

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent change in instructional design, the Herricks Public Schools has been highly responsive to the on-going medical mental health and economic needs of its community. The district recognizes that the stressors and trauma embedded in the health crisis have been exceptionally challenging for most of the students, families and staff members.

***Establish an advisory council, shared decision-making, school climate team, or other collaborative working group comprised of families, students, members of the board of education, school building and/or district/charter leaders, community-based service providers, teachers, certified school counselors, and other pupil personnel service providers including school social workers and/or school psychologists to inform the comprehensive developmental school counseling program plan.***

Representatives of the Herricks Public Schools Board of Education, central administration, building administration, mental health team and parents have worked in collaboration to develop strategies and programs to: 1) identify students/staff at risk, 2) provide multitiered mental health interventions, 3) provide resources/referrals to families/staff and 4) provide professional development to staff.

***Ensure that a district-wide and building-level comprehensive developmental school counseling program plan, developed under the direction of certified school counselor(s), is reviewed and updated to meet current needs.***

### Needs Assessment

To identify students, families and staff members who may be in distress, the district has developed a needs assessment, which is a systematic approach to determine how to address the concerns related to the social-emotional well-being of the community we serve. Over the past few months, there has been tremendous stress on individuals, whether it be due to direct illness, the illness of others, the loss of loved ones, or financial and economic loss or hardship, all creating unprecedented circumstances that many people were not prepared to handle. Many of us feel at a loss and a sense of uncertainty, which is causing extreme stress and anxiety. The focus of the needs assessment is to identify students, families and staff who are struggling with the situation at hand. Once identified, the district will implement proper interventions to provide support, resources and professional development for those in need. This needs assessment is a part of the Herricks Public Schools' ongoing commitment to provide a quality education and to nurture an inclusive community environment that focuses not only on the exceptional academic performance of our students, but the overall well-being of their social-emotional development. To ensure our students and families are well-adjusted, we must also support our faculty and staff in their well-being.

The Herricks Public School District has developed a few ways to identify those who have faltered in some way due to the impact of the pandemic. During the spring, when school moved to remote learning, the mental health support staff and building administration kept track of

students who had a difficult time availing themselves of their academic learning. Teachers identified students in need as those who were not present during their live facetime lessons, and building pupil personnel team meetings tracked all students who were of concern. Through phone calls, virtual meetings and pupil personnel team meetings, students who were having trouble were brought to light and the mental health support staff (school psychologists, social workers and school counselors) reached out to provide support, counseling and resources to the student and families. At the end of the school year, the administration and support staff articulated with one another to relay concerns about transitioning students. This enabled the staff to determine immediate concerns coming into the new school year.

During the summer of this pandemic, there continues to be concern for students, families and staff who may wrestle with both physical and social-emotional wellness. The district has created surveys for families, students and staff, which will be sent out on July 31 for a return date of August 7, to inquire about the impact that COVID has had on the individual or family. Such questions include whether individuals, immediate or extended family members have been impacted by the COVID virus, if families lost loved ones due to the illness or unrelated during this time, if there was financial or economic distress caused by the pandemic, and whether families saw changes in their child(ren)'s behaviors during this time. A student and staff survey will also be disseminated on August 14, with a turnaround date of August 21, asking similar questions. The goal is to send out reminders to families and encourage them to complete the survey to provide the most accurate results. Based on the information that is compiled from the survey, point people (either building principals or school psychologists) will reach out to families or staff that express they want someone to contact them. Our mental health support staff will determine the tier of intervention needed for identified students, based on the results of the individual surveys. Additionally, the data gathered will aid in deciding the type of professional development needed for faculty and staff, as well as how the buildings will orient students to prepare for re-entry. As a follow-up to the initial surveys over the summer, once school is underway, a universal screening will be administered to the entire district to further identify students and families in need. Once students, families and staff are identified through the initial summer surveys, the district will provide a variety of resources that will be distributed throughout the district as well as located on the Herricks district website. Herricks has partnered with Northwell Health to provide outside resources for mental health and behavioral support.

## COVID-19 Family Survey

The information collected from this survey will be used to help the district identify students and families in need of social/emotional support. All information obtained from this survey will remain anonymous and confidential.

The Mental Health Teams at each school will review the data and will follow up with requests to contact families based on this information. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey to help us best support you and your family. Please have the survey completed by August 7.

If you would like to view this form in a language other than English, please use the Google Chrome browser to open the form. Once the form is open, right click in your browser window, click on "Translate to", select the three vertical dots in the upper right corner and choose you desired language.

