

REOPENING GUIDE

July 2020

International Charter School of Trenton
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Planning Committee

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Student Population Profile

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Poverty Rate</u>	<u>Special Needs</u>	<u>Educational Setting Option</u>		
			A - B	In-school only	Virtual only
Kindergarten	Unknown	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
First Grade	15	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD
Second Grade	15	1	TBD	TBD	TBD
Third Grade	15	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD
Fourth Grade	10	5	TBD	TBD	TBD

Scheduling cohorts for transportation, after school care, and siblings

Info TBD

<u>Grade Level</u>	A day	B day	<u>End of Day Pick-up</u>		
			Bus	Sitter/Program	Virtual only
Kindergarten					
First Grade					
Second Grade					
Third Grade					
Fourth Grade					

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted every aspect of our lives. As we look to the future and plan for students to return to schools in-person this fall, we must recognize and prepare for the ways the virus and necessary public health response has changed and will change the way students learn. This Restart and Recovery Plan provides educators and administrators with the information necessary to ensure that our schools reopen safely and are prepared to accommodate students' unique needs during this unprecedented time.

The Plan presents guidance related to four key subject areas:

1. Conditions for Learning
2. Leadership and Planning
3. Policy and Funding
4. Continuity of Learning

Throughout the document, the term "anticipated minimum standards" is used to refer to items that school districts should incorporate into their reopening plans as definite components related to health, safety, and operations. The term "considerations" is used to refer to components that districts and schools should incorporate into their thinking about reopening, but do not represent necessary components of plans.

Conditions for Learning

Conditions for learning must not only address students' and educators' basic physical safety needs, but also the social and emotional and environmental factors that can impact educators' capacity to teach and students' capacity to learn.

ICST will screen students and employees for symptoms of COVID-19 and history of exposure and must strive for social distancing within the classroom and on school buses prior to the opening of school in September. Due to the building design, we are not able to maintain this physical distance. Therefore each class size will be limited to 50% (maximum of nine students and one adult simultaneously present). Additional modifications include 6' spacing between desks and turning desks to face the same direction. ICST will also adopt additional cleaning and disinfecting procedures.

School staff and visitors are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health or the individual is under two years of age. Students are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings and are required to do so when social distancing cannot be maintained, unless doing so would inhibit the student's health. It is also necessary to acknowledge that enforcing the use of face coverings may be impractical for young children or individuals with disabilities. CARES Act money was used for the purchase of face masks and additionally 100 child sized and 20 adult sized face-shields to be worn in conjunction with masks (or singly for those who cannot wear a mask) to further reduce the spread of air-borne virus contaminants.

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

- 1. General Health and Safety Guidelines** – In all stages and phases of pandemic response and recovery, ICST will comply with Center for Disease Control (CDC), state, and local guidelines. We will also provide reasonable accommodations for staff and students at higher risk for severe illness and promote behaviors that reduce spread, such as social distancing, frequent hand washing and the use of face coverings.
 - Receiving and consuming meals
 - Mask removal and storage during meals
 - Person belongings / storage restrictions
 - Health screening prior to daily entry

2. Classrooms, Testing, and Therapy Rooms – ICST will allow for social distancing to the maximum extent possible. Social distancing is not possible, therefore face coverings are required, and face coverings are always required for visitors and staff unless it will inhibit the individual's health. In those situations the individual will wear a face shield. Clear barriers will be located in some offices. ICST will minimize use of shared objects, open windows as possible, prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations, and ensure students wash hands frequently.

3. Transportation – ICST students will follow the guidance on bussing set forth by the Trenton Board of Education. Social distancing practices on buses to the maximum extent practicable will be emphasized. If maintaining social distance is not possible, all students who are able must wear face coverings while on busses.

4. Student Flow, Entry, Exit, and Common Areas –The process and location for student and staff health screenings will occur at the main entrance to the building. People waiting to enter will be in line, spaced 6' outside the building. This includes physical guides, such as tape on the sidewalk and signs on walls, to help ensure that staff and students remain at least six feet apart. Because there is less 113 square feet of space per person (even with a 50% reduction in the number of pupils per class) all people in the building are required to use face coverings.

