



2020-2021 School Year August Information Requests July 23, 2020

INTRODUCTION

The 2020-2021 school year requests from the SUNY Charter Schools Institute (“the Institute”) ask for the 2020-2021 calendar, enrollment, attendance, scheduling, and any changes to the chartered curriculum and assessment plans. With regard to a required due date for responding to these requests, as each week provides new information on the complexities of this fall’s return to school, we know that no single date will be the sweet spot date in the near term where everything in your planning for fall 2020 start will align. With that in mind, and understanding that most schools are planning for at least two scenarios:

- blended learning that encompasses instruction in a physical location for some grades for some number of days with remote instruction occurring for some grades on line; and,
- full remote instruction if needs require.

To the extent your charter school/multi-school education corporation has established plans for multiple scenarios, please provide responses that include the multiple scenarios for which the charter school/multi-school education corporation has plans. Updates will continue to be communicated directly to SUNY authorized charter schools in emails, and webinars and via the website.

For the purposes of the Institute’s requests below, SUNY authorized education corporations operating one charter school must provide responses for that individual school. Education corporations operating multiple charters with multiple sites are not required to submit to SUNY responses for each charter or each site with the same or similar programs. Rather, for SUNY’s purposes, education corporations may indicate to which schools the submission applies. Submissions may include descriptions of different programs for elementary, middle, and high school programs or grades; or for students placed in cohorts based on other criteria. In addition, responses