

# **BERGEN COUNTY SPECIAL SERVICES**

## **Autism Continuum**

### **Washington Elementary &**

### **RESTART & RECOVERY PLAN**



*August 2020*

# Autism Continuum Restart & Recovery Plan

## Introduction:

Bergen County Special Services School District is committed to the health and safety of our students and staff. This is our number one priority. The BCSS Restart Plan was developed to define clear guidance for the reopening of schools that aligns with the regulations developed in collaboration with county, state and national health professionals and organizations.

The areas outlined in the BCSS Restart Plan represent major considerations our district is addressing to reopen schools safely and to sustain their reopening. Based on the guidance therein, the New Bridges and Washington Schools' Pandemic Response Teams customized the Conditions for Learning component of the plan to meet the more specific health and safety needs of the students and staff within each of our very unique educational programs.

As with every plan right now, this document is fluid and will change as necessary based on guidance from the district, the state, the Bergen County Health Department and considerations to our families and our staff.

We strongly believe the actions brought forth in this plan are in the best interests of our students, staff, families and communities.

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## Autism Pandemic Response Team Members from each program included:

- Principal
- Supervisor
- Teacher
- Nurse
- Teaching Assistant
- Speech Therapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Physical Therapist
- Behavior Specialist
- Case Manager
- Administrative Assistant
- Association Representative
- Parent

**The NJDOE Restart and Recovery Plan for Education requires that then Critical Areas of Operation be addressed under Conditions for Learning. The BCSS Restart Plan addresses these globally for the district. Below you will find Program Specific information related to those 10 Critical Areas of Operation.**

## Schedule

In an effort to maximize student-teacher contact time and assist students with social and emotional interactions and support, while simultaneously following guidance for the NJDOE for safe and preventative practices, Washington Elementary will institute a hybrid schedule.

Students will attend in person instruction for a full instructional day three days a week (9:00 - 2:45).

Students will follow the remote learning model two days a week for the mandatory minimum of 4 hours set forth by the NJDOE.

Students whose family have requested full remote instruction will receive remote instruction five days a week for the mandatory minimum of 4 hours set forth by the NJDOE.

Students will be designated a group and follow the schedule of that group until such time that the NJDOE provides guidance to open fully or revert to full remote instruction.

- A. Group A: in person Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday
- B. Group B: in person Monday, Thursday, Friday
- C. Group C: in person Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
- D. Group D: in person Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

|         | Monday    | Tuesday   | Wednesday | Thursday  | Friday    |
|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Group A | in person | in person | in person | remote    | remote    |
| Group B | in person | remote    | remote    | in person | in person |
| Group C | remote    | in person | remote    | in person | in person |
| Group D | remote    | remote    | in person | in person | in person |

This model limits the student body present in the building to 2/3rds at any one time, thus supporting social distancing of students at all times. Therapy and specials schedules will be constructed to maximize in-person sessions when possible and to balance in-person /virtual sessions as necessary.

Student Group Assignments will be communicated to families and districts by Friday, August 7, 2020.

As has always been our practice, student schedule of therapies and specials will be distributed to families during the first full week of school

Barring any health restrictions, all faculty will be expected to be in the building daily, conducting in person or virtual instruction in or from the school.

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- A. COMMUNICATION: in all stages of the pandemic response and recovery, our schools must comply with the Center for Disease Control (CDC), state, local and district guidelines
  - B. STAFF AT HIGHER RISK:
    - a. Staff members with a current medical condition should speak to their doctor, and as applicable, provide Human Resources with a note stating that it is not advisable for them to be in a work environment due to the existing condition
    - b. Be sensitive to those who do not feel comfortable coming in to work
      - i. Have supervisors talk to person
      - ii. Look at the position and can this work be done remotely
      - iii. Come to an understanding that we will all have to come into work eventually if there is no medically documented condition
    - c. If a staff member has a childcare issue he/she will need to provide documentation that pre-existing childcare is not yet available
      - i. We may need to make accommodations for a short time
  - C. STUDENTS AT HIGHER RISK:
    - a. Student who cannot come to school due to a medical condition, will be provided remote instruction
      - i. Assure the parent/caregiver that high quality instruction will continue
      - ii. Program administrators/case managers reach out to parents to assure them that we will work with the student until they can transition from home to school
    - b. Where possible bring the student into the classroom remotely through Zoom
    - c. A Behavior Department Pandemic Response Team has been created to
      - i. ensure protocols to ensure student and staff safety during instruction, behavior interventions and crisis interventions
      - ii. Behavior Intervention Plans will be reviewed and modifications made as necessary to maximize compliance with COVID specific safety protocols
      - iii. IEP meetings will be held if necessary to discuss the safest learning environment
  - D. FOLLOWING CDC'S GUIDELINES  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>
  - E. PROMOTING BEHAVIORS THAT REDUCE SPREAD
    - a. social distancing
    - b. frequent hand washing
    - c. use of face coverings
    - d. Staff and students stay home when ill
    - e. Signs and messages

