Assignment	<i>Reports to the Director of Facilities. Coordinates activities with, and updates the Director of Facilities regularly. Assists in providing employees with proper direction for performing necessary cleaning, equipment, cleaning products and protocols. Provides a direct line of communication from custodial staff to the Director of Facilities. Assists with keeping records of and controlling inventory, communicates directly with suppliers for ordering and receiving material and supplies to maintain an adequate cache of necessary products and materials. Assists with building schedules and arranging custodial staff and staff schedules to meet District needs. Assists with communication and updating employees in district cleaning regimen/schedules and constant changes to these duties.</i>	1 FOR DISC
Business Office	Assists the Superintendent of Schools and Administrator for School Business Services with maintaining critical financial functions and oversight. Provides needed guidance and advice with logistical and financial obligation; as well as record keeping. Provides purchasing support to ensure that necessary safety equipment and supply inventory can be maintained for education, maintenance, nursing, and custodial functions.	1
Technology Department	Provides support to ensure critical infrastructure is in place to provide effective building support and educational support securely. Works directly with the Superintendent of Schools, Administrator for Information Services and Administrative staff to ensure communication and internet stability. Provides the necessary equipment and approved software to staff and students to perform the functions of each necessary school sector to maintain building maintenance, day-to-day operations, and educational needs.	1
Nurses	Assist with the medical goals of the district. Provide medical insight and support to help maintain a healthy school population. Assists with planning and achieving district goals. Provides support and assistance to carry out orders from the Medical Director, CDC, DOH and NYSED regulations. Maintain sanitary environment.	1

	Monitors quarantine area. Keeps accurate records. Makes immediate and necessary notifications to building administrators when necessary. Coordinates activities with parents. Offers guidance to building occupants and parents. Communicates regularly with the building administration and the Superintendent.	
Building Secretaries	Staff will continue to perform vital services as directed by the Superintendent of Schools and directed by their school administrator. The District will determine need based on individual circumstances and can be utilized in school or remotely. Administration will provide services necessary for staff to operate in a safe and clean environment on site. Administration will ensure all staff will be informed of and are required adhere to district safety policy while onsite. Administration will provide the necessary means and materials to safely and effectively work in a remote setting as well.	1
Maintenance Staff	Maintenance staff will perform vital services to keep and maintain essential equipment for onsite and remote learning. Maintenance staff and work will be overseen by the Director of Facilities. Staff will be informed of school procedures and adhere to all personal safety protocols required by the CDC, DOL (PESH), and DOH at all times. The Director of Facilities will supervise and schedule maintenance personnel for the purpose of keeping vital services operating and functional.	1
Custodial Staff	Custodial staff will work as directed by the Director of Facilities and Operations and Custodial Supervisor. The Director of Facilities and Operations and Custodial Supervisor will oversee and ensure school buildings are being cleaned properly. Building Administration will also assist with notification and information about building conditions and issues that need to be discussed or addressed. Custodial staff has received pandemic awareness training. Training provided essential information about communicable diseases. Training also included information about personal	1

	protective equipment, cleaning products, proper disinfection and sanitization and product use, product labels, Safety Data Sheets, and manufacturers' requirements for use. The district will provide custodial staff with the required personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies to maintain a safe working environment. Staff shifts and personnel will be scheduled accordingly based on the needs of the district. As with all staff, custodial personnel will follow district protocols required by the CDC, DOL (PESH), DOH and the district while providing services and on breaks.	
Educational	The Superintendent, with assistance from the Administrator for Curriculum and Instruction, Administrator for Information Services and other District Administrators will determine the level of on-site education and or implement the District Remote Learning Plan.	1
Outside Contractors	Outside contractors will be scheduled and work will be performed with the oversight of the Director of Facilities. All outside contractors will notify the Director of Facilities when they arrive on-site. Outside contractors will be informed of district procedures and policy before they are allowed to work on the premises. Companies performing work on site will provide their employees with the proper PPE to comply with District policy. Outside contractors who do not or cannot work safely will not be allowed on district property.	1
Food Service	All District protocols will be initiated by the District Food Service Administrator.	1
Transportation	Transportation will provide services directed by the Superintendent with the assistant of the Administrator for School Business Services. As directed by the Superintendent, and/or the Administrator for School Business Services, the District Transportation Coordinator will work in conjunction with the Transportation Contractor on daily operations. The District will provide safe and secure transportation based on the needs of the District and learning environment. Protocols will be established and the Transportation Contractor has will ensure proper training for cleaning and	1