**\* Required**

1. What school(s) will your child/children attend in the fall? Click all that apply. \*

Center Street  
Denton Avenue  
Searingtown  
Middle School  
Shelter Rock Academy  
High School

2. Has anyone in your household contracted COVID-19? \*

Yes

No

3. Has anyone in your extended family contracted COVID-19? \*

Yes

No

4. Have you suffered a loss in the immediate family due to COVID-19? \*

Yes

No

5. Have you suffered a loss of a family member during the pandemic not related to COVID-19?

Yes

No

6. Have any family members been experiencing extended illnesses or ongoing health issues as a result of COVID-19? \*

Yes

No

7. Has a family member become unemployed as a result of COVID-19? \*

Yes

No

8. Have you or a member of your extended family suffered any economic/domestic hardship due to the COVID-19 crisis?

Yes

No

9. Has your child experienced any of the following behaviors during this pandemic? Please check all that apply. \*

Lethargy - low energy

Anxiety - less willing to be alone or apart from family, increased worry

Fatigue - Sleeping more or difficulty sleeping

Loss of appetite

Less interested in pleasurable activities

Somatic complaints - complaining of not feeling well

Unexplained outburst (unexplained crying, irritability, anger, emotional reactivity, highly sensitive)

Heightened activity level

Sadness

10. Are you concerned that your child may struggle re-adjusting to school? \*

Yes

No

11. Does your child have a special challenge that would prevent him or her from wearing a mask? \*

Yes

No

12. Would you like any of the following school staff members to reach out to you or your child/children? \*

Mental Health Team Member (psychologist, social worker, guidance counselor)

School Administrator (Principal, Assistant Principal)

Not Applicable

13. If you would like a specific Mental Health Team member or administrator to contact you, please indicate the name or position of that person below.

Your answer

If you are requesting contact, please provide us with your contact information. Keep in mind this information is confidential and will only be shared with the applicable Mental Health Team members and building administrators.

## COVID-19 Staff Survey

The information collected from this survey will be used to help the district identify the social/emotional needs of each building. All information obtained from this survey will remain anonymous and confidential.

The Mental Health Teams at each school will review the data and provide support as needed based on this information. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey to help us plan. Please complete the survey by August 21.

**\* Required**

1. What building will you return to in the fall? Click all that apply. \*

Center Street  
Denton Avenue  
Searingtown  
Middle School  
Shelter Rock Academy  
High School

2. Has anyone in your household contracted COVID-19? \*

Yes  
No

3. Has anyone in your extended family contracted COVID-19? \*

Yes  
No

4. Have you suffered a loss in the immediate family due to COVID-19? \*

Yes  
No

5. Have you suffered a loss of a family member not directly related to COVID-19 during the pandemic?

Yes  
No

6. Have any family members been experiencing extended illnesses or ongoing health issues as a result of COVID-19? \*

Yes  
No

7. Have you or a member of your extended family suffered any economic/domestic hardship due to the COVID-19 crisis?

Yes  
No

8. Have you been struggling with any of the following behaviors directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic? Please check all that apply. \*

Lethargy - low energy

Anxiety - less willing to be alone or apart from family, increased worry

Fatigue - Sleeping more or difficulty sleeping

Loss of appetite

Less interested in pleasurable activities

Somatic complaints - complaining of not feeling well

Unexplained outburst (unexplained crying, irritability, anger, emotional reactivity, highly sensitive)

Heightened activity level

Sadness

9. Are you concerned that you may struggle re-adjusting to work? \*

Yes

No

10. If you would like additional resources or support related to any of these concerns, please reach out to any one of our Mental Health Team members. As always, all interactions with our support staff will be confidential.

### COVID-19 Student Survey

The information collected from this survey will be used to help the district identify students who may be in need of social/emotional support. This is an anonymous and confidential needs assessment survey for students.

The Mental Health Teams at each school will review the data and will follow up with requests to contact students based on this information. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey to help us best support you. Please complete the survey by August 21.

**\* Required**

1. What building will you attend in the fall? \*

Middle School

Shelter Rock Academy

High School

2. Has anyone in your household contracted COVID-19? \*

Yes

No

3. Has anyone in your extended family contracted COVID-19? \*

Yes

No

4. Have you suffered a loss in the immediate family due to COVID-19? \*

Yes

No

5. Have any family members been experiencing extended illnesses or ongoing health issues as a result of COVID-19? \*

Yes

No

6. Has a family member become unemployed or suffered economic hardship as a result of COVID-19? \*

Yes

No

7. Have you experienced any of the following behaviors during this pandemic? Please check all that apply. \*

Lethargy - low energy

Anxiety - less willing to be alone or apart from family, increased worry

Fatigue - Sleeping more or difficulty sleeping

Loss of appetite

Less interested in pleasurable activities

Somatic complaints - complaining of not feeling well

Unexplained outburst (unexplained crying, irritability, anger, emotional reactivity, highly sensitive)

Heightened activity level

Other:

8. Are you concerned that you may struggle re-adjusting to school? \*

Yes

No

9. Would you like any of the following Mental Health Team members to reach out to you?

Guidance Counselor

School Social Worker

School Psychologist

10. If you would like a specific Mental Health Team member or administrator to contact you, please indicate the name or position of that staff member below.