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- A. Classrooms
- a. Every class will have additional space for social distancing (utilization of larger spaces, utilization of two adjacent rooms , splitting students for spacing)
  - b. Students will enter/exit classrooms one at a time
  - c. Barriers (such as space dividers or desktop sneeze guards or study carrels) will be used in classrooms when possible
  - d. Students will be present in the building, and therefore in classrooms, on hybrid schedule to create reduced occupancy and support all practices outlined herein
  - e. When social distancing is difficult, face coverings are required for students if it is possible for the student to wear a mask. In many BCSS schools students cannot wear masks. Some may be able to wear face shields for some protection.
  - f. All staff are required to wear masks unless it will compromise the individual's health.
  - g. Sharing of objects, materials will be severely limited (classroom, ST, OT(.. If sharing certain equipment is necessary, it will be cleaned and disinfected in between uses (mainly for PT); time will be built into schedules as needed to clean/disinfect materials/equipment in between student use
  - h. Indoor facilities have adequate ventilation, including operational heating, and ventilation systems where appropriate (See Policy #7421 Indoor Air Quality Standards)
    - i. Recirculated air must have a fresh air component
    - ii. Filter(s) for A/C units will be maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations.
  - i. For classrooms that have existing handwashing stations, prepare stations with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol).
  - j. Hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) will be prepared and accessible:
    - i. In each classroom (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer)
    - ii. At entrances and exits of buildings.
    - iii. Near lunchrooms and bathrooms.
    - iv. Students will be supervised when using hand sanitizer.
  - k. Students will wash hands for at least 20 seconds at regular intervals, including before eating, after using the bathroom, after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing, when returning from outdoors.

B. Therapy rooms

- a. The location of therapy sessions will be dictated by the IEP.
  - b. Whenever possible, therapy will take place in the extended classroom space
  - c. Sessions will be scheduled back to back within the same classroom when possible
  - d. sharing of equipment will be severely limited
  - e. time will be in schedules to clean/disinfect materials/equipment when necessary
- C. Since we provide services to medically fragile students and students with complex disabilities, schools will implement the following:
- a. Obtained PPE prior to opening and maintain ongoing supplies, in order to remain open
  - b. Provide direct instruction to students on use of PPE on self and others
  - c. Ensure there will be continuous disinfecting of classrooms and therapy rooms that service students with complex disabilities where multiple tools are used for communication, mobility, and instruction
  - d. Ensure heightened monitoring and frequent handwashing which will often require hand-over-hand assistance
  - e. Limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use
  - f. When possible, ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the greatest extent possible
  - g. No sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids, or thoroughly clean and disinfect between use
  - h. Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example, by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children using the facility
  - i. Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other) or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart
  - j. For furniture that is intended to accommodate more than one student replace the multi-student furniture or consider some type of partitioning system ( sneeze guards, Plexiglas, temporary or movable dividers)
  - k. Keep classes together to include the same group of children each day (cohorts). Do not allow mixing between groups/cohorts
  - l. Allow outdoor classrooms/activities where possible and when seasonally appropriate
  - m. Add time to schedules where needed to ensure students have time to wash their hands

### ● Critical Area of Operation #3: Transportation

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- A. Travel outside of the building for field trips, community based instruction and/or vocational training will be on hold until further notice
  - B. Once travel outside of the building resumes, protocols for transportation found in the BCSS Restart Plan will be followed

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- **Critical Area of Operation #4: Student Flow, Entry, Exit, and Common Areas:**

- A. Social distancing will be maintained whenever possible
- B. Multiple entrances will be used to support social distancing and prevent congregating
- C. Entrances will be assigned to and restricted to use by assigned cohorts.
- D. When physical distancing (six feet) is not be maintained for individuals entering or exiting a building, face coverings/masks must be utilized
- E. Physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and/or signs on walls, will be used to help ensure that staff and students remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g. guides for creating “one-way routes” in hallways).
- F. Minimize interaction of students between drop-off and entrance to school facilities by limiting the number of students embarking and disembarking from buses as a given time.
- G. Create “one-way routes” in hallways.
- H. Cohorts (classes and staff assigned to specific areas of the building) will be used as an effective strategy to limit exposure and contact
- I. No large group gatherings.
- J. Continue to have signage around school buildings to provide hygiene advice and reminders (CDC offers [printable resources](#) and [handwashing posters](#))
- K. Increase frequency of cleaning all surfaces, including walls (to the appropriate height based on age of students).
- L. Student belongings will be stored within the classroom in individual bins or cubbies
- M. Reception areas can maintain social distancing with natural barriers already in place.
- N. Visitors to the building will be severely limited (See Policy # 9150 School Visitors)
- O. Parents dropping off their child will be met at the curb by a faculty member to retrieve the student
- P. Bathrooms
  - a. Stagger the use of bathrooms; one student a time when possible
  - b. make sanitizing wipes readily available at all times for high touch areas
  - c. Install/create occupied/vacant signs

