

# Voorheesville Central School District

## District-Wide Safety Plan

### 2023-2024

Chief Emergency Officer: Frank Macri, Superintendent of Schools

Revised July 19, 2023

#### **Introduction**

Emergencies and violent incidents in school districts are critical issues that must be addressed in an expeditious and effective manner. Districts are required to develop a district-wide school safety plan designed to prevent or minimize the effects of serious violent incidents, declared state disaster emergencies involving a communicable disease or local public health emergency declaration and other emergencies and to facilitate the coordination of the district with local and county resources in the event of such incidents or emergencies. The District-Wide School Safety Plan is responsive to the needs of all schools within the district and is consistent with the more detailed emergency response plans required at the school building level. Districts stand at risk from a wide variety of acts of violence, natural, and manmade disasters. To address these threats, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law. Project SAVE is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses prevention, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in each school district and its schools.

The **Voorheesville Central School District** supports the SAVE Legislation and intends to facilitate the planning process. The Superintendent of Schools encourages and advocates on-going district-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

The Chief Emergency Officer is responsible for coordinating communication between staff and law enforcement and first responders for ensuring staff understanding of the district-level safety plan. The Chief Emergency Officer shall also be responsible for ensuring completion and yearly update of the confidential Building-Level Emergency Response Plans.

#### **Section I: General Considerations and Planning Guidelines**

##### **Purpose**

The Voorheesville CSD District-wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the Voorheesville CSD District Board of Education, the Superintendent of the Voorheesville CSD appointed a District-Wide School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the District-wide School Safety Plan.

##### **Identification of Chief Emergency Officer**

Voorheesville CSD designates the Superintendent as the Chief Emergency Officer whose duties shall include, but not be limited to:

- Coordination of the communication between school staff, law enforcement and other first responders;

- Lead the efforts of the District-Wide School Safety Team in the completion and yearly update by September 1st, of the District-wide safety plan and coordination with the building-level emergency response plan;
- Ensure staff understanding of the District-wide school safety plan;
- Ensure the completion and yearly update by September 1st, of building-level emergency response plans for each school building;
- Assist in the selection of security related technology and development of policies for the use of such technology;
- Coordinate appropriate safety, security, and emergency training for staff, including required training in the emergency response plan yearly by September 15th; and
- Ensure the conduct of required evacuation and lock-down drills in all District buildings as required by Education Law section 807.

**Identification of School Teams**

The District has created a District-Wide School Safety Team appointed by the board of education consisting of, but not limited to, representatives of the school board, teacher, administrator, and parent organizations, school safety personnel, bus driver/monitor and other school personnel. The members of the team by title are as follows:

- Chief Emergency Officer
- Business Manager
- Director of Facilities
- High School Principal
- Middle School Principal
- Elementary Principal
- Athletic Director
- Head Custodian
- School Nurses
- BOCES Health and Safety Specialist
- Board of Education Member

**Concept of Operations**

- The District-Wide School Safety Plan is directly linked to the individual building-level emergency response plans. Protocols guide the development and implementation of 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 is by the building-level emergency response team.
- Upon the activation of the building-level emergency response team, the Superintendent or their designee is notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials are notified.
- Efforts may be supplemented by County and State resources through existing protocols.

**Plan Review and Public Comment**

- This plan shall be reviewed and maintained by the District-Wide School Safety Team and reviewed on an annual basis on or before September 1 of each year. A copy of the plan is on the Voorheesville

CSD website. The updated 2023-2024 District-Wide Safety Plan was reviewed and approved by the Board of Education on August 30, 2023.

- Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17 (c)(3), this plan will be made available for a 30-day public comment period prior to its re-adoption. The District-Wide School Safety Plan was adopted by the School Board after the required public hearing that provided for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties.
- 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. The building-level emergency response plan shall be kept confidential and shall not be disclosed except to authorized department staff and law enforcement officers.
- Full copies of the District-Wide School Safety Plan and any amendments are submitted to the New York State Education Department within 30 days of adoption by posting this public plan on the Voorheesville CSD website. The building-level emergency response plan is supplied to the NYS State Police and local law enforcement within 30 days of adoption, but no later than October 15.

## **Section II: General Emergency Response Planning**

The District-Wide School Safety Plan provides the framework for the building-level emergency response plan. The purpose of a uniform plan is to ensure organization-wide continuity for emergency responses. These general emergency responses are used to assist school employees, students, parents and emergency responders learn one system that can be used at Voorheesville CSD.

### **Identification of Sites of Potential Emergency, Including:**

- Detailed plans for each school building;
- The location of potential command and evacuation sites; primary and secondary for each site;
- The kinds of action to be taken in the event of emergency, and
- The potential internal or external hazards or emergency situations.

Voorheesville CSD has developed multi-hazard response guides. These guidelines are located in the building-level emergency response plans and are in Incident Command System (ICS) format. Plans for taking the following actions in response to an emergency where appropriate are, including but not limited to:

- Initial Actions
- Command Post Location (primary and secondary)
- Shelter in Place: Used to shelter students/staff inside the school
  - Severe Weather
  - Bomb Threat
  - Haz-Mat Incident
- Hold-In Place: Limits student/staff movement while dealing with short term emergencies
- Evacuation: Used to evacuate students/staff from the school/office
  - Before, during and after school hours, including security during evacuation and evacuation routes
  - Evacuation/Relocation Sites (internal and external)
- Lock-out: Used to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an imminent concern outside of the school

- Lock-down: Used to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school.
- School Cancellation
- Early Dismissal

Emergencies include, but are not limited to:

- Air Pollution
- Epidemic
- Medical Emergency
- Anthrax/Biological
- Explosion
- Natural Gas Leak
- Aviation Crash
- Fire Alarm Activation
- Radiological
- Building Structural Failure
- Flood
- Roof Leak/Failure
- Bomb Threat
- Heating System Failure
- School Bus Accident
- Civil Disturbance
- Hostage Situation
- Severe Weather Emergency
- Crimes Against People
- Intruder Situation
- Sudden Death of Staff/Student
- Earthquake
- Loss of Building
- Threats of Violence
- Electrical System Failure
- Loss of Buses
- Water Emergency
- Energy Supply Loss
- Mass Casualty

Voorheesville CSD has identified various resources that may be available for use during an emergency, including the identification of personnel, equipment and shelters.

Using the Incident Command System, Voorheesville CSD has identified the officials authorized to make decisions during an emergency. Through ICS, the procedures to coordinate the use of Voorheesville CSD's resources during emergencies are clearly defined. ICS also identifies the staff members and their backups assigned to provide assistance during emergencies.