	sanitizing buses. The Transportation Contractor will provide their employees with the training and proper PPE and disinfection equipment to effectively maintain the transportation fleet. Records will be maintained accurately to ensure bus safety procedures are being followed. The District Transportation Coordinator will schedule student bussing pickup and drop off according to the needs of district. The District will continually inform staff and parents of changes to procedures as necessary.	
B.O.E	The Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools will dictate school policy and procedures.	1
Outside Deliveries	Deliveries will be coordinated with the Director of Facilities , Custodial Supervisor, and Building Custodians. The Director of Facilities will inform companies of District Policy and procedures in advance. All delivery agents will be required to notify the district prior to arrival on District and strictly adhere to district policy while on site. Employers will be required to provide their employees with the proper PPE to work safely while on site.	1

Essential Positions

Each essential function identified above requires certain positions on-site to effectively operate. The table below identifies the positions or titles that are essential to be staffed on-site for the continued operation of each essential function. Note that while some functions and associated personnel may be essential, some of these can be conducted remotely and do not need to be identified in this section.

Essential Function	Essential Positions/Titles	Justification for Each
Administration and Oversight	Superintendent of Schools	The Superintendent is the decision-maker for the entire district.
Financial Operations	Administrator for School Business Services	Administrator for School Business Services ensures all essential financial functions are maintained.
Human Resources/Personnel	Administrator for Human Resources	The Administrator for Human Resources ensures all essential staff and substitutes are employed and deployed appropriately at each location
Education	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction	The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, assists in determining the District's educational plan.
Information Technology	Administrator for Information Services	The Administrator for Information Services establishes all priorities for IT tasks and organizes staff. IT staff members provide support in setting up hardware and software, network management, and help desk support.
Administration	Principals, Assistant Principals	The Principals, and Assistant Principals, are the liaisons between students, families, and employees in the building.
Health Services	District Medical Director	Directs all Health Services including Nurses
Facilities	Director of Facilities	The Director of Facilities ensures the maintenance of buildings and grounds and the necessary level of cleaning and sanitizing at all locations
Child Nutrition	Food Service Administrator	Coordinates and supports the child nutrition goals of the district including oversight of all kitchen/Food Service Staff. Initiates and Implements all Nutritional, health and safety food

		service protocols.
Cleaning and Sanitizing	Buildings and Grounds Staff, Custodial Maintenance, Repairers and Laborers	Perform all cleaning and sanitization and necessary upkeep of the buildings.
Support	District Clerical Staff	Provides necessary support for all Administrators.

Reducing Risk Through Remote Work and Staggered Shifts

Through assigning certain staff to work remotely and by staggering work shifts, we can decrease crowding and density at work sites and on public transportation.

Remote Work Protocols

Non-essential employees and contractors able to accomplish their functions remotely will be enabled to do so at the greatest extent possible. Working remotely requires:

1. Identification of staff who will work remotely
2. Approval and assignment of remote work
3. Equipping staff for remote work, which may include:
 - a. Internet capable laptop
 - b. Necessary peripherals
 - c. Access to VPN and/or secure network drives
 - d. Access to software and databases necessary to perform their duties
 - e. A solution for telephone communications
 - i. Note that phone lines may need to be forwarded to off-site staff

The Superintendent of Schools and the District Administrative Staff will determine the level of remote working for all district employees in conjunction with all NYSDOH guidelines.

Staggered Shifts

Implementing staggered shifts may be possible for personnel performing duties which are necessary to be performed on-site but perhaps less sensitive to being accomplished only within core business hours. As possible, management will identify opportunities for staff to work outside core business hours as a strategy of limiting exposure. Regardless of

changes in start and end times of shifts, **Niagara Falls City School District** will ensure that employees are provided with their typical or contracted minimum work hours per week. Staggering shifts requires:

1. Identification of positions for which work hours will be staggered
2. Approval and assignment of changed work hours

The Director of Facilities will work with the Superintendent of Schools and District Administrators to formulate a calendar that schedules employees based on the needs of the District.