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- **Critical Area of Operation #5: Screening, PPE, & Response to Students & Staff Presenting Symptoms**

- A. BCSS has revised a policy to include screening students and employees for symptoms, including temperature checks and history of exposure. (See Policy # 5310M Health Services). See BCSS Restart Plan.
- B. The NJDOH has issued guidance on screening, decision making regarding isolation, exclusion, closures, contact tracing and communication. [NJDOH COVID 19 GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS](#)

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- **Critical Area of Operation #6: Contact Tracing**

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- A. BCSS has revised Policy #8441M Care of Injured and Ill Persons to include contact tracing procedures and protocols. See BCSS Restart Plan

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● **Critical Area of Operation #8 Meals**

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- A. Cafeteria will be used for social distance learning not as a lunchroom
  - B. Lunch will be eaten in classrooms or, when possible, outside
  - C. Meals will be picked up & delivered to the designated area
  - D. Meals will need to be preordered and prepaid
  - E. PRTs will determine the most efficient & safe protocols for meal service in their schools
  - F. Hand washing will be required before and after eating
  - G. Our food service vendor, Chartwells, will follow all CDC protocols for the cleaning and disinfecting of their food prep areas.

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● **Critical Area of Operation #9 Recess/Physical Education**

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- A. The number of groups that will participate in recess will depend upon the size of the space the facility has whether indoors or outdoors
  - B. Designate specific areas for each class during recess to avoid cohort mixing.
  - C. Students should have at least 6 feet of open space between them during recess or Physical Education.
  - D. Schools will use cones, flags, tape, or other signs to create boundaries between groups.
  - E. Students and staff will always wash hands immediately after outdoor playtime or after Physical Education class
  - F. Staggered schedules for the use of playground equipment and frequent disinfecting protocols will be developed by the **PRTs**.
  - G. Schools will complete an inventory of outdoor spaces (playgrounds, green spaces, open space, and local parks) and designate zones, use stations, mark off areas, floor markers, floor tape, poly spots, etc., to ensure separation among students (six feet for social distancing)
  - H. BCSS schools do not utilize locker rooms.
  - I. To mitigate risk, limit and/or eliminate direct contact with equipment (lessons with no equipment) and do not allow sharing of equipment. If equipment must be shared, clean and disinfect between each use.

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● **Critical Area of Operation #10 Field Trips, Extra-curricular Activities, & Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours**

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- A. Field Trips & CBI
    - a. There will be no field trips or CBI for students/adults at least through December
    - b. BCSS has established a CBI committee to develop curriculum and resources to be utilized for CBI, internships and career exploration in school and remotely.
    - c. We are exploring the new job opportunities that may be available post-COVID



- B. Extra-curricular Activities
  - a. BCSS does not provide extra-curricular activities.
- C. Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours
  - a. BCSS will severely limit or eliminate the use of our facilities after school hours

### **Social Emotional Learning(SEL)**

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Social Emotional learning has always been an integral part of instruction for our student population. Focus on individual student needs for social emotional learning will continue on an ongoing basis. Focus on adjustment to in person learning will be a priority during our first few weeks back to school, including return to school schedules, school based expectations and learning with others. An individualized approach will be taken, understanding that the adjustment period will differ for each student.

### **Staff/ Student/Parent Training**

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- A. Medical & Protocols
  - a. District nurses are developing a training that will address all aspects of COVID-19 from a medical perspective. This comprehensive training will include guidance & protocols regarding the following:
    - i. symptoms
    - ii. spread
    - iii. treatment
    - iv. testing
    - v. district and building level policies, procedures and protocols (Health Checks)
    - vi. importance of and proper hand washing and social distancing when possible
    - vii. appropriate use of PPE, masks gloves, face shields, gowns, etc.
    - viii. use of hand sanitizer
  - b. A general training will be developed for the district & then shared with building nurses who will customize the training to meet the needs of the staff depending on how they are required to interact with students based on the level & type of disability
- B. Social Emotional Well-Being
  - a. District SAC, School Psychologist, and Physical Therapist are developing a training that will address social emotional learning and school culture and climate. This comprehensive training will include:
    - i. Grief, loss, trauma
    - ii. Mental health and supportive behaviors
    - iii. Fear and anxiety
    - iv. Preparedness, hope, and resilience
    - v. Coping strategies
- C. Schools will utilize CST & district SAC to address ongoing mental health issues
  - a. Assess students and staff regarding mental health concerns.
  - b. Provide resources as needed
  - c. Work with students on an ongoing basis as needed