## Training and Drills

Voorheesville CSD has policies and procedures for annual multi-hazard school safety training for staff and students, including the strategies for implementing training related to multi-hazards. Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, all staff undergo annual training by September 15, 2017 and each subsequent September 15 thereafter on the building-level emergency response plan which includes components on violence prevention and mental health. New employees hired after the start of the school year receive this training within 30 days of hire or as part of the existing new hire training program, whichever is sooner. Voorheesville CSD certifies that this training is completed during the October NYSED BEDS data collection.

Voorheesville CSD conducts drills and other training exercises to test components of the emergency response plan, including the use of tabletop exercises, in coordination with local, county, and state emergency responders and preparedness officials. A debriefing concludes each test to determine if changes to the plan are necessary.

### **Education Law §§ 807(1-a), 807 (b): Fire and Emergency Drills**

The July 2016 amendments expanded fire drill requirements to also include emergency drills to prepare students to be able to respond appropriately in the event of a sudden emergency. The statute now requires twelve drills be conducted each school year, four of which must be lock-down drills, the remaining eight are required to be evacuation drills. There is still a requirement that eight of the required twelve drills must be completed in the first half of the school year. However, the date of completion has been changed from December 1 to December 31 of each school year.

The statute now explicitly requires schools to conduct lock-down drills, which are essential, because they prepare students and staff to respond to the highest level of threat with the most urgent action and the least margin for error. The goal is to have schools conduct drills where they immediately clear hallways, lock doors and take positions out of sight to practice their ability to put the building into a protective posture as quickly as possible. These emergency measures allow time for responding law enforcement to arrive on scene and neutralize the threat. If possible, law enforcement should be involved in the drills to help prepare students and staff for their interactions and release from lock-down by uniformed officers. However, law enforcement involvement is not required by the new legislative mandate. Other protective actions such as lock-out or shelter in place are emergency actions that are usually preceded by some degree of warning time and do not require the immediate response necessary for a lock-down. While the school should be well versed in their lockout and shelter in place protocols, lock-down is the only type of protective action that is specifically required by the statute.

At least once every school year, and where possible in cooperation with local county emergency preparedness plan officials, Voorheesville CSD conducts one test of its emergency response procedures under its building-level emergency response plan, including sheltering, lock-down, or early dismissal, at a time not to occur more than 15 minutes earlier than the normal dismissal time.

## Threat Assessment

When a student or staff member becomes aware of implied or direct threats of violence by other students, he/she must report the threat immediately to the principal or other designated administrator. The appropriate administrator shall determine if it is necessary to convene the threat assessment team

in order to make further inquiries about the threat. The threat assessment team process allows the school to systematically investigate student-made threats to determine the apparent risk level of the student of concern. Threat assessment inquiries are non-bias and conducted using standardized questionnaires. The purpose of the threat assessment process is to determine if a student poses a real danger to the school community or themselves after gathering information from multiple sources.

The school's designated administrator (Threat Assessment Team Leader) will manage the threat assessment program. They are responsible for ensuring that new members of the threat assessment team receive training in a timely manner. If the school threat assessment team is activated and performs a threat assessment, the Team Leader (or designee) shall notify the Principal or other administration to determine appropriate management of the student of concern. Disciplinary action, if any, will be in accordance with Voorheesville CSD policy. Reports of potentially violent incidents shall be given to the Principal or Superintendent as soon as practicable.

### **Section III: Responding to Threats and Acts of Violence**

The Voorheesville CSD Building-level Emergency Response plans contain procedures for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school, including threats by students against themselves, which includes suicide. The following types of procedures are addressed in the plan:

- The use of staff trained in de-escalation or other strategies to diffuse the situation.
- Informing the Superintendent or her designee of implied or direct threats.
- Determining the level of threat with the Superintendent and building-level emergency response team members.
- Contact the appropriate law enforcement agency, if necessary.
- Monitoring the situation, adjusting the Voorheesville CSD responses as appropriate to include possible implementation of the building-level emergency response team.
- Communication with parents and guardians. When a student implies or specifically threatens self-inflicted violence, including suicide, the school's social worker directly contacts the student's parents/guardians.

The Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Guides in the building-level emergency response plan provide guidance on the Voorheesville CSD procedures for responding to direct acts of violence (i.e., Crimes Against Persons, Hostage Taking, Intruder and Kidnapping) by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school, including consideration of zero-tolerance policies for school violence. The following types of procedures are addressed in the plan:

- Inform the Superintendent/designee.
- Determine the level of threat with the Superintendent/designee and the building-level emergency response team.
- If the situation warrants, isolate the immediate area.
- Monitor the situation and adjust the level of response as appropriate. If necessary, initiate lock-down, evacuation, sheltering and/or early dismissal procedures as needed.
- Contact the appropriate law enforcement agency.

NOTE: The Voorheesville CSD “Code of Conduct” describes policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school.

Response protocols are identified in the Building-level Emergency Response Plan in the ICS format along with definitions of ICS roles and responsibilities. The Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Guides address specific procedures for responding to a bomb threat, intruder, hostage taking and kidnapping.

The following protocols for appropriate responses to emergencies are provided as examples of responses to bomb threats, hostage takings, intrusions and kidnappings:

- Identification of decision-makers.
- Plans to safeguard students and staff.
- Procedures to provide transportation, if necessary.
- Procedures to notify parents/guardians.
- Procedures to notify the media.
- Debriefing procedures.

Voorheesville CSD has established policies and procedures to contact parents, guardians or persons in parental relation to students in the event of a violent incident or an early dismissal. At Voorheesville CSD, the following communication methods are taken:

- Building level administrators will communicate with home school personnel, parents/guardians or others in parental relation to students. Determination on timing, method and scope of contact will be the responsibility of building administration.

#### **Section IV: Communication**

The Voorheesville CSD District-wide Safety Plan provides the framework for the Building-level Emergency Response Plan.

Community based emergency response services (police, fire and rescue squad) participate in the development and review of the building plan and the district plan. Copies of each written plan are made available to emergency service agencies and New York State Police. If there were to be an emergency within our facility, that facility would call 911 for emergency assistance. If involvement were needed from other local government agencies, the Superintendent or designee would act as that contact person.

Additional procedures for communications can be found in the Building-level Emergency Response Plan including local emergency contacts and phone numbers. These contacts provide guidance for obtaining assistance during emergencies from emergency services organizations and local government.