Student drop-off and pick-up during busy times will follow the traffic pattern created for meal pick-up beginning in March, 2020:

- Those waiting to access the building will enter a line, with 6' interval spacing marked on the sidewalk.
- People leaving the building during crowded time periods will exit through an adjacent property in order not to pass others waiting to drop-off or pick-up students.
- Staff members who need to access the school entrance will follow the same procedures.
- Directional arrows within the building to reduce incidences of close proximity.

5. Screening, PPE, and Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms – Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 must be safely and respectfully isolated from others. There is an isolated area designated for students to wait to be picked up if they fall ill during regular school hours. If the school is made aware that an individual who has spent time in the school building tests positive for COVID-19, district officials will immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality.

A multistep procedure process for screening staff and families includes:

- Health checks prior to entry to the building (ex: temperature taking, quick check to identify loss of smell, verbal questions.)
- Any person reporting illness or registering an abnormal temperature will be refused entrance, their name and temperature will be recorded and they will be sent home.
- Hand sanitizing regularly throughout the day.

6. Contact Tracing – ICST will support contact tracing to identify those who have come into contact with people who have tested positive with COVID-19. Multiple staff members completed the training provided by Johns Hopkins and offered through Coursera. ICST will collaborate with the local health department and develop contact tracing procedures, as well as educate the broader school community on the importance of contact tracing.

7. Facilities Cleaning Practices – ICST will continue to adhere to existing required facilities cleaning practices and procedures, and any new specific requirements of the local health department as they arise. Increased cleaning and disinfecting, especially of frequently touched surfaces and objects, will occur and bathrooms will be sanitized daily as well as between uses will occur as much as possible. CARES Act money was used to purchase anti-viral/bacterial tape to be adhered to doorknobs and other commonly touched surfaces and also two electrostatic sprayers (plus disinfecting tablets for the spray solution) to reduce the spread of both virus and bacterial germs. The tape will be refreshed every three months (or sooner if it becomes worn down) while the sprayers will be used during the day when classes are meeting elsewhere in the building and in the bathrooms between scheduled uses.

Steps for maintaining a hygienic environment:

- Multiple access points for hand sanitizer, disinfecting spray bottles
- Maintaining possession of personal belongings (coats, bags, etc)
- Scheduled bathroom times
- Staggered movement in hallways
- Sanitizing routines including the use of the electrostatic spray cleaner

8. Meals – Breakfast will be distributed as students enter the building, to be consumed in the classroom. ICST will serve grab and go style lunch meals to be eaten off site. Cafeteria staff must wash their hands immediately after removing gloves and after directly handling used food service items.

9. Recess/Physical Education – ICST uses Orange Park (a public park) and will use cones to mark off areas to ensure separation between students. Recess times will be staggered by groups and staff will disinfect both items brought to the park and public equipment before use. Gym will be conducted in the second floor multi-purpose room. Windows will be opened, and students will be spaced out further than the minimum 6’ recommendation. Naturally, all equipment will be sanitized between classes.

10. Extracurricular Activities and Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours – At this time there are no extracurricular activities or beyond school hour use of the building.

Leadership and Planning

Adjusting the school environment to ensure the health and safety of students and staff will require a great deal of planning. School districts should create Restart Committees to coordinate the overall reopening plan. These Committees should include district- and school-level administrators, school board members or charter trustees, local education association representatives, educators, parents, and students. School districts should also establish school-based Pandemic Response Teams to centralize, expedite, and implement COVID-19-related decision-making. Each school team should have a liaison that reports to district-level administrators to ensure coordinated actions across the district. Pandemic Response Teams should include a cross section of administrators, teachers and staff, and parents and should represent a cross-section of the school community including its gender and racial diversity. The Restart Committee should work closely with school Pandemic Response Teams, health departments, and others in municipal and county government to develop district plans that address the ten Critical Areas of Operation. The NJDOE also recommends they address the following critical issues:

- **Scheduling** – ICST’s reopening plans for resuming in-person instruction in are:
 - To implement an A-B schedule with one day reserved for diagnostic assessment, student meetings, and other face to face activity for teacher-student contact.
 - Dismissal for in-person students at 1:00 to allow time for teachers to provide individual or small group support for remote students, as well as time for educational support to be implemented, and time for wrap around support to be conducted without interrupting instructional time.
- **Staffing** – Regardless of the environment, school expectations for student learning are the primary factor in decision making. ICST has historically and will continue to involve school staff in plans and decision-making throughout the school year. The unique needs of each staff member, such as access to and comfort level with technology, social and emotional health, and child care concerns are built into the new work routines. Staff roles also expanded to accommodate the new health and safety regulations. Instructional and non-instructional staff

schedules include designated time to support school building logistics required to maintain health and safety requirements. ICST Families are updated nearly daily as planning solidifies into action.