Personal Protective Equipment

The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce the spread of infectious disease is important to supporting the health and safety of our employees and contractors. PPE which may be needed can include:

- ☐ Masks
- ☐ Face shields
- ☐ Gloves
- ☐ Disposable gowns or aprons

Note that while cleaning supplies are not PPE, there is a related need for cleaning supplies used to sanitize surfaces, as well as hand soap and hand sanitizer. The Coronavirus pandemic demonstrated that supply chains were not able to keep up with increased demand for these products early in the pandemic. As such, we are including these supplies in this section as they are pertinent to protecting the health and safety of our employees and contractors.

Protocols for providing PPE include the following:

1. Identification of need for PPE based upon job duties and work location
2. Procurement of PPE
 - a. As specified in the amended law, public employers must be able to provide at least two pieces of each required type of PPE to each essential employee during any given work shift for at least six months
 - b. Public employers must be able to mitigate supply chain disruptions to meet this requirement
3. Storage of, access to, and monitoring of PPE stock
 - a. PPE must be stored in a manner which will prevent degradation
 - b. Employees and contractors must have immediate access to PPE in the event of an emergency
 - c. The supply of PPE must be monitored to ensure integrity and to track usage rates

The Director of Facilities and the District Medical Director will be responsible for insuring the proper PPE is available at all buildings for required applications. The District will work to ensure we maintain a six month supply of PPE as directed above for all faculty and students. An extra supply of PPE will be available in all buildings for the Principals, Nurses or Custodial staff. The **Niagara Falls City School District** participates in the Orleans/Niagara Cooperative Bid Purchasing Agreement. It provides a comprehensive list of suppliers and products used for maintaining employee safety, disinfecting and sanitization protocols.

Surplus PPE will be stored in a dry, secured central location. Access to the surplus PPE can only be made by the Director of Facilities as this will ensure the accurate accountability of all supplies on hand. The District Storekeeper will be responsible for keeping accurate records and reporting to the Director of Facilities

Staff Exposures, Cleaning, and Disinfection

Staff Exposures

Staff exposures are organized under several categories based upon the type of exposure and presence of symptoms. Following CDC guidelines, we have established the following protocols:

- A. If employees or contractors are exposed to a known case of communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency (defined as a 'close contact' with someone who is confirmed infected, which is a prolonged presence within six feet with that person):
 - 1. Potentially exposed employees or contractors who do not have symptoms should remain at home or in a comparable setting and practice social distancing for the lesser of 14 days or other current CDC/public health guidance for the communicable disease in question.
 - a. As possible, these employees will be permitted to work remotely during this period of time if they are not ill.
 - b. All necessary parties will be notified of staff exposure through contact tracing.
 - c. See the section titled Documentation of Work Hours and Locations for additional information on contact tracing.
 - 2. CDC guidelines for COVID-19 provide that critical essential employees may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure, provided they remain symptom-free and additional precautions are taken to protect them, other employees and contractors, and our constituency/public.
 - a. Additional precautions will include the requirement of the subject employee

or contractor, as well as others working in their proximity, to wear appropriate PPE at all times to limit the potential of transmission.

- b. In-person interactions with the subject employee or contractor will be limited as much as possible.
 - c. Work areas in which the subject employee or contractor are present will be disinfected according to current CDC/public health protocol at least every hour, as practical. See the section on Cleaning and Disinfection for additional information on that subject.
 - d. If at any time they exhibit symptoms, refer to item B below.
 - e. The Superintendent of Schools, in the organization is the decision-maker in these circumstances and who is responsible for ensuring these protocols are followed.
- B. If an employee or contractor exhibits symptoms of the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:
1. Employees and contractors who exhibit symptoms in the workplace should be immediately separated from other employees, customers, and visitors. They should immediately be sent home with a recommendation to contact their physician.
 2. Employees and contractors who exhibit symptoms outside of work should notify their supervisor and stay home, with a recommendation to contact their physician.
 3. Employees should not return to work until they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation per CDC/public health guidance and have consulted with a healthcare provider.
 4. **Niagara Falls City School District** will not require sick employees to provide a negative test result for the disease in question or healthcare provider's note to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or return to work unless there is a recommendation from the CDC/public health officials to do so.
 5. CDC criteria for COVID-19 provides that persons exhibiting symptoms may return to work if at least 24 hours have passed since the last instance of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. If the disease in question is other than COVID-19, CDC and other public guidance shall be referenced.
 6. The Superintendent, Medical Director and Administrator for Human Resources in the organization must be informed in these circumstances and are responsible for ensuring these protocols are followed.
- C. If an employee or contractor has tested positive for the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:
1. Apply the steps identified in item B, above, as applicable.