Procedures for obtaining advice and assistance from local government officials including the county or city officials responsible for implementation of Article 2-B of the Executive Law. The following local government officials will be consulted when emergency conditions call for their advice and assistance:

- Village Mayor
- Town Supervisor

- Emergency Squad
- Fire Chief
- Albany County Sheriff's Department

## **Section V: Prevention and Intervention Strategies**

Voorheesville CSD has implemented procedures for the dissemination of informative materials regarding the early detection of potentially violent behaviors, including, but not limited to: the identification of family, community and environmental factors to teachers, administrators, parents and other persons in parental relation to students of the school district or board, students and other persons deemed appropriate to receive such information. All faculty and staff will receive Mental Health Awareness and Violence Prevention Training and a copy of the District's Code of Conduct is made available. Voorheesville CSD participates in programs such as: child abuse and prevention workshops, programs to train staff on how to identify potentially violent behaviors and other risk factors. Voorheesville CSD also employs school psychologists, social workers, special education staff and school nurses who help identify early warning signs in students, early intervention/prevention strategies and the development of violence prevention instruction for staff.

The school climate is viewed as an important part of school safety. The Dignity for All Students Act supports an environment free of harassment and discrimination. The District provides training around bullying prevention through curriculum integration, which is overseen by the building level DASA coordinators. The District's Code of Conduct supports intervention and defines Disciplinary Consequences/Remediation. If appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken by the administration in accordance with the district's Code of Conduct, as applicable. If the behavior rises to the level of criminal activity, law enforcement will be contacted.

The district has implemented appropriate prevention and intervention strategies and strategies for improving communication among students and between students and staff and reporting of potentially violent incidents, such as the establishment of anti-bullying programs, youth-run programs, conflict resolution and others based on district need.

### **The Elementary Schools practice the following prevention and intervention strategies:**

- The Spirit Committee at the elementary school coordinates assemblies based on yearly themes aimed at character education.
- The school counselor teaches lessons in classrooms for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.
- The school counselor facilitates groups for students, such as Banana Splits and friendship groups.
- The school's site based team coordinates a yearly theme to improve school culture.

### **The Middle School practices the following prevention and intervention strategies:**

- Team character themes with activities throughout the year promoting and recognizing positive behavior.
- Mediation throughout the year.
- DASA complaint/concern forms available for submission and investigation.
- Student office report forms for when a child is sent to an office to explain their interpretation of why – may result in counseling of behavior approach, teacher-student meeting or an investigation of another issue that was a result of the behavior.



**The High School practices the following prevention and intervention strategies:**

- Sources of Strength (student leaders) are trained in and offer school-wide support in the areas of substance abuse, healthy relationships, stress reduction, response to and processing of social norms, and suicide prevention.
- The superintendent, high school principal, SAGA advisor, and deans of students meet with the Pride Center of the Capital Region
- The school psychologist, social worker, guidance counselors, deans of students, principal, and teaching staff employ a "Keeping Students Safe: Crisis Plan" in the case of visible cuts, burns, and other self-harm behavior.
- The Voorheesville Community Alliance for Healthy Choices takes a proactive stance regarding the reduction of destructive decisions by providing resources, organizing speakers, and offering a range of summer and year-round educational programs.
- Every Clayton A. Bouton student participates in Beacon of Hope/Remind 301 to internalize lessons about the responsibility intrinsic in life behind the wheel of a car.
- Through Reality Check, the Great American Smokeout, and Albany County Stop DWI, our chapter of SADD sets up visuals through the school and on our front lawn to display the addictive power of nicotine, the life-threatening and/or life-ending consequences of drugs and alcohol: floor-to-ceiling posters of victims and their families, flags symbolizing each teen who starts to smoke, etc.

Students, staff or parents that have concerns about an individual's potential threat to others or to themselves should immediately report those concerns to the school superintendent or other school administrators. Students are encouraged to contact a trusted adult who then will refer the matter to the appropriate administrator.

If the district becomes aware of information that an individual is likely to engage in conduct that would result in serious physical harm to him/herself or others, the Superintendent and/or designee will contact law enforcement and/or the school attorney, outside agencies, etc. to determine the appropriate next steps.

Voorheesville CSD has developed policies and procedures related to school building security, including:

- All entrances are secured daily. The District utilizes an electronic buzzer system at only one entrance to each building wherein persons must be identified and cleared prior to allowing them access to the building. Each visitor the building must sign-in and sign-out.
- Security cameras have been installed in strategic areas throughout the district.
- Staff has been issued swipe cards in order to access the buildings.

The Voorheesville CSD currently does not employ hall monitors. When and if the district hires hall monitors or other school safety personnel, they will go through the normal district hiring practices including, but not limited to, interviews, reference checks, meeting job posted requirements and fingerprinting if not on file.

The district has many Board of Education (BOE) policies that support school safety, including but not limited to:

- 0110 – Sexual Harassment
- 0115 – Student Harassment, Hazing or Bullying Prevention and Intervention

- 4526.1 – Internet Safety
- 5300 – Code of Conduct
- 5440 – Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- 5450 – Student Safety
- 5710 – Violent and Disruptive Incident Reporting
- 8100 – Safety Program
- 8110 – School Building Safety
- 8130 – School Safety Plans and Teams
- 8133 – Bomb Threats
- 8134 – Emergency Closings
- 8140 – Procedures For Determining Whether A Student Has Become The Victim Of A Violent Criminal Offense On School Grounds

Voorheesville Central School District has considered, pursuant to Alyssa’s Law, the use of silent panic alarm systems in the school that directly alerts authorities during emergencies and has installed a panic alarm system in school and administrative buildings.

### **Section VI: Declared State of Emergency Involving a Communicable Disease**

On September 7, 2020, Governor Cuomo signed into law Chapter 168 of the Laws of 2020 that requires public employers, including public school districts, to adopt a continuation of operations plan in the event that the Governor declares a state disaster emergency involving a communicable disease. The legislation (S.8617-B / A.10832) amended subdivision 2 of section 2801-a of New York Education Law to require that District Safety Plans include protocols for responding to a declared state disaster emergency involving a communicable disease that are “substantially consistent” with the provisions of section 27-c of the Labor Law. A technical chapter amendment (S.01295 / A.009980) to the legislation became effective February 16, 2021 (Chapter 30 of the Laws of 2021).

As per section 27-c of the Labor Law, the operations plan must include, but is not limited to:

- A. A list and description of the types of positions considered essential in the event of a State-ordered reduction of in-person workforce. For this purpose, essential is defined as required to be physically present at a work site to perform his or her job. Such designation may be changed at any time at the sole discretion of the employer.
- B. A description of protocols the employer will follow in order for nonessential employees to telecommute including, but not limited to, facilitating, or requesting the procurement, distribution, downloading, and installation of any needed technology, including software, data, and the transferring of office phone lines to work or personal cell phones as practicable or applicable to the workplace, and may include devices.
- C. A description of how the employer will, to the extent possible, stagger work shifts of essential employees to reduce overcrowding on public transportation and at worksites.
- D. Protocols the employer will implement to procure personal protective equipment (PPE), defined as equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards, including gloves, masks, face shields, foot and eye protection, protective hearing devices, respirators, hard hats, and disposable gowns and aprons and, for essential employees, a quantity sufficient to provide PPE to each essential employee to

meet his or her tasks and needs during any given work shift. A plan for storage of equipment and access to equipment must be included.

