

Public Employer Health Emergency Plan for the Argyle School District

date of approved plan: March 11, 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 Argyle Teachers Association and Argyle Non-Teaching Association, 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 Argyle Central 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: 3/12/2021

By: Michael Healey

Title: Superintendent

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 Argyle 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 Argyle Central 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 Argyle Central 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 will maintain communications with the public and constituents as needed throughout the implementation of this plan.

The Superintendent of Schools of the Argyle Central 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 Argyle Central 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 Argyle Central 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

The Argyle Central 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 Argyle Central School District have been identified as:

Essential Function	Description
Buildings and Grounds	Responsible for upkeep the campus, ensures that all buildings and grounds are properly maintained, regularly cleaned, and disinfected as necessary to ensure the safety of school community members.
Business Office	Ensure the continuity of business operations and related functions of the school district.
Delivery of Instruction	Provide instruction to all students enrolled in the district.
District Office	Oversight and management of the functions performed by employees in the district; ensuring that to the extent possible, regular business operations and services continue as necessary and/or mandated.
Food Service	Ensure that food can be provided to students
Health Office/Health Services	Assist in all health-related functions of the school district; act as a liaison between the district, the school physician, state and local health departments, and other entities as needed.
Information Technology	Provides hardware and software for staff and students to facilitate continued education in remote learning environments necessary for continuity of instruction and education. 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 the academic and social-emotional needs of students
School Building Office and Secretarial Staff	Monitor/assist with mail, phones, sign-in procedures, building utilization and operations, and other activities determined essential in daily office function.
Transportation	Ensure students are safely transported to and from school. In the case that school transitions to remote instruction, ensure that meals and instructional materials may be delivered to students.

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
Buildings and Grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Maintenance Worker • Cleaners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for cleaning, disinfecting, and maintenance tasks. • Ensures district facilities are maintained during periods of remote instruction. • Assist with the health and safety functions occurring within the district.
Building Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Principals • Director of Pupil Personnel Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Business Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Manager • Account Clerk/Payroll • District Treasurer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for maintaining the daily fiscal operations of the district, including payroll, accounts receivable, purchase orders, budgeting, etc.

Communication Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Specialist (BOCES) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for ensuring important communications re: district actions and decisions relating to remote instruction are shared with the community
Food Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cafeteria Manager • Cafeteria Workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for the preparation of student meals during periods of remote instruction.
Health Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Nurse(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for ensuring compliance with any state mandated health reporting
Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Director • BOCES IT Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Directors establishes all priorities for IT tasks, including overseeing the local area network and the subsequent ongoing maintenance of this network as well as all related IT for the district. • IT staff sets up, maintains, and supports hardware, software, and network with help desk support required for remote learning and remote working.
Secretarial Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent Secretary • Jr/Sr High School Secretary • Guidance Secretary • CSE Secretary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for daily office functions during periods of remote instruction.
Superintendent of Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent of Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for overseeing all decisions pertaining to educational programs, health & safety, budget/spending, staff, students, and facilities, etc.
Faculty/ Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • Related Service Providers • Teacher Aides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for delivery of instruction and related services for all students enrolled in the district; Faculty & staff may be deemed essential during periods of remote instruction on an as needed basis.
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Bus Driver • Mechanic • Drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for the maintenance of district vehicles. • Responsible for delivery of meals and instructional materials during periods of remote instruction.

Reducing Risk Through Remote Work and Staggered Shifts

Should this be required, the District can decrease crowding and density at the work sites and on public transportation by assigning certain staff to work remotely and by staggering work shifts.

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. Administrative 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

Any request for additional equipment for remote work, in addition to the equipment provide to all faculty, must be made in writing to the appropriate building principal. If approved by the building principal, the request will be forwarded to the Superintendent for final approval.

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 district 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, and as required, management will identify opportunities for staff to work outside core business hours as a strategy of limiting exposure.

Staggering shifts requires:

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

For those "Essential Employees", the district may develop a staggered shift schedule to reduce the number of employees within the building at a given time. The supervisor for each labor title will develop a staggered schedule and submit to the Superintendent for review and approval.

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

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. *The school 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

On a monthly basis, The school nurse shall track PPE inventory in the building in the form of an inventory report that will be submitted to the *Superintendent* for review. When inventory gets low the nurse will notify the Business Manager who will contact one or more of the vendors on the District-approved supplier's list to procure the necessary PPE. For unforeseen disruptions or shortages, the district shall work with the Washington 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 Washington County Department of Health, New York State Department of Health, and CDC guidelines as is required and best practices.

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 and by following guidelines for frequency and process as recommended by CDC and NYSDOH.

- 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 and high touch 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 pathogen in question and which are appropriate for that surface.
 5. Staff will follow instructions of cleaning products to ensure safe and effective use of the products.

Employee and Contractor Leave

Public health emergencies are filled with extenuating and unanticipated circumstances in which the Argyle Central School District is committed to reducing the burden on our employees, contractors, and families. The Argyle Central School District is committed to ensuring that our leave policies meet all local, state, and federal requirements and that additional provisions may be enacted upon need and the guidance and requirements put in place by local, state, and federal employment laws, FMLA, executive orders, and other potential sources as deemed necessary.

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 Argyle Central School District to support contact tracing within the organization and may be shared with local public health officials.

During a public health emergency, employees, contractors, vendors, and visitors entering the building will be required to complete an attestation related to their current health status.

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 Argyle Central 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.