2. Areas occupied for prolonged periods of time by the subject employee or contractor will be closed off.
 - a. CDC guidance for COVID-19 indicates that a period of 24 hours is ideally given before cleaning, disinfecting, and reoccupation of those spaces will take place. If this time period is not possible, a period of as long as possible will be given. CDC/public health guidance for the disease in question will be followed.
 - b. Any common areas entered, surfaces touched, or equipment used shall be cleaned and disinfected immediately.
 - c. See the section on Cleaning and Disinfection for additional information on that subject.
3. Identification of potential employee and contractor exposures will be conducted
 - a. If an employee or contractor is confirmed to have the disease in question, the Superintendent, or his/her designee, should inform all contacts of their possible exposure. Confidentiality shall be maintained as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - b. Apply the steps identified in item A, above, as applicable, for all potentially exposed personnel.

We recognize there may be nuances or complexities associated with potential exposures, close contacts, symptomatic persons, and those testing positive. We will follow CDC/public health recommendations and requirements and coordinate with our local public health office for additional guidance and support as needed.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

CDC/public health guidelines will be followed for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces/areas. Present guidance for routine cleaning during a public health emergency includes:

1. As possible, employees and contractors will clean their own workspaces in the beginning, middle, and end of their shifts, at a minimum, in conjunction with District custodial staff.
 - a. High traffic/high touch areas and areas which are accessible to the public/constituents will be disinfected at least hourly.
 - b. The Director of Facilities will coordinate and establish cleaning guidelines and schedules for all cleaners to cover the common areas listed above.
2. Staff tasked with cleaning and disinfecting areas will be issued and required to wear PPE appropriate to the task.
3. Soiled surfaces will be cleaned with soap and water before being disinfected.
4. Surfaces will be disinfected with products that meet EPA criteria for use against

the virus in question and which are appropriate for that surface.

5. Staff will follow instructions of cleaning products to ensure safe and effective use of the products.

Employee and Contractor Leave

Public health emergencies are extenuating and unanticipated circumstances in which **Niagara Falls City School District** is committed to reducing the burden on our employees and contractors. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act provided requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which form the policies outlined below. This policy may be altered based upon changes in law or regulation, as applicable.

It is our policy that employees of **Niagara Falls City School District** will not be charged with leave time for testing. Employees will be provided with up to two weeks (80 hours) of paid sick leave at the employee's regular rate of pay for a period which the employee is unable to work due to quarantine (in accordance with federal, state, or local orders or advice of a healthcare provider), and/or experiencing symptoms and seeking medical diagnosis.

Further, **Niagara Falls City School District** will provide up to two weeks (80 hours) of paid sick leave at minimum of two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay if the employee is unable to work because of a bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine (pursuant to federal, state, or local orders or advice of a healthcare provider), or to care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to the public health emergency, and/or the employee is experiencing a substantially similar condition as specified by the CDC/public health officials. This provision may be modified if an employee is able to effectively work remotely and the need exists for them to do so.

Additionally, **Niagara Falls City School District** will provide up to an additional 10 weeks of paid expanded family and medical leave at minimum of two-thirds of the employee's regular rate of pay where an employee, who has been employed for at least 30 calendar days by **Niagara Falls City School District**, is unable to work due to a bona fide need for leave to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to the public health emergency. This provision may be modified if an employee is able to effectively work remotely and the need exists for them to do so.

Additional provisions may be enacted based upon need and the guidance and requirements in place by federal and state employment laws, FMLA, executive orders, and other potential sources.

Contractors, either independent or affiliated with a contracted firm, are not classified as employees of **Niagara Falls City School District**, and as such are not provided with paid leave time by **Niagara Falls City School District**, unless required by law.