- E. Protocols in the event an employee is exposed to a known case of the disease, exhibits symptoms of the disease, or tests positive for the disease to prevent the spread or contraction in the workplace. The protocols shall not violate any existing federal, state, or local law regarding sick leave or health information privacy and must include detailed actions to immediately and thoroughly disinfect the work area, common area surface and shared equipment. The protocols must also describe the employer policy on available leave in the event of the need of an employee to receive testing, treatment, isolation, or quarantine.
- F. Protocols for documenting hours and work locations, including off-site visits, for essential employees. The protocol shall be designed only to aid in tracking of the disease and to identify exposed employees and contractors to facilitate the provision of any benefits which may be available.
- G. Protocols for working with the employer's locality to identify sites for emergency housing for essential employees to further contain the spread of the communicable disease to the extent applicable to the needs of the workplace.
- H. Protocols for implementing any other requirements determined by the Department of Health such as contact tracing or testing, social distancing, hand hygiene and disinfectant, or mask wearing.

The employer must consider and respond to recommendations received from the recognized or certified representatives of the employer's employees in writing, within a reasonable timeframe. A copy of the final version of the plan shall be published in a clear and conspicuous location, and in the employee handbook, and in a location accessible on either the employer's website or on the internet accessible by employees. No employer shall take retaliatory action or otherwise discriminate against any employee for making suggestions or recommendations regarding the content of the plan. "Retaliatory action" is defined as the discharge, suspension, demotion, or discrimination against any employee, or other adverse employment action taken against an employee in the terms and conditions of employment.

See Appendix B for the full plan.

## **Section VII: Recovery**

Recovery addresses the help needed for all involved to heal and to restore the school community to "normal" operations. The District supports the school buildings by deploying district resources that support the Emergency Response Teams and the Post-Incident Response Teams in the affected school(s).

Recovery plans include mental health/emotional recovery, academic, physical and business recovery, and can continue long after the actual emergency. The District has social worker and counselor resources and support systems. The District has the ability to coordinate with school, local, County and State disaster mental health services. The District's role with mental health services includes looking at

the school culture and climate, providing student access to services and following threat assessment procedures.

### **Support for Building-level Teams**

The Building-level Emergency Response Plan provides resources for supporting the building-level emergency response team and post-incident response team. The Voorheesville CSD Incident Command System (ICS) identifies back-ups to relieve team members. This provides team members the opportunity to rotate personnel, to fill in if assigned personnel are unavailable and to debrief in a supportive environment.

Voorheesville CSD realizes that some emergencies may overwhelm an individual school's ability to manage an extreme crisis. If/when the school is faced with an emergency such as threats of violence or actual violent incidents, the district-wide emergency response team assists as follows:

- Act as a sounding board regarding the implied or direct threats and/or violent acts.
- Assist in determining the level of threat and appropriate response.
- Monitor the situation and adjust the response as appropriate.
- Assist with parent/guardian, faculty/staff and media communication.
- Assist with coordinating building and grounds security in conjunction with local and State Police.
- Assist with offering a backup post-incident response team as needed.
- Offering debriefing sessions as needed working in conjunction with local, County and/or State emergency responders.

### **Disaster Mental Health Services**

If/when a building-level emergency response team or post-incident response team is faced with an emergency that may overwhelm the school's ability to manage an extreme crisis, the district-wide emergency response team assists as follows:

- If safe to do so, sending a district-wide emergency response team member to the affected school/building as a liaison between the school/building and District Office.
- Activating the district-wide post-incident response team. The district and schools have school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, and social workers that are knowledgeable of local resources for students. In addition, a Community Mental Health Resource List can be found on both the middle school and high school websites.
- Offer district support and look for continued feedback from those directly impacted during the incident, with projected plans to assist, if needed, during heightened stressful times such as a re-occurrence of a similar event and anniversaries of the original event.
- Assist with parent/guardian, student, and faculty/staff debriefing and/or post-incident crisis intervention. The debriefing is also used in part to evaluate the district-wide safety plan for possible revisions. If needed, assist in contacting additional outside mental health resources such as the National Organization for Victim Assistance (1-800-try-nova; [www.try-nova.org](http://www.try-nova.org)).

- Assist schools with written statements going out to faculty/staff, parents/guardians, press releases and media requests through the district's Public Information Officer and Communications Office.

The district supports the recovery phase and reevaluates current multi-hazard and violence prevention practices and school safety activities.

### **Section VIII - Emergency Remote Instruction Plan**

Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, all public schools, boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES), and county vocational education and extension boards must include plans for remote instruction. The emergency remote instruction plan describes how children will be educated if a school or schools must close under emergency conditions. The Voorheesville Central School District Emergency Remote Instruction Plan will outline methods that will ensure the availability of devices, internet access, provision of special education and related services for students with disabilities, and the expectations for time spent in different remote modalities. The remote instruction plan will be reviewed annually by district and building-level emergency response teams, adopted annually by the Board of Education and submitted to the New York State Education Department.

The Emergency Remote Instruction Plan can be found in Appendix C.

## **APPENDIX A – DISTRICT INFORMATION**

### **Clayton A. Bouton High School**

- Address: 432 New Salem Road, Voorheesville NY 12186
- Phone number: (518) 765-3314
- Number of Students: 345
- Number of faculty/staff: 110 (total including Middle School)

### **Voorheesville Middle School**

- Address: 432 New Salem Road, Voorheesville NY 12186
- Phone number: (518) 765-3314
- Number of Students: 306
- Number of faculty/staff: 110 (total including High School)

### **Voorheesville Elementary School**

- Address: 129 Maple Avenue, Voorheesville, NY 12186
- Phone number: (518) 765-2382
- Number of Students: 560
- Number of faculty/staff: 83

### **Bus Garage**

- Address: 129 Maple Avenue, Voorheesville, NY 12186
- Phone number: (518) 765-2382, ext. 508
- Vehicle information
  - 18 full sized buses
  - 1 handicapped accessible bus
  - 8 vans/small buses
  - 5 SUVs

Note: The District Office is located within the high/middle school building.