Your answer

11. If you are requesting contact, please provide us with your name and the best way to contact you. Keep in mind this information is confidential and will only be shared with the Mental Health Team members.

Your answer

## Identification

As the students, families and staff of the Herricks community begin the 2020-21 school year, they will face revised routines, restricted personal interactions, varied methods of instruction and new safety protocols. These changes, in combination with the stressful and traumatic experiences of the pandemic, will contribute to the already heightened feelings of worry, fear and isolation felt by most. In planning for the reopening of school, the Herricks Public Schools has prioritized the social-emotional and physical well-being of its students and staff. To address the community's worries and concerns, members of the Herricks administration and faculty have maintained a high level of communication with the parents and students. Along with the information and resources related to the district's response to the health crisis, these communications offered reassurance and connectedness.

As mentioned above, in addition to the district's various efforts to communicate and connect with the community, surveys will be distributed to gain a better understanding of the stressors experienced by the students, families and staff (surveys will be available in multiple languages). These surveys will guide the district's efforts in meeting the specific mental health needs of individuals and/or groups. More specifically, members of the district's pupil personnel staff (PPS), including school psychologists, social workers and school counselors, will provide targeted interventions for individuals and/or groups of students based on the data and referrals from Pupil Personnel Teams. Likewise, professional development hours will be dedicated to fostering the physical and mental well-being of the staff as well as addressing teaching practices that build resilience and coping skills in students.

To best meet the social-emotional needs of the students, Herricks Public Schools will utilize a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). This comprehensive school counseling plan includes both universal and targeted, more intensive interventions. Under the Tier 1 level, the universal interventions will focus on creating classroom environments where students feel safe, respected and supported, and where they can freely express themselves and seek assistance without judgment. To ease the students' transition to school, members of PPS will provide the parents and staff with resources on supporting the development of student social-emotional competencies and a protocol for identifying students experiencing social, emotional and/or behavioral challenges. At the beginning of the school year, both informal and standardized universal screening instruments will be administered to students, parents and teachers to assist in the identification of students in need of mental health support. The teachers, in collaboration with members of PPS, will use the data to select evidence-based social-emotional learning strategies and interventions to meet the students' varied needs. The teachers and members of PPS will utilize various resources, including the NYSED Mental Health Education Literacy in Schools, evidence-based programs such as Second Step Social Emotional Learning and Lions Quest, and teacher-created lessons to address students' concerns related to the health crisis and their transition to school (be it in-person and/or remote learning). The goal of these interventions is to support the students' social-emotional well-being and will include lessons on developing and/or improving coping, resilience and self-care skills. The lessons and resources will be presented in a developmentally and culturally sensitive manner. The teachers and members of PPS will routinely observe, monitor and screen the students' responsiveness to the interventions and

possible need for additional supports/services. Parents will be encouraged to also monitor their children's needs and to contact school staff with concerns.

When students continue to demonstrate social-emotional-behavioral challenges despite the universal interventions provided under Tier 1, more individualized and targeted interventions are warranted (Tier 2). Parents, teachers and pupil personnel staff can refer a student presenting with challenges for consideration of more intensive mental health support. A member of PPS will contact the parents regarding the student's needs and will request permission to screen the student. To gather more information, the school psychologist or social worker may observe and interview the student. Additional standardized screening instruments may be administered with parent consent. Students identified as needing school-based counseling will be recommended for short-term, group counseling (5:1 to 10:1), typically on a biweekly or monthly basis. The school psychologist or social worker will utilize research-based strategies such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Trauma-Informed Therapy and Mindfulness strategies to address the student's needs and will maintain ongoing communication with the parents and teacher(s). In addition, referrals for mental health resources, agencies and clinicians will be provided to the parents.

