

Public Employer Health Emergency Plan for the Germantown School District

4/1/2021

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

Promulgation

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

This plan has been developed with the input of GTA, GSA, GAA, as required by the amended New York State Labor Law.

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

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

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

Signed on this day: 4/1/2021

By: Benjamin Bragg

Title: Superintendent of Schools

Signature: 

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Purpose, Scope, Situation Overview, and Assumptions

Purpose

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

Scope

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

Planning Assumptions

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

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

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

Concept of Operations

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

Upon the determination of implementing this plan, all employees and contractors of the Germantown School District may be notified by phone, email, or any other means determined to be necessary, with details provided as possible and necessary, with additional information and updates provided on a regular basis. Parents, students, and other community members will be notified of pertinent operational changes by way of email notifications, social media messaging, and local news outlets, amongst others. Other interested parties, such as vendors, will be notified by phone and/or email as necessary. The Superintendent of Schools will maintain communications with the public and constituents as needed throughout the implementation of this plan.

The Superintendent of Schools of the Germantown School District, their designee, or their successor will maintain awareness of information, direction, and guidance from public health officials and the Governor's office, directing the implementation of changes as necessary. Updates of this plan will be published on the District Website and posted conspicuously in all school buildings.

Upon resolution of the public health emergency, the Superintendent of Schools of the Germantown School District, their designee, or their successor will direct the resumption of normal operations or operations with modifications as necessary.

Mission Essential Functions

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

Essential functions are those functions that enable an organization to:

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

The Germantown School District has identified as critical only those priority functions that are required or are necessary to provide vital services. During activation of this plan, all other activities may be suspended to enable the organization to concentrate on providing the critical functions and building the internal capabilities necessary to increase and eventually restore operations. Appropriate communications with employees, contractors, our constituents, and other stakeholders will be an ongoing priority.

Essential functions are prioritized according to:

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

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

The mission essential functions for the Germantown School District have been identified as:

Essential Function	Description
Information Technology/Continuity of Operations and Instruction	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.
Buildings and Grounds	Continues to upkeep the campus during remote work and learning and ensures that all buildings and grounds are properly maintained, regularly cleaned, and disinfected as necessary to ensure the safety of school community members.
District Office	Oversight and management of the functions performed by employees in the superintendent's office and the business office to ensure that regular business operations and services continue as necessary and/or mandated.
Health Office/Health Services	Upon consultation with the district physician and the County Department of Health, school nurses may be responsible for assessing ill staff and students, providing consultation to the district office, following up with healthcare providers, and providing assistance with contact tracing efforts as necessary.
School Building Main Office Staff	Oversight of mail, phones, sign-in procedures, and building utilization and operations.
Food Service	Ensure that food can be provided to students
Transportation	To ensure that meals may be delivered to students
Building Administrators	Oversight and management of the functions performed by school level employees in their specific schools

Essential Positions

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

Essential Function	Essential Positions/Titles	Justification for Each
Information Technology/Continuity of Operations and Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IT Director (Questar) 	Responsible for overseeing the local area network and the subsequent ongoing maintenance of this network for the district. Oversees the district's internet access, phone systems, and cell phone plans. Responsible for providing support to teachers and students in regards to computer