## **APPENDIX B – COMMUNICABLE DISEASE - PANDEMIC CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN**

This Continuity of Operations Plan (plan) has been developed to meet the requirements of subsection (2)(m) of Education Law §2801-a which requires public employers to prepare a plan for the continuation of operations in the event that the Governor declares a public health emergency involving a communicable disease. This plan is built upon the components of the District-Wide School Safety and the Building-Level Emergency Response Plans. The Plan includes elements of COVID-19 Reopening Plan and will be updated regularly to reflect current guidance and best practices. The District-Wide School Safety Team assumes responsibility for development and compliance with all provisions of this plan and implementation at the building level through the Building-Level Emergency Response Teams.

The district will work closely with the Albany County Department of Health (local health department) to determine the need for activation of this plan. The district will report suspected and confirmed cases of communicable diseases (e.g., influenza, coronavirus, etc.) on the monthly Communicable Disease Report, (DMS-485.7/93; HE-112.4/81) and submit it to the local health department. Depending on the severity of the disease, the district may be required to report information more frequently and in another format (i.e., daily for COVID-19).

The local health department will monitor county-wide communicable disease cases and inform school districts as to appropriate actions.

When this plan is activated, the District-Wide School Safety Team may invite additional people to the meetings to aid in the planning efforts:

- District Medical Director
- School nurse(s)
- Computer Technology Services Director
- Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations
- Director of Facilities
- Food Service Director
- Transportation Supervisor
- Public Information Officer
- Curriculum Director
- Public Information Officer
- Albany County Sheriff
- Albany County Department of Health

Communication with parents, students, staff, and the school community is important throughout a pandemic outbreak. Communication methods will include postings to the district website, general mailings, email, social media, school communication apps, and the public media. The district communications officer through Capital Region BOCES, has been designated to coordinate this effort. Communications will work closely with the district technology department to ensure proper function of all communication systems.

## **Essential Positions/Titles**

The district has developed this plan to prepare for any future government ordered shutdowns that may occur, similar to the coronavirus shutdown in the spring of 2020. Attachment 1 includes a list of essential positions that would be required to be on-site or in district to continue to function as opposed to those positions that could work remotely. The list includes:

- Title – a list of positions/titles considered essential (i.e., could not work remotely) in the event of a state-ordered reduction of in-person workforce.
- Description – brief description of job function.
- Justification - brief description of critical responsibilities that could not be provided remotely.
- Work Shift – brief description of how work shifts of essential employees and/or contractors will be staggered in order to reduce overcrowding in the district.
- Protocol – how precise hours and work locations, including off-site visits, will be documented for essential employees and contractors.

## **Working/Learning Remotely**

The District will assess devices and technology needs of all non-essential employees and contractors in order to enable telecommuting.

Options for assessing district needs include stakeholder meetings or surveys to ascertain

- Who will need devices and/or peripherals at home,
- What programs will need to be added to these devices, and
- The availability of viable existing at-home Internet service.

The information from these surveys will be used to determine what items need to be purchased, which programs need to be installed on devices and if appropriate Internet bandwidth can be provided to those in need

## **Reducing Risk**

Depending on the exact nature of the communicable disease and its impact, the district is prepared to use the strategies below to reduce traffic congestion and maintain social distancing:

- Limiting building occupancy to 25%, 50% or 75% of capacity or the maximum allowable by state or local guidance.
- Forming employee work shift cohorts to limit potential contacts.
- Limit employee travel within the building and/or between buildings.
- Limit restroom usage to specific work areas.
- Stagger arrival and dismissal times.
- Alternate work-days or work weeks.
- Implement a four-day work week.
- Limit or eliminate visitors to the building.
- Allow for teaching staff to work remotely
  - Cancel in-person instruction



The district may need to include additional strategies based on updated federal, state, and local guidance.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Face Coverings**

The district will procure a six-month supply of face coverings and PPE required for essential work tasks. Disposable PPE will be provided in quantities of at least two pieces per work day.

<b>PPE Type</b>	<b>Task/Role</b>
N-95	Nurses/Nurses’ Aides Cleaners/Custodians (based on disinfectants used)
Face Shields	Nurses/Nurses’ Aides Special Education All Staff based on request
Gowns	Nurses/Nurses’ Aides Special Education
Gloves	Nurses/Nurses’ Aides Special Education Cleaners/Custodians Maintenance/Mechanics
Cloth Face Coverings*	All faculty, staff and students

\* Cloth face coverings are not considered personal protective equipment by OSHA because their capability to protect the wearer is unknown. However, cloth face coverings are important as a source control for COVID-19 and provides some protection to the wearer. As such, OSHA strongly encourages workers to wear face coverings.

Those individuals that are required to wear N-95 respirators will be fit-tested and medically screened prior to use to ensure they are physically able to do so.

The use of cloth face coverings to reduce the spread of communicable diseases is important to the health and safety of faculty, staff and students. Cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected (asymptomatic) and are essential when physical distancing is difficult. Information will be provided to faculty, staff and students on proper use, removal, and cleaning of cloth face coverings. All faculty, staff and students will be mandated to utilize their own personal face coverings but the district will secure and provide face coverings as needed.

PPE and face coverings will be stored in a manner which will prevent degradation. These supplies will be monitored to ensure integrity and track usage rates.

**Continuity of Operations**

Continuity of operations could be severely impacted by a loss of staff. The table below describes the procedures for maintaining essential functions and services by planning for backup personnel.

<b>Role/Topic</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Backups</b>
Overall Operations	<p>Have decision-making authority for the district.</p> <p>Make district policies and procedures to reflect crisis response.</p>	<p>Those listed below are assigned to this role:</p> <p>Superintendent Business Official Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds District Covid Coordinator</p>
Business Office	<p>Maintain overall function and facilities operation.</p> <p>Review essential functions and responsibilities of back-up personnel.</p> <p>Monitor utilization of supplies, equipment, contracts, and provided services and adjust as necessary</p>	<p>Purchasing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Finance Clerk I</li> <li>● Purchasing Agent</li> </ul> <p>Payroll</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Payroll Clerk</li> </ul>
Facilities	<p>Keep the Business Office informed of staffing issues and of the point at which buildings can no longer be maintained</p> <p>Provided building administrators with procedures for maintaining essential building functions (e.g., HVAC system operation, alarms, security, etc.) along with a list of telephone numbers of outside companies and alternates for repair and maintenance of these systems</p> <p>Meet with staff and monitor their ability to maintain essential function</p>	<p>Maintenance/Custodial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Custodial Supervisor II</li> <li>● Night Shift Supervisor</li> <li>● BOCES Facilities Support</li> </ul>

<p>Human Resources</p>	<p>Monitors absenteeism and ensures appropriate delegation of authority</p> <p>Work with bargaining units to develop the plan for emergency use of personnel in non-traditional functions and changes in the normal work-day such as alternate or reduced work hours, working from home, etc.</p>	<p>Recruitment/Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Administrative Assistant</li> </ul> <p>Workplace Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Administrative Assistant</li> <li>● Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations</li> </ul> <p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Administrative Assistant</li> </ul> <p>Labor Law Compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Administrative Assistant</li> <li>● Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations</li> </ul> <p>Compensation Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Superintendent</li> <li>● Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations</li> </ul>
<p>Continuity of Instruction</p>	<p>Will be implemented in the event of significant absences or school closure. Alternate learning strategies will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hard copy, self-directed lessons</li> <li>● Use of mobile media storage such as the cloud</li> <li>● On-line instruction; on-line resources; on-line textbooks</li> <li>● Communication modalities for assignment postings and follow-up: telephone; Postal Service; cell phone, cell phone mail, text messages; e-mail; automated notification systems; website postings</li> </ul>	

**Response**

The District-Wide School Safety Team will meet to determine the need for activation of a pandemic response based on internal monitoring and correspondence with the local health department and other experts.