Documentation of Work Hours and Locations

In a public health emergency, it may be necessary to document work hours and locations of each employee and contractor to support contact tracing efforts. Identification of locations shall include on-site work, off-site visits.

This information may be used by **Niagara Falls City School District** to support contact tracing within the organization and may be shared with local public health officials.

APPENDIX III

Niagara Falls City
School District

**Niagara Falls
City
School District**

**Emergency Remote
Instruction Plan**

2025

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Introduction

The **City School District of the City of Niagara Falls** developed the following **Emergency Remote Instruction Plan** to address the instruction of students if extraordinary circumstances prevent students and staff from physically attending school. The **Emergency Remote Instruction Plan** meets the requirements of New York State Education Commissioner's Regulations for inclusion in the 2025-2026 District-Wide School Safety Plan.

Background Information

The NYS Education Department (NYSED) authorized a "snow day pilot" program during the Covid-19 pandemic 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years. This program allowed school districts to deliver instruction remotely on days in which they would otherwise have closed due to an emergency.

To give districts greater predictability, in September 2022, the NYSED Board of Regents amended section 175.5(e) of the Commissioner's regulations to codify this flexibility. Districts that would otherwise close due to an emergency may, **but are not required to**, remain in session and provide instruction through remote learning and count these instructional days towards the annual hours requirement for State Aid purposes. Instruction must be provided to all students and be consistent with the definition of remote instruction, as explained below. In addition, beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, such instruction must be consistent with the school district's **Emergency Remote Instruction Plan**.

NYSED also amended section 155.17 of the Commissioner's regulations to require public schools, BOCES, and county vocational education and extension boards amend their **District-Wide School Safety Plans** to include plans for remote instruction beginning with the 2023-2024 school year. This gives the public an opportunity to provide feedback on such plans for remote instruction prior to their adoption. The **Emergency Remote Instruction Plan** must include the methods that the school district will ensure the availability of: devices; internet access; provision of special education and related services for students with disabilities; the expectations for time spent in different remote modalities.

Such plans also require that each chief executive officer of each educational agency located within a public school district report information on student access to computing devices and access to the internet each year.

NYSED additions to section 100.1 of the Commissioner's regulations define the term "remote instruction." This definition identifies various ways in which remote instruction may be delivered, but which must include, in all situations, regular and substantive teacher-student interaction with an appropriately certified teacher.

The NYS Board Regents adopted the amendments noted above that became effective as a permanent rule on September 28, 2022. Sections 200.7, 200.16, and 200.20 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education were amended, and became effective September 13, 2022, and December 12, 2022, as an emergency action for the preservation of the general welfare to permit approved special education providers to provide remote instruction in the 2022-2023 school year on days they would otherwise close due to an emergency and to count such instructional days towards 14 minimum requirements and to identify the ways in which such

remote instruction may be delivered. These amendments relate to remote instruction and its delivery under emergency conditions for students in approved private schools for the education of students with disabilities, state-supported schools, state-operated schools, and approved preschool special education programs. These updated regulations now provide the same flexibility for remote instruction under emergency conditions that was given to school districts. The effective date of the final rule was January 25, 2023.

Remote Instruction

The Commissioner's regulations define remote instruction as "instruction provided by an appropriately certified teacher, or in the case of a charter school an otherwise qualified teacher pursuant to Education Law §2854(3)(a-1), who is not in the same in-person physical location as the student(s) receiving the instruction, where there is regular and substantive daily interaction between the student and teacher." For the purpose of this plan, remote instruction means the instruction occurring when the student and the instructor are in different locations due to the closure of one or more of the district's school buildings due to emergency conditions as determined by the Superintendent of Schools. Emergency conditions include, but are not limited to, extraordinary adverse weather conditions, impairment of heating facilities, insufficient water supply, prolonged disruption of electrical power, shortage of fuel, destruction of a school building, shortage of transportation vehicles, or a communicable disease outbreak, and the school district would otherwise close due to such an emergency.

Unscheduled School Delays and Early Releases

Instructional hours that a school district scheduled but did not execute, either because of a delay to the start of a school day or an early release, due to emergency conditions, may still be considered as instructional hours for State Aid purposes for up to two instructional hours per session day, provided the School Superintendent certifies such to NYSED, on the prescribed NYSED form, that an extraordinary condition existed on a previously scheduled session day and that school was in session on that day (NYSED Part 175.5).