		hardware and software. Will respond to "help desk" and troubleshooting concerns.
	Head Custodian	Responsible for overseeing and providing direction to the B&G department and employees to ensure a safe working environment.
Buildings and Grounds District Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custodians • Cleaners • Maintenance Workers • Groundskeeper(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for routine cleaning, disinfecting, and maintenance tasks. • Responsible for performing a wide variety of tasks related to the maintenance and upkeep of campus grounds, parking lots, and fields.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent of Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for making day-to-day decisions about educational programs, budget/spending, staff, and facilities. • Responsible for helping the school district come in to and remain in compliance with all aspects of reopening plans, reopening activities, and guidance related to reopening.
	Business Administrator	Responsible for assisting the Superintendent in the administration of business affairs in such a way to provide the best services with the financial resources available
	Head Nurse	Assists building and district administrators by communicating with the local health department for guidance, may act as the liaison to the school physician, and is responsible for assisting other nurses in assessing ill students and staff
Health Office/Health Services School Building Main Office Staff	School Nurse	Responsible for assessing ill students and staff and assisting in contact tracing efforts
	School Secretary	Responsible for answering phones, providing support to building administrators, responding to emails, greeting visitors, assisting in building sign-in procedures, accepting deliveries, and helping disseminate mail.
Food Service	Food Service Manager	Responsible for overseeing the preparation of meals and coordinating with the Transportation Director to ensure that meals are disseminated.
Food Service Transportation	Food Service Employee	Responsible for the preparation of and making of meals for students.
	Transportation Director	Responsible for the safety and efficient operation and maintenance of the transportation department. Coordinates with the Food Service Manager on meal deliveries.
Building Administrators	Building Principals	Responsible for overseeing the day-to-day functioning of the school community and supporting the academic success of students,

		promoting a positive school climate, and assisting educators.

Reducing Risk Through Remote Work and Staggered Shifts

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

Remote Work Protocols

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

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

Remote work protocols shall be developed and facilitated through coordination with district administrators, building administrators, and the IT department to ensure that all needs are met and that safety, security, and functionality are at the forefront of any and all discussions

Approval and Assignment of Remote Work

The Superintendent or designee, in consultation with the Director of Human Resources and other administrators and/or supervisors as needed, will review requests for remote work and corresponding work assignments to aid in the decision making process. Final decisions will be communicated to the Director of Human Resources and building/department administrators for dissemination to their respective staff. The Director of Human Resources will notify payroll of such decisions to ensure employee time and attendance is tracked accurately.

Equipping Staff and Students for Remote Learning

The school district shall work with their IT Manager to support non-essential employees and students during an extended school closure. In order to support this, students K-12 and instructional faculty and staff shall be provided with Chromebooks/laptops as possible to ease the transition to remote learning/working. Non-instructional staff who work remotely will have access to Chromebooks/laptops based on their individual needs for them to effectively perform their job duties remotely. In addition, the IT Department has established protocols for the repair of Chromebooks/laptops, as well as protocols for assisting in the procurement of internet access at an individual's home, if they do not have internet. The IT Department will also be responsible for assisting individuals in the procurement of VPN or other secure network drives as is deemed necessary and for providing access to software and databases that are deemed necessary for somebody to perform their duty.

Staggered Shifts

Implementing staggered shifts may be possible for personnel performing duties which are necessary to be performed on-site but perhaps less sensitive to being accomplished only within core business hours. As possible, management will identify opportunities for staff to work outside core business hours as a strategy of limiting exposure. Regardless of changes in start and end times of shifts, the Germantown School District will ensure that employees are provided with their typical or contracted minimum work hours per week. Staggering shifts requires:

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

Shifts will be staggered in determination based on specific needs of the school community. The technology team, Superintendent of Schools and Business Official will be on campus at all times unless health/safety determines otherwise.

Identification of Positions with Staggered Work Hours and Approval Process

District buildings and grounds staff may be assigned to staggered shifts to ensure coverage before, during, and after core business hours. Nurses and other building positions may also be realigned to ensure greater coverage during the day and to line up with the needs of our population.

The approval and assignment of changed work hours must be reviewed by the district's Building Administrator. Factors such as staffing levels, the ability to provide physical distancing, and ways to improve efficiency and/or effectiveness will be considered in the decision-making process.