- The Incident Command Structure at both the District and Building level will be informed that the response effort has been enacted. These individuals will meet to discuss the plan’s activation and review responsibilities and communication procedures.

- Communications will work closely with the Informational Technology Department to re-test all communication systems to ensure proper function. The District-wide School Safety Team and Building-Level Emergency Response Teams will assist in this effort.
- An alert will be sent to the school community upon activation of this plan. The communication will be based on the latest information from federal, state and local health authorities.
- If the decision is made to close a school building, the district will notify the NYS Education Department and District Superintendent.

The district will assign a communicable disease safety coordinator **for the district**, whose responsibilities include continuous compliance with all aspects of the district’s reopening plan and any phased-in reopening activities necessary to allow for operational issues to be resolved before activities return to normal or “new normal” levels. The coordinators shall be the main contact upon the identification of positive communicable disease cases and are responsible for subsequent communication. Coordinators shall be responsible for answering questions from students, faculty, staff, and parents or legal guardians of students regarding the public health emergency and plans implemented by the school.

### **Hand Hygiene**

Faculty, staff, and students will be trained on proper hand hygiene. Information will be provided to parents and/or legal guardians on ways to reinforce hand hygiene at home. The district will provide stations around the school buildings:

- For hand washing: soap, running water, and disposable paper towels.
- For hand sanitizing: an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where hand washing facilities may not be available or practical.
- Accommodations for students who cannot use hand sanitizer will be made.

### **Communicable Disease Exposures**

The district must be prepared for communicable disease outbreaks in their local communities and for individual exposure events to occur in their facilities, regardless of the level of community transmission. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) have provided recommendations for strategies to follow after an exposure:

- Close off areas used by a sick person and not using these areas until after cleaning and disinfection has occurred;
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have a communicable disease, such as offices, classrooms, bathrooms, lockers, and common areas.
- Once the area has been appropriately cleaned and disinfected it can be reopened for use.
- Individuals without close or proximate contact with the person suspected or confirmed to have a communicable disease can return to the area and resume school activities immediately after cleaning and disinfection.

- If more than seven days have passed since the person who is suspected or confirmed to have a communicable disease has visited or used the facility, additional cleaning or disinfection is not necessary, but routine cleaning and disinfection should continue.

### **Contact Tracing**

The district will notify the state and local health department immediately upon being informed of any positive communicable disease diagnostic test result by an individual within school facilities or on school grounds, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors of the district.

Districts may assist with contact tracing by:

- Keeping accurate attendance records of students and staff members
- Ensuring student schedules are up to date
- Keeping a log of any visitor which includes date and time, and where in the school they visited
- Assisting the local health departments in tracing all contacts of the individual in accordance with the protocol, training, and tools provided through the NYS Contact Tracing Program

The district, in consultation with the local health department, will determine what process will be followed when communicable disease cases are discovered in the school (e.g., how many individuals will be quarantined, closing of areas or classrooms, etc.).

Confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state laws and regulations. School staff should not try to determine who is to be excluded from school based on contact without guidance and direction from the local health department.

### **Returning after Illness**

The district has established protocols and procedures, in consultation with the local health department(s), about the requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screened positive for communicable disease symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment at school. This protocol includes:

- Documentation from a health care provider following evaluation
- Negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result
- Symptom resolution, or if positive for a communicable disease, release from isolation

The district will refer to the NYSDOH’s [“Schools and Youth COVID-19 Guidance”](#) page and other applicable guidance regarding protocols and policies for faculty, staff, and students seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed communicable disease case or after the faculty or staff member had close or proximate contact with a person with a communicable disease.

The district requires that individuals who were exposed to a communicable disease complete quarantine and have no symptoms before returning to in-person learning. The discharge of an individual from quarantine and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the local health department.

## **Cleaning/Disinfecting**

The district will ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and NYSDOH, including “[Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection - Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes](#)” and other guidance, as applicable.

Attachment 2 describes cleaning and disinfection protocols and procedures for the district. Regular cleaning and disinfection of the facilities will occur, including more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk and frequently touched surfaces. This will include desks and cafeteria tables, which will be cleaned and disinfected between each individual’s use. Cleaning and disinfection will be rigorous and ongoing and will occur at least daily, or more frequently as needed.

The district will ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms. Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected more often depending on frequency of use.

## **Housing for Essential Employees**

The school district in coordination with the local health department will determine when the emergency housing of essential workers is necessary. Essential workers who will be required to use emergency housing will be identified.

## **Recovery**

Re-establishing the normal school curriculum is essential to the recovery process and should occur as soon as possible. The district will

- Work toward a smooth transition from the existing learning methods to the normal process.
- Use the described communication methods to keep the school community aware of the transition process.
- Work closely with the New York State Education Department to revise or amend the school calendar as deemed appropriate.
- Evaluate all building operations for normal function and re-implement appropriate maintenance and cleaning procedures.

The Building-Level Post-Incident Response Teams will assess the emotional impact of the crisis on students and staff and make recommendations for appropriate intervention. The District-Wide School Safety Team and Building-Level Emergency Response Teams will meet to debrief and determine lessons learned with input from *all essential functions*. The District-Wide School Safety Plan and Building-Level Emergency Response Plans will be updated accordingly.

Curriculum activities that may address the crisis will be developed and *implemented*.