The **Emergency Remote Instruction Plan** shall identify various ways in which instruction may be delivered, including synchronous and asynchronous instruction. In all situations, remote instruction requires regular and substantive teacher-student interaction with an appropriately certified teacher.

Synchronous instruction engages students in learning in the direct presence (remote or in-person) of a teacher in real time. During remote instruction, students and teachers attend together from different locations using technology. Asynchronous instruction is self-directed learning that students engage in learning without the direct presence (remote or in-person) of a teacher. Students access class materials during different hours and from different locations. During an emergency closing, synchronous instruction is the preferred method of instruction, whereas asynchronous instruction is considered supplementary instruction.

Ensuring Accessibility and Availability (Internet, Computers / Devices)

The **City School District of the City of Niagara Falls** shall survey families to find out who has a reliable high-speed internet connection. A survey conducted in 2020 identified families who live in the district that do not have access, therefore remote learning is a challenge, if not impossible, for these students. Since 2020, every student who enrolls in the district provides information on internet access and computer accessibility. All survey information is stored and available in Microsoft Teams. When students do not have internet access, the district works with the families to develop a plan to provide instructional materials for them as well as a process for recording attendance and grading. The district works with the community to provide locations where internet access could be used if they are able to use these locations.

Commissioner's regulation 115.17(f) outlines the annual data collection that districts must submit to SED every year by June 30. It requires the school district to survey families regarding internet and device access at the student's place(s) of residence. The chief executive officer (School Superintendent) shall survey students and parents and persons in parental relation to such students to obtain information on student access to computing devices and access to internet connectivity.

District policy [8270 – Instructional Technology, 7317 – Laptop Computer Distribution, Use and Collection, 5170 – Emergency Remote Instruction] and procedures are followed to ensure computing devices are made available to students or other means by which students will participate in synchronous instruction.

City School District of the City of Niagara Falls

Emergency Remote Instruction Plan

POLICIES	The plan adheres to guidance set forth in the following Board of Education policies: [Policy 5170 – Emergency Remote Instruction, Policy 8270 – Instructional Technology, Policy 8271 – Children's Internet Protection Act: Internet Content Filtering/Safety Policy, Policy 7317 – Laptop Computer Distribution, Use and Collection, Policy 6410 – Staff/Students Acceptable Use policy (AUP) for District Computer Systems].
INTERNET AND DIGITAL DEVICE ACCESS	The school district provides all students in grades K-12 access to a personal laptop computer. In the event of an emergency, closing provisions will be made to the greatest extent possible to ensure that all students have their device at home for instruction. The school district participates fully in the SED Digital Access Survey along with locally developed surveys to assess how many students have internet access at home. The district provides hotspots to any families that indicate a need for reliable internet to facilitate access to learning at home. All faculty should have an alternative general activity for students in the instance that widespread power outages or other disruptions to connectivity occur preventing synchronous connection. If students lose connectivity, then the expectation is they will complete the alternate assignment provided.
PEDAGOGY	All teachers in grades K-12 will use Microsoft Teams - Office 365 as their primary instructional platform. Several district provided instructional technology software programs are available to support instruction along with a wide array of other resources curated by faculty. Teachers will utilize these programs to differentiate instruction, accessing a variety of delivery methods that best suit their course, grade level, and teaching style. The instructional approach may include a combination of: Synchronous “Live” Instruction - Using Microsoft Teams along with other digital platforms, teachers will deliver real time instruction to a full group or subset of students. Teachers may incorporate asynchronous or project based opportunities within this model. Teachers will make personal connections with all students during scheduled class times via Microsoft Teams. These connections will allow teachers to take attendance, introduce new content or skills and will allow students to connect with their teachers and peers in order to be guided through lessons, ask questions, and maintain personal relationships. The duration of these synchronous connections depends on the grade level and daily instructional plan but should be the primary mode of instruction and substantial enough to guide learning.