- d. Engage families and provide resources as needed
- D. Educator Well-being
  - a. Administrators will give permission to faculty/staff to take mental health breaks, take walks, and engage in other acts of self-care as needed
  - b. Administrators/CSTs will check-in regularly with faculty/staff creating opportunities for employees to share information that may be affecting their wellbeing.
  - c. In addition, Employee Assistance Program information will be shared with faculty/staff at the beginning of the school year and individually when a need is identified.
  - d. Information on access to mental health professionals through the health insurance plan will be shared with employees at the beginning of the school year and individually when a need is identified.
  - e. Links to mental health support resources such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness, CDC, and NJ Mental Health Cares will be shared with faculty/staff.

## School Culture and Climate

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In addition to its role in developing, maintaining, and fostering a positive school climate to prevent Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying, the School Safety / Climate Team along with school nurse and counselors, where applicable, will assess the school climate and develop evidence-based strategies and school-wide instructional programs to address the identified needs. The efforts of the team will be to prioritize the health and emotional well-being of staff and students to promote a safe learning environment.

## Multi-tiered Systems of Support

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- A. Universal Screening
  - a. Teachers administer screening assessments to each student in the areas of English language arts & mathematics. These assessments will be very different depending upon the student population being assessed.
- B. Collaborative Problem-Solving
  - a. As a district that serves only students with varying levels and types of disabilities, we engage in collaborative problem solving on a daily basis at all times. Each student has an IEP team that assesses the data regarding student progress and then makes decisions as to the supports and instruction that student will be provided. It is then the work of our educational teams consisting of CST, teachers, therapists, in conjunction with families to implement the IEP and to continually assess and then adjust the instruction and level of support services accordingly.
- C. Family Engagement
  - a. Families and students (to the greatest degree possible) are always included in the decision-making process via the IEP and school level educational teams regarding interventions and supports. We work with our families to help to enable them to provide in-home support for the student and provide the supports or accommodations that may be necessary to facilitate family participation, i.e. participation by phone and ongoing

communication between the members of the educational teams and families via phone, email, written correspondence, etc.

**D. Data-Based Decision Making**

- a. Data-based decision making involves systematic analysis of data within multiple levels of instruction and interventions to identify students' strengths and areas of need, appropriate interventions and determine the effectiveness of interventions. In each school building in our district a coordinated system for planning and delivering intervention and referral services already exists to assist students who are experiencing learning, behavior, or health difficulties, and to assist staff who have difficulties in addressing students' learning, behavior, or health needs.

## **Wraparound Supports**

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**A. Mental Health Supports**

- a. BCSS has long established procedures for working with students in need of individualized mental health interventions.
- b. Schools will utilize CST & district SAC to address ongoing mental health issues
- c. Assess students and staff regarding mental health concerns.
- d. Provide resources as needed
- e. Work with students on an ongoing basis as needed
- f. Engage families and provide resources as needed

**B. Primary Health and Dental Care**

- a. BCSS school nurses have been continually and will continue to be engaged in meeting the physical health, dental needs of students and families in virtual, hybrid, or in-person school environments
- b. BCSS CST and SAC have been continually involved in meeting mental health needs of students in virtual, hybrid, or in-person school environments.
- c. Our consulting school physicians has been and will continue to be utilized in addressing the needs of our students and families in both remote and hybrid scenarios as needed

**C. Family Engagement**

- a. Throughout reopening, it is important to connect students and families to wraparound services that will be critical in the upcoming academic year such as health care, mental health supports, child care, after-school enrichment programs, and other services to meet day-to-day needs.

**D. Academic Enrichment/Expanded After-School Learning**

- a. BCSS continues to serve students through ESY programming
- b. In addition we will work with LEAs through the IEP process to provide compensatory services if and when it is determined that that they are warranted

**E. Mentoring**

- a. BCSS will continue to work with various LEAs to provide home programming for students as required via contracts through our Educational Enterprises division

## **Food Service and Distribution**

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- A. Cafeteria will be used for social distance learning not as a lunchroom

- B. Lunch will be eaten in classrooms or other designated area, when possible outside**
- C. Meals will be picked up & delivered to the designated area by a member of that cohort**
- D. Meals will need to be preordered and prepaid**
- E. Hand washing will be required before and after eating**
- F. Our food service vendor, Chartwells, will follow all CDC protocols for the cleaning and disinfecting of their food prep areas.**
- G. If students are on an alternate day schedule, each student identified for free or reduced meals (breakfast/lunch) will take home prepared meals for the next day**

#### **Quality Child Care**

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- **BCSS CSTs will work with families to provide possible resources when it is identified that quality child care is needed**