### Attachment 1 – Essential Positions

Title	Description	Justification	Work Shift	Protocol
Superintendent	Oversight and management of the functions performed by employees in the superintendent’s office, the business office, and acts as the human resources office to ensure that regular business operations and services continue as necessary and/or mandated.	Superintendent needs to review/sign/ and access hardcopy documents.	As needed, at least 2 four hour in-person shifts weekly	Superintendent will follow all in-person protocols as detailed in the district reopening plan.
Central Administration	Oversight and processing of payroll, insurance claims, purchasing.	Processing of payroll claims, purchasing requests, etc cannot be fully automated through a remote system.	Each Central Administration staff: payroll, treasurer, purchasing agent, internal claims auditor- will work 1- 4 hour in-person shift weekly. All other time will be remote. Shifts could double dependent on need.	Central Administration Staff will follow all in-person protocols as detailed in the district reopening plan.
Facilities Services	Continues to upkeep the campus during remote work and learning and ensures that all buildings and	The building needs to be maintained and checked for potential issues-	3 maintenance staff for the district- rotate every other	Maintenance person or supervisor will perform building checks

	grounds are properly maintained, regularly cleaned, and disinfected as necessary to ensure the safety of school community members.	electrical,plumbing, internet servers.	day. (1 person on shift)  1 custodial, per building, every other day.	All individuals work independently in different areas of the building.  Staff will follow all in-person protocols as detailed in the district reopening plan
Transportation	Ensure meals/ technology are delivered to students.	Dependent on quarantine levels/not all families can access the district for food services.	Staff will rotate shifts doing 1 run per day of 2 buses.	Staff will follow all in-person protocols as detailed in the district reopening plan
Food Service	Ensure that food can be provided to students.	2-3 staff will be utilized 3 days a week to pre-package meals for delivery.	2-3 staff will be utilized 3 days a week to pre-package meals for delivery.	Rotate staff to have 2 staff on with director  Staff follow all building protocols/attestation  One 3 hour shift per work day
Communications	Develops, prepares, and disseminates information to targeted audiences. Information will include but not be limited to COVID Pandemic Protocols, Building Protocols, instructional programs, student specific guidance, etc.	Share district/building level messages to the school community	BOCES Communication staff will work remotely	Superintendent and designees will communicate to the Communications staff through email, web conferencing, and phone calls.



Technology	Provides hardware and software for staff and students to facilitate continued education in remote learning environments necessary for continuity of instruction and education. Also responsible for troubleshooting technical issues that may arise during the distance learning process, the offering of best practices in communication to ensure that students are able to access curricular materials, and for helping staff members disseminate information related to both academic and social-emotional education.	Hardware updates/repairs will need to be performed. General maintenance and upkeep of server systems is needed.	1 I.T. staff members will work 1 in-person day on a rotational basis.	Staff will follow all in-person protocols as detailed in the district reopening plan.  When the staff member is not in-person. I.T. Staff will access the system remotely and utilize the district ticketing system.
Instructional Programs	During the instructional year (September- June) the k-12 instructional program must have at least 180 days of programming.	Instruction must still be delivered to ensure student learning. This will be remote, synchronous learning.	Staff will have a fully remote schedule that can be performed within their personal homes or in buildings. The building is dependent on state and local guidance.	Staff will follow all protocol outlined in our Building Reopening plans  No more than 10 staff members will be in the school at any one time  If staff members would like to enter the building, then they must request permission from the building principal in writing.
Athletics	In the event of school closure there will be no athletic events.			

Special Education	In the event of school closure- special education services will follow the instructional service guidelines.			
Messenger/Mail Services	Written communication needs to be sent and received daily during business hours of operation.	Mail will be delivered and sent daily.	The individual in charge of mail will work a 1- 2 hour shift daily.	Staff will follow all in-person protocols as detailed in the district reopening plan

**Attachment 2 – Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols and Procedures**

<b>Room Types/Areas</b>	<b>Cleaning Frequency</b>	<b>Disinfection Frequency</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Additional Information</b>
Classrooms	Daily	Daily	Custodial staff; staff and teachers	Doors, (desks & chairs-cleaned after each use), floors, light switches, and high touchpoints.
Restrooms	4x daily	4x daily	Custodial staff	Doors, sinks, toilets, urinals, (sprayed and wiped) will be done 4xs daily. Floors will be done once daily.

Health Offices/Isolation Rooms	Various	Various	Nursing staff; Custodial staff	Cots, bathrooms and health office equipment will be cleaned after each use. Floors will be done once daily.
Breakrooms	Daily	2x Daily after-er use	Custodial staff; staff and teachers	Doors, tables, chairs, hightouch points, and floors
Cafeterias/Kitchens	Various	Various	Custodial staff; staff and teachers	Tables and chairs will be cleaned/disinfected in between each group's use. Floors will be done once daily.
Outside Seating Areas	Various	Various	Custodial staff; staff and teachers	Tables and chairs will be cleaned/disinfected in between each group's use. Floors will be done once daily.
Computer Labs	Various	Various	Custodial staff; staff and teachers	Equipment to be cleaned/disinfected between each use. Doors, tables, chairs, hightouch points, and floors will be done once daily.
Science Labs	Daily	Daily	Custodial staff; staff and teachers	Equipment to be cleaned/disinfected between each use. Doors, tables, chairs, hightouch points, and floors will be done once daily.
Maintenance Office and Work Areas	Daily	Daily	Custodial staff	Doors, desks, chairs, hightouch points areas and floors
Bus Garage	Daily	Daily	Custodial staff; Transportation staff	Bathroom, doors, desks, chairs, and floors

Libraries	Daily	Daily	Custodial staff; Librarians	Equipment to be cleaned/disinfected between each use. Doors, tables, chairs and floors will be done once daily.
Playgrounds	As needed	N/A	Custodial staff	Hightouch point areas
School Buses	Daily	Daily	Transportation staff	High contact surfaces will be cleaned after the morning (AM) runs and cleaned/disinfected after the afternoon (PM) run.
School Vehicles	After each use	After each use	Staff using vehicles	Hightouch point areas (steering wheel, locks, window, keys, etc.)
Administrative Offices	Daily	Daily	Custodial staff	Doors, desks, chairs, and floors
Large Meeting Areas (e.g., gymnasiums, auditoriums, music rooms)	After each use	After each use	Custodial staff; staff and teachers	Doors, (desks & chairs-cleaned after each use), floors, light switches, and hightouch points will be done daily. Equipment to be cleaned/disinfected between each use.
Athletic Training Rooms, Locker Rooms	N/A	N/A	N/A	These areas are not going to be used during closure. When these areas will be returned to use, then an appropriate frequency for cleaning/disinfection will be established.
Frequently touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, elevator buttons, copy machine buttons, handles, etc.)	2x daily	2x daily- or after use	Custodial staff; staff and teacher	

Shared frequently touched surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks, phones, laptops, tablets, remote controls, etc.)	After each use	After each use	Staff using shared surfaces	
Shared equipment (e.g., hand tools, facilities equipment, groundskeeping equipment, golf cart, etc.)	After each use	After each use	Staff using equipment	

Only district approved chemicals will be used. At no time will students be allowed to use cleaners or disinfectants.