Tier 3 provides mental health support services for students presenting with more significant social-emotional-behavioral challenges. The same procedures listed in Tier 2 will be followed in identifying and screening the student. Teacher and parent involvement is typically greater when students present with high-need/risk behaviors. The students are recommended for short-term individual or group school-based counseling (no greater than 5:1), typically meeting much more frequently than Tier 2 services. The students are often considered for specialized care and support services such as a Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plans. The school psychologist or social worker continually monitors and evaluates the clinical level of concern. Efforts are made to coordinate intervention strategies with outside mental health clinicians, physicians and agencies.

***Address how the school/district will provide resources and referrals to address mental health, behavioral, and emotional support services and programs.***

### **Communications**

We have determined that in order to prioritize social-emotional well-being together with learning, we must establish clear methods of ongoing communication between our families, teachers/staff and board of education. It will be absolutely essential for the parents, teachers, coaches, mental health team and administrators to be in frequent communication regarding the students' needs in order to best support them. Student voice should be a major component for those age-appropriate groups.

The methods of communication are described briefly below, with greater detail provided in the Communication Recommendations Staff and Families chart.

- Parent/staff resources will be provided in multiple languages on websites, social media, Blackboard, etc. These resources will be provided in a packet prepared by a district-

coordinated team of professionals from our guidance, social work and psychology departments.

- A “Welcome Back” video presentation will be created and made public prior to the beginning of school. These videos will be on a district and building level. They will essentially be reorientation videos highlighting changes in health and safety procedures, as well as the reorganization of the school environment in relation to these precautions. The goal is to provide reassurance with regard to health and safety, hygiene, safe social distancing, etc.
- Google Meet sessions with students and parents, especially for the transition years (kindergarten, and those entering 6th grade and 9th grade), should be established and scheduled prior to the start of the school year. This forum will provide opportunities for both students and parents to ask questions related to their concerns about these transition years.
- Information on how to speak to students regarding the health crisis of COVID-19, in a developmentally and culturally sensitive manner, will be provided to ALL staff members including, but not limited to, teaching staff, clerical, security guards, monitors, aides, bus drivers and custodial staff.
- Determine which students and families have received individual outreach from staff and the barriers that may have prevented outreach to others. For the staff, we must map out existing relationships to identify gaps in connections.  
(<https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/relationship-mapping-strategy>)
- Create diverse teams of staff, family or student volunteers to increase outreach efforts and stay in touch with students and families that are not fully engaged by the school. Determine the needs of these families and establish a way to intervene and avoid future disengagement (gaps in internet access or computer/device access).
- Prepare a variety of creative strategies, including Google Meet, virtual meetings/events, social media platforms and community groups such as PTA/SEPTA, Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc. to engage the students and families as partners in plans for reopening (Task Force Committee). Plan for differences in technology access, languages (translation services) and other needs.
- Establish the role of a community liaison responsible for cultivating relationships with multicultural, multi-faith organizations to best meet the community’s needs.

Communication Recommendations for Staff and Families

Recommendation	Description	Purpose	Target Audience	Method of Communication	Follow up	Presentation of Results
<b>Survey(s) to determine and identify need for services (3 parts families-parents, students and teachers)</b>	Survey	The data collected will be utilized to determine need-based services and interventions. Additionally, the staff survey will help to guide future professional development topics and speakers as well as SEL methodologies.	Students, families, staff	Online via Google Forms	School psychologists and social workers will follow-up with families upon request. Professional development speakers will be determined based on needs identified by surveys.	On website, a brief summary to describe the surveys being sent out. Anonymous charts may be presented with general results delineating the need that was noted and how we are addressing these needs to the BOE and families via superintendent letter, on video, or through PD and/or PTA meetings
<b>Multi-tiered System of Support</b>	Tiered interventions ranging from universal to more individualized, intense interventions and strategies.	To determine the social-emotional needs of the students. To determine the level of mental health support services needed.	Students and families	Dependent upon instructional model (remote, in-person or hybrid).	Teachers, social worker, and school psychologists	Meetings with appropriate staff and families
<b>Universal screening of students</b>	Identification of students presenting need for mental health support. Standardized screening assessment will be administered to students, parents and staff.	Identification of students presenting need for mental health support especially during the transitional years.	Students/families	Screening will be accessible through a virtual platform. Superintendent will announce the administration and completion of screenings.	Families, teachers, social workers, psychologists, and administration.	The results of these screenings are for professional use and will not to be publicized. Assessment results will be available to parents and appropriate staff.
<b>Checklists for staff/teachers to identify signs of students displaying difficulties of adjustment to the re-entry to school.</b>	Identification of students in need for potential intervention.	To determine need for intervention, increase awareness of signs of trauma, and emotional issues that could impede social interactions and learning.	Teachers	Resource packet	Parent and teacher communication, weekly pupil personnel team meetings.	Resources related to mental health will be listed on the district webpage.
<b>Checklists for parents to identify signs of their children displaying difficulties of adjustment to the re-entry to school.</b>	Identification of students in need for potential intervention.	To increase awareness of emotional and behavioral issues that may interfere with children's adjustment to school re-entry.	Parents/students/caregivers/extended family	Resource packet available on district website (with translation options available).	Parent communication on an on-going basis, PTA meetings, speakers for parents online or in person or both and resource packets for parents.	Resources related to mental health will be listed on the district webpage.