Personal Protective Equipment

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

- Masks
- Face shields
- Gloves
- Disposable gowns and aprons

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

Protocols for providing PPE include the following:

1. Identification of need for PPE based upon job duties and work location
2. Procurement of PPE
 - a. As specified in the amended law, public employers must be able to provide at least two pieces of each required type of PPE to each essential employee and contractor during any given work shift for at least six months
 - b. Public employers must be able to mitigate supply chain disruptions to meet this requirement

3. Storage of, access to, and monitoring of PPE stock
 - a. PPE must be stored in a manner which will prevent degradation
 - b. Employees and contractors must have immediate access to PPE in the event of an emergency
 - c. The supply of PPE must be monitored to ensure integrity and to track usage rates

All PPE will be stored in the Nurses cabinet and is accessible as needed. Monitoring of supplies will be handled by the school nurse.

Identification of Personal Protective Equipment Based on Job Duties

Each building shall be provided with a supply of disposable masks and hand sanitizer for use by students, employees, contractors, and/or visitors, as necessary. *Nurse* shall be responsible for monitoring and replenishing those supplies as necessary. Individuals with a medical necessity and an approved reasonable accommodation will be provided N-95 respirators as necessary.

Given the nature of their work, buildings and grounds staff and health office staff will be supplied daily access to disposable masks, disposable gloves, face shields, and gowns as necessary. Individuals who have a job position that requires the wearing of an N-95 respirator shall be entered into a respiratory protection program, fit tested, medically cleared, and provided N-95 respirators as required.

Procurement of Personal Protective Equipment

Nurse shall track PPE inventory in their building in the form of an inventory report that will be submitted to the *Head Maintenance Worker* for review each week. When inventory gets low (i.e., having less than two pieces of PPE for each essential employee for at least a six-month period), the Head Maintenance Worker will notify the Business Administrator who will contact one or more of the vendors on the District-approved supplier's list to procure the necessary PPE. The district maintains a supplier list with backup suppliers listed in an effort to mitigate any supply chain disruption. For unforeseen disruptions or shortages, the district shall work with the Columbia County Department of Health for assistance. Personal protective equipment shall be stored within the buildings where they can be tracked and accessed in the event of an emergency, and maintained in a way that prevents degradation.

Staff Exposures, Cleaning, and Disinfection

Staff Exposures

Staff exposures are organized under several categories based upon the type of exposure and presence of symptoms. When/if a staff member is exposed, we will follow applicable Columbia County Department of Health, New York State Department of Health, and CDC guidelines as is required and best practices.

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

Cleaning and Disinfecting

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

1. As possible, employees and contractors will clean their own workspaces in the beginning, middle, and end of their shifts, at a minimum.

- a. High traffic/high touch areas and areas which are accessible to the public/constituents will be disinfected according to a preset schedule that emphasizes their cleaning and disinfection.
 - b. Buildings and grounds staff, with possible assistance from others, will be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting common areas, based on the requirements of each individual situation and influenced by factors such as frequency of use, the specifics of the communicable disease, and recommendations from local, state, and federal authorities.
2. Staff tasked with cleaning and disinfecting areas will be issued and required to wear PPE appropriate to the task.
 3. Soiled surfaces will be cleaned prior to being disinfected.
 4. Surfaces will be disinfected with products that meet EPA criteria for use against the virus in question and which are appropriate for that surface.
 5. Staff will follow instructions of cleaning products to ensure safe and effective use of the products.

Documentation of Work Hours and Locations

In a public health emergency, it may be necessary to document work hours and locations of each employee and contractor to support contact tracing efforts. Identification of locations shall include on-site work, off-site visits. This information may be used by the Germantown School District to support contact tracing within the organization and may be shared with local public health officials.

All parties in attendance will complete our online Frontline health survey. Those without access will sign a paper copy of the health survey prior to entering the building. All staff will keep track of their contacts with a contact tracing form daily.

Housing for Essential Employees

There are circumstances within a public health emergency when it may be prudent to have essential employees lodged in such a manner which will help prevent the spread of the subject communicable disease to protect these employees from potential exposures, thus helping to ensure their health and safety and the continuity of the Germantown School District's essential operations. If such a need arises, the school district shall work with local and state authorities to help identify and arrange for housing needs.