## **APPENDIX C – EMERGENCY REMOTE INSTRUCTION PLAN**

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, school districts in New York are required to have a plan for how children will be educated if a school or schools must close under emergency conditions. These Emergency Remote Instruction Plans (ERI Plans) are included as part of the district-wide school safety plan, which is reviewed annually by district and building-level emergency response teams, adopted annually by the Board of Education and submitted to the New York State Education Department.

### **Communication and Engagement**

To help inform our Emergency Remote Instruction Plan, the district completes an annual Student Digital Resources data collection report to better understand the level of access students have to devices (e.g., laptop, Chromebook, cell phone) and the Internet. Voorheesville Central School requests that the parents and guardians of enrolled students complete a Digital Equity Standard Survey on an annual basis which is reported to the New York State Department of Education.

The purpose of this survey is to ensure that, to the extent possible; students can access the Internet and receive remote instruction, if necessary, under emergency conditions. This survey is conducted on an annual basis. Students and families may update their access information at any time by contacting the student's school. It is our goal that this plan is aligned with the information provided by families in the Student Digital Resources data collection.

The district has also developed a plan for communicating all necessary information should a school or schools need to close. The district will use existing internal and external communications channels to notify staff, students, and families/caregivers about remote learning schedules with as much advance notice as possible. This communication will include information about how computing devices (e.g., computers, hot spots, etc.) are being disseminated to students and families who need them. When the school needs to close and move to remote instruction, the district will notify staff, students, and family/caregivers by the School Messenger phone messaging system, if needed staff would be asked to notify families individually, and send home a written notification. In addition, students and staff receive information through emails and via Google Classroom.

The school will communicate with students when to bring home school computing devices as needed. During regular in-person instruction, Voorheesville Central School District provides 1:1 access to computing devices in school. Grades 6-12 are allowed to bring their devices home on a daily basis. In the event the district would need to provide emergency remote instruction, the district would arrange for Grades K-5 to receive computing devices. Based on the most recent

digital equity survey, the district estimates that approximately 85 - 90% have computing devices in students' homes in addition to school district provided devices.

The district will provide students and their families with multiple ways to contact schools and teachers during remote learning, including through Google Meets, student email, or via phone.

### **Device, Internet and Platform Access**

To support remote learning, the district will make computer devices available to all students and families who need them. If the need for remote instruction is anticipated, the district will direct students and staff to bring school computing devices home. High school and middle school students who require additional internet access have been provided a hotspot device for use at home. Elementary school students and families can make a request through their building principal for such a device.

There will be those students in our community for whom remote learning through digital technology is not appropriate or possible. For these students, the district will assess each student's individual needs and whether in-person learning is an option. Other methods that will be considered include instruction through the delivery of district level computing devices for home instruction.

The district will also take steps to ensure that school staff members have the necessary tools, i.e., computing devices and Internet access, to deliver emergency remote instruction from their place of residence. Teachers will use school computing devices and have access to Wi-Fi to deliver remote instruction.

### **Instruction**

Our district has developed an emergency remote instruction plan that would support all students. When a remote learning model is necessary, certain groups of students will be prioritized for in-person learning to the greatest extent possible, depending on the nature of the emergency.

The district may choose to provide remote learning to students when all students and staff are not on school premises or they may choose to provide remote learning to students while staff are present on school campuses.

Acknowledging that the typical content in each grade level or course may need to be adjusted, content will be prioritized to ensure that students receive instruction for the prioritized learning standards, key understandings, and skills necessary for students' success in future study.

Instruction will focus on “core” subject areas; however, elective courses will continue to be offered in a remote learning environment. All instruction will continue to be aligned to the New York State Learning Standards.

Virtual learning schedules have been developed by grade level. If an emergency requires the district to move to virtual learning, these schedules will be shared with students and families in accordance with the communication strategies outlined earlier in this plan. Students will be given opportunities to engage with teachers and classmates through live instruction, question and answer periods with teachers and group work (i.e., synchronous learning). Teachers will ensure that their students are directly engaged with them and their class peers in experiential learning on a regular basis. Supplementing this time will be self-guided projects, readings and other age-appropriate assignments that can be completed by the students remotely (i.e., asynchronous learning).

Remote instruction in Grades 6-12 will primarily occur following a typical class schedule with classes conducted in the same digital space for synchronous learning sessions. The high school campus will synchronize with BOCES if campuses are open and to develop scope and sequence of schedules. An office hours schedule will be provided to students through Google Classroom so that they can receive extra help. Extra help will also be provided as needed. In addition, extra help and instruction can be provided upon return to in-person instruction.

In Grades K-5, preparation for such an emergency event requiring remote instruction, teachers and staff will maintain 1 emergency plan per trimester. Students will be provided a schedule that follows regular in-class instruction as closely as possible with consideration to the type of emergency event. Synchronous learning in Grades pre-K-5 will be 85-95% of whole group instruction time. Teachers may provide break out rooms and supports as needed within instruction time. Students with IEPs will continue to receive required services.

Special area classes such as Art, Music, Library and Physical Education, will be offered through a list of asynchronous virtual activities. Extra help will also be provided as needed. In addition, extra help and instruction can be provided upon return to in-person instruction.

The district recognizes that there will be students for whom remote instruction via digital technology is not appropriate. In an emergency, as the district is assessing which students need devices or access to the Internet, the district will also assess which students may require additional support. Support for students returning from remote learning will be provided in the classroom through options such as Homework Center, tutoring services and learning labs. In addition, missed work will be addressed in the same manner as an absent student returning to school.



## **Support Services**

Based on the learning model we have developed, students with disabilities and/or an Individualized Education Plan will continue to receive support services in accordance with their individualized education plans (IEP) should remote learning become necessary. It is the expectation that all service providers (e.g., teachers, paraprofessionals, related service providers) will sign-on to the remote learning platform to support students as needed. This will include large classroom settings in the remote learning environment, as well as the use of breakout rooms or one-on-one virtual meetings as necessary.

Special education and related services will be provided in accordance with students' individualized education plans to ensure the continued provision of a free appropriate public education. Service providers have all been trained to continue service and work with families in anticipation of remote learning.

The district will follow its existing engagement and communication protocols with parents regarding the provision of special education services for their child.

## **Foundation Aid**

The estimated number of instructional hours the district would claim for state aid purposes for each day spent in remote instruction due to emergency conditions is outlined below. The district estimates that:

- High School and Middle School students will be provided with 5.5 hours of instructional time per day.
- Kindergarten and Elementary School students will be provided with 5 hours of instructional time per day.