Reopening Plan • July 2020

<b>Resources for parents, staff, and teachers</b>	Resource packets will be created including information on talking to children about COVID-19, addressing concerns to school re-entry, building coping and resilience skills as well as providing resources/referrals to families.	Provide resources to parents and staff to support re-entry to school, helping to identify concerns and guide to the appropriate professional assistance whether in school or within the community (ex. agencies, private clinicians and medical professionals)	Parents, staff, teachers	Resource packet available on district website (with translation options available).	Community feedback on accessibility and usability of resources. Data analytics can help to determine the value and usage of the material provided to help to guide the staff in terms of work vs results. Resources will be ongoing and revised based on NYSED and DOH recommendations.	Resources related to mental health will be listed on the district webpage.
<b>Mental Health training and workshops for dealing with trauma</b>	Mental health training and workshops for families and staff.	To address the emotional stress and trauma caused by COVID-19. Topics to be explored include grief, socioeconomic challenges, emotional stressors, family issues, and more.	Families, teachers and staff.	Virtual and/or in-person workshops.	Online Google Form survey to determine value of this resource	Communication from superintendent.
<b>Parent and staff communication</b>	Ongoing communication between parents and staff regarding student adjustment and progress.	To maintain ongoing communication regarding student progress, in areas of academics, social, emotional and physical well being.	Staff/teachers, parents, and students.	Phone calls, emails, Google Forms, virtual check ins with appropriate staff.	Communication will be ongoing throughout the school year.	
<b>School psychologists and social workers newsletter</b>	To provide information and resources to the students, families, and staff. Identification of mental health staff across district.	To provide resources, ongoing guidance related to issues of mental health, emotional support, and increasing awareness of COVID-19 mental health concerns.	Families and students.	Email and website.	Ongoing communication and resources will be provided based on district need, and recommendations from NYSED/DOH.	

***Address professional development opportunities for faculty and staff on how to talk with and support students during and after the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency, as well as provide support for developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty, and staff.***

### **Professional Development**

Based on the information that we obtain from the teacher/staff and family surveys, we will use a data-driven approach to decision-making such that the information we obtain will be utilized to help guide the ongoing training and continuing education of our staff/teachers/administrators throughout the year. With this information, we will determine the needs for professional intervention from the medical, social, psychological or instructional standpoint and, in turn, the need to provide training in these areas identified.

Through professional learning, we will elaborate on SEL, mental health, well-being, and trauma-responsive and restorative practices. We plan to utilize the data collaboratively with the staff, students and families to solidify our partnerships and form an ongoing plan for implementation throughout the year. Herricks Public Schools will coordinate a series of professional development sessions to address concerns of re-entry, which will include instruction (both in-person and remote learning), health and safety protocols, operations management, and social-emotional well-being of students, families and staff. To provide further services for students, families and staff, the district has partnered with the Northwell Health Mental Health Crisis Center as a resource for services, education and training. Throughout the summer, professional development has been offered to staff, through Nassau BOCES via a virtual platform. Many of these topics will address the issues previously mentioned. District-provided professional development will begin with the Superintendent's Conference Days, as well as throughout the school year. Professional development will be offered through various presenters, experts in their field, as well as through curriculum developed by our mental health staff.

Over the summer, members of the mental health staff will be meeting to develop classroom-based and community resources. Information on how to speak to students regarding the health crisis of COVID-19, in a developmentally and culturally sensitive manner, will be provided to ALL staff members including, but not limited to, teaching staff, clerical, security guards, monitors, aides, bus drivers and custodial staff. The mental health team will provide SEL curriculum to support Tier 1 interventions to address competencies such as coping skills, resilience, building community, personal hygiene, etc. A listing of evidence-based interventions as well as teacher/clinician developed activities will be provided. In addition, resource packets will be created including information on talking to children about COVID-19, addressing concerns about school re-entry, and building coping and resilience skills, as well as providing resources/referrals to families.

In closing, the Herricks Public School District is committed to providing the utmost attention and care to our students, families and faculty to ensure a safe, healthy and well-balanced re-entry to school.