- Athletics – N/A

Policy and Funding

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

- **Purchasing** – ICST is a member of the Hunterdon County Educational Cooperative Purchasing System, and regularly seeks the lowest prices for goods.
- **Use of Reserve Accounts, Transfers, and Cash flow** – While there is very little latitude, ICST will strive to the greatest extent consider making expenditures from various accounts or over-budgeted line items to meet unanticipated costs and to manage their cash flow.
- **Costs and Contracting** – ICST participates in the federal E-rate program, which provides schools and libraries with funding support for high-speed broadband connectivity and internal connections equipment. The application was written prior to COVID-19 shutting down operations in March, 2020.

To ease the burden on schools, the NJDOE plans to leverage existing and pending federal and state legislation, regulations, and guidance to predict the potential impact on districts and provide targeted assistance. Resources that may be available to schools include:

- **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund** – ICST applied for the CARES Act grant to fund the purchase of a variety of materials related to school operations within the brick and mortar building as well as for virtual instruction. Additional Chromebooks, technology, and related tools were ordered to supply students with goods and materials related to both in person and remote instruction. Sanitizing equipment and supplies will ensure as germ and virus free an environment as can be maintained. Partitions and PPE were ordered for both staff and students for the purpose of reducing the airborne spread of COVID-19.
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency – Public Assistance** – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers the Public Assistance program, which reimburses 75 percent of eligible expenses that are a direct result of the declared emergency (in this case, the COVID-19 outbreak). ICST is currently completing their application for aid to provide additional on-site cleaning to protect the school community from COVID-19 inside the building during school hours.

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

- The July FY21 Budget Projection includes Adjustment Aid that replaces dollars lost from State Aid. Additional information will be released in August and budget modifications may be necessitated at that time.

Continuity of Learning

Ensuring continuity of learning is critically important during this time of great stress for families, educators, and students. The degree to which districts will be able to return students to brick and mortar education remains uncertain. ICST agrees with the NJDOE that there will be some students who made less than one full year of academic growth during the 2019-2020 school year. The move to a fully virtual learning environment happened quickly and created significant challenges for staff and students, particularly students already considered at-risk prior to the pandemic. ICST continues to work closely with all stakeholders to ensure decisions are made collaboratively and transparently and to prioritize safely returning students who are most in need of in-person instruction.

Keeping this in mind, ICST is focused on the following areas to ensure continuity of learning:

- **Delivery of in-school and remote instruction**

Kindergarten

The format is expected to be split day Kindergarten to maintain 9 student cohorts. Families are connected to digital communication during registration to ensure there is a viable method for sharing information about both school and classroom. Kindergarteners (and their parents) will be taught how to use OnCourse Connect and they will follow a similar pattern as grades one and two.

1st to 4th grade

Whether students are physically in-school or learning remotely, teachers will have students log in to their laptops at 8:30 AM to begin their first lesson. The lesson duration will be determined and communicated in advance. The camera will be focused on the teacher and the view will include the white board as necessary. As the teacher delivers instruction, they will expect responses from students both in the classroom and engaged in remote learning. The responses will be tracked as developmentally appropriate for each grade level (or student as determined by their IEP).

1st and 2nd grade students working remotely will interact with a classroom aide who monitor responses. 3rd and 4th grade students working remotely will use ClassFlow or while students in the classroom will use their white boards to provide their responses to the teacher.

For the purposes of maintaining safety, teachers will meet with small groups only when the students are working remotely. The teacher will provide independent tasks for students who are in-school while the teacher is working with the small group virtually. This combination will ensure that each student will meaningfully interact with their teacher daily.