	Asynchronous “Flipped” Instruction - Using a variety of digital platforms, teachers will deliver captured or recorded lessons with associated expectations for students participation and assignment completion [Near Pod]. These activities may include teacher/student synchronous interactions for a portion of the lesson. Authentic Independent Instruction - Using a variety of methods, teachers will engage students in high quality learning activities. These activities must engage students in the learning process. Teachers will provide assistance to students in this mode of instruction through asynchronous and synchronous methods outlined above.
STUDENT EXPECTATIONS	All students will receive information on how to access course material and instruction from their teachers. Students are expected to follow all directions and requests to participate in instruction to the fullest extent possible. During synchronous instruction students are expected to be school ready. This includes being on time for class, engaging fully through video and audio as directed by their teacher, and presenting themselves in a manner that is in accordance with school expectations. All students are expected to practice appropriate digital etiquette and responsible behavior during assigned Microsoft Teams: • Mute yourself on meets as directed by your teacher • Cameras are to be kept on during classroom meets unless directed specifically by your teacher to do otherwise. Students are expected to work in an appropriate setting when participating remotely / on-line. Work places include a desk, table, kitchen counter, etc... Other locations are not appropriate or acceptable. Student dress must be appropriate in all platforms - the Student Dress Code section of the Student Handbook / Code of Conduct applies to students in all platforms. If there are any circumstances preventing full and appropriate participation the student should let the teacher know. As this is a required attendance day, students must fulfill expectations for satisfactory participation as determined by their teacher.
DAILY SCHEDULE	The virtual day will follow the same schedule framework as the HS, MS and Elementary School to which the student is assigned. As with all school schedules, appropriate breaks will be included in the daily schedule for students and faculty, including time for lunch. Students will attend all assigned classes at their scheduled time. The method of instructional delivery will vary to facilitate appropriate screen time per age level within these parameters. (https://www.nfschools.net/domain/3027)

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL: INTERVENTION	Teachers will follow the same communication protocols that are established in school for addressing areas of academic or behavioral need. This includes a combination of email, phone calls, and academic/behavioral referrals to the administration. All effective strategies should be accessed to maintain effective communication.
SPECIAL SERVICES	School districts are required to implement supports, services and accommodations, as indicated in students' IEPs or 504 Accommodation Plans, to the best of their ability. NYSED recognizes that there may be limitations to implementing certain services or accommodations through remote instruction and as a result, encourages districts to apply a "lens of reasonableness" to their approach. Please see Emergency Remote Instructional Supports for Students with Disabilities in Appendix for specific guidelines.
NON- INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES • TRANSPORTATION • FOOD SERVICE • MAINTENANCE • CUSTODIAL • CLERICAL/ ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	When a school district is in remote session, non-instructional services may still be required to report to work to perform critical services related to their area of expertise. In the event that the change to remote instruction is due to a snow or other weather emergency, such change will likely impact transportation and other critical services. Decisions whether or not non-instructional employees should report to work will be made and communicated in real time by the appropriate supervisor or administrator based on whether services can be provided in a safe and efficient manner.

NYSED Plan Requirements

1. Policies and procedures to ensure computing devices will be made available to students or other means by which students will participate in synchronous instruction;
2. Policies and procedures to ensure students receiving remote instruction under emergency conditions will access internet connectivity;
3. Expectations for school staff as to the proportion of time spent in synchronous and asynchronous instruction of students on days of remote instruction under emergency conditions with an expectation that asynchronous instruction is supplementary to synchronous instruction;
4. A description of how instruction will occur for those students for whom remote instruction by digital technology is not available or appropriate;
5. A description of how special education and related services will be provided to students with disabilities and preschool students with disabilities, as applicable, in accordance with their individualized education programs to ensure the continued provision of a free appropriate public education; and
6. For school districts that receive foundation aid, the estimated number of instructional hours the school district intends to claim for State Aid purposes for each day spent in remote instruction due to emergency conditions pursuant to section 175.5 of this Chapter.

Instructional Hours for State Aid and Reporting Requirements

Pursuant to Section 175.5 of Education Law the school district may decide to transition to remote instruction in the event emergency conditions dictate the closure of the PreK through Grade 12 facilities. Under the provisions of New York State Education Law and the district **Emergency Remote Instruction Plan** any instruction sessions provided during the closure of the school facilities are counted towards annual hour requirements for meeting 180 days required for State financial aid.

Annual Hourly Requirements for the purpose of apportionment of State Aid (for districts receiving foundation aid) are noted below:

- 450 instructional hours for pupils in half-day kindergarten
- 900 instructional hours for pupils in full-day kindergarten and grades one through six
- 990 instructional hours for pupils in grades seven through twelve

The district estimates the number of instructional hours it intends to claim for State Aid purposes for each day spent in remote instruction due to emergency conditions from a minimum of 1 remote instruction day due to emergency conditions, up to the full year's annual hourly requirement.

Reporting

IMMEDIATELY

Whenever a school building must close to instruction due to the activation of its **District-Wide School Safety Plan or Building-Level Emergency Response Plan**, a **Report of School Closure** must be submitted to the Commissioner of Education by the School Superintendent as required under CR 155.17(f) via the NYSED Report of School Closure portal. Even when remote instruction is provided during an emergency closure, a Report of School Closure must be submitted. This also applies when instruction can be delivered in an interim location or via another instructional modality.

When it is determined that it is safe to re-open a school building after an emergency closure, the School Superintendent must notify the Commissioner by completing a corresponding Report of School Re-Opening, via the NYSED Report of School Re-Opening portal.

The Report of School Closure is intended to provide immediate notification to the Commissioner regarding an emergency closure. The Report of School Re-Opening notifies the Commissioner of the re-opening and also collects the actual duration of the closure, the location and modality of instruction, and detailed information that may not have been available at the time of the closure.

Reasons for building closures may include, but are not limited to, natural disasters, power outages, instances of infectious disease, extraordinary adverse weather conditions and threats of violence. It is no longer required to submit a Report of School Closure for routine snow days.

Annually by June 30th

The School Superintendent shall notify the NYSED Commissioner the results of the survey on student access to computing devices and access to internet connectivity through the Student Information Repository System (SIRS) every year by June 30th.

End of the School Year

The school district shall report the **Emergency Remote Instruction Plan** through the **State Aid Management System** at the end of the school year. After the close of the school year starting with the ending of 2023-2024, the School Superintendent reports remote instructional days under emergency conditions through the State Aid Management System, and certifies this at the time NYSED's Form A is submitted as part of other required certifications. Using the NYSED prescribed form, the School Superintendent certifies to NYSED:

- That an emergency condition existed on a previously scheduled session day and that the school district was in session and provided remote instruction on that day;
- How many instructional hours were provided on such session day; and
- Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, that remote instruction was provided in accordance with the district's Emergency Remote Instruction Plan.

Board of Education Approval

As part of the **District-Wide School Safety Plan**, the school district's Board of Education shall make the **Emergency Remote Instruction Plan** available for public comment and public hearing for no less than thirty days (30) prior to adoption. The plan must be adopted as part of the District-Wide School Safety Plan annually prior to September 1st and posted on the district website in a conspicuous location.

Support for Students with Disabilities during Emergency Closing Virtual Instruction

School districts are required to implement supports, services and accommodations, as indicated in students' IEPs or 504 Accommodation Plans, to the best of their ability, when providing virtual instruction.

Special education teachers who provide direct/indirect consultant services will initiate outreach to their students' general education teacher(s) to collaborate on instructional modalities and any necessary accommodations or modifications required of assignments or assessments for the day.

Special education teachers who teach resource room, self-contained special classes either content specific or specialized programs, should follow the same guidance and expectations as classroom teachers in regards to pedagogy, content, class meetings, and flexibility.

Teaching assistants are available for instructional support by way of participating in class meetings, keeping up on classroom assignments and expectations, and serving as additional academic support.

Related service providers are to provide “tele-therapy” services, to the best of their ability. Related service providers are expected to adhere to similar guidelines as other professionals in regard to student and teacher work at home, communication, and flexibility and they will use the students’ IEPs to determine an appropriate/reasonable level of communication and support.

Documentation Requirements: Special education personnel are expected to document all supports and services provided to students during this time. Document the manner, means, duration of time, follow up efforts, etc. IEP progress monitoring is required to be collected and reported to parents following the schedule listed on students’ IEPs. Medicaid session notes continue to be a requirement for eligible related service providers. Special education teachers/service providers are responsible to hold any virtual professional meetings already scheduled on a day that becomes a virtual instruction day.