Students will be assessed for math and reading levels. Teachers have a base-line from 2019-20 digital instructional student results. The summer packets also incorporated digital programs that allow teachers to identify areas of academic weakness and strength. ICST groups students homogeneously for specific content area goals, and this process will continue both in the building and through online learning.

- **Digital Resources**

International Charter School is connecting all students through OnCourseConnect, which is an integrated platform for remote learning. The various websites and tools that will be used by teachers from K-4 will be linked through OnCourse Classroom.

Each child will have access to a Google ChromeBook provided by the school, unless they have access to a personal computer at home for their use during the entire school day. Based on our survey, around 40% of families will need the school to provide them with a ChromeBook. Hot spots will be provided to families with unreliable internet access.

If necessary, teachers will create videos of lessons so that students can review material taught during the live lessons and discuss during consultation time.

Besides teacher-created instruction videos, students will also use independent learning tools such as Khan Academy, Reading and Science A-Z, Scholastic News, Iknowit.com, Success Maker and others.

- **Students with Disabilities**

Currently ICST students with IEP's are provided service through content area replacement or support. Additional services such as Counseling, Speech, etc. are also delivered out of the regular classroom setting. Regardless of the setting, all students with special needs will have services in compliance with their IEP. This will happen in the building and/or remotely through Google Meet. Meeting times and identification codes will be provided to parents through OnCourse Connect. Telephone conferences will be conducted to ensure families understand how to connect to their child's instructors as well as to provide technical assistance. Teachers will coordinate student meeting times in order to eliminate conflicts.

All students in this category will participate in Google Meet with their Teacher of the Handicapped. Lessons will be designed to help students attain the goals and objectives as

specified in their IEP's. The virtual lessons will meet or exceed the required duration of instruction. Students with disabilities will follow their grade level class schedule in the building and during virtual sessions in order to maintain social connectedness, and to participate in instruction not specified by the IEP.

Daily and academic progress will be recorded during Google Meetings and in OnCourse GradeBook. Additional tracking will be registered in the apps students use regularly, such as Reading A-Z, Successmaker, etc. Student progress will be recorded and measured against each student's PLAFF, which guides the lessons used to improve individual student academic achievement. As with all students, daily attendance will be kept in Oncourse, the school's student information system.

Prior to the first day of school, families of students with disabilities will be individually contacted and guided through setting up the remote learning process. Families will connect through OnCourse Classroom where communication between school personnel and families may be sent through private messages. ICST Staff will coordinate telephone meetings to ensure families have adequate equipment and connectivity, will determine optimum meeting times, will answer questions and provide even more information about who to communicate through, as well as to make sure they understand what their child should be able to accomplish at home. The principal will attend Google Meet sessions on a random basis to ensure that the meetings are productive.

When building based programming is restarted, IEP annual review meetings and evaluations will be conducted and meetings will be rescheduled to complete the processes begun during the previous interrupted school year.

- **Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments**

Teachers are currently planning adaptations to the curriculum, delivery of instruction, and methods of assessment in anticipation of hybrid instruction. Staff capacity to deliver highly effective instruction in hybrid environments and preparing to address any learning gaps that might prevent students from meeting grade-level New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) is the priority focal point as the teachers shift into planning lessons through OnCourse Connect and the array of virtual tools that are available for instruction. The ICST staff has developed a culture of shared purpose and goals, collaboration among educators, and an effective partnership approach with students' family members and caregivers.

- **Professional Learning**

It is imperative that districts provide professional learning that will better equip leaders, staff, substitutes, students, and parents/caregivers to adapt to altered educational environments and experiences. Among the most critical focus areas are training to address the learning loss for the most vulnerable populations (students with disabilities, English language learners, students without proper technology or internet access, etc.), and preparing and supporting educators in meeting the social emotional, health, and academic needs of all students.

Mapping the Road Back for education in New Jersey will require a collaborative, comprehensive, and careful approach to reopening schools as well as school district flexibility to pivot should health conditions change. Still, New Jersey residents, students, and educators are resilient and with the guidance offered in this document, districts will be able to successfully develop plans that allow schools to reopen in a way that protects students' and educators' physical health while providing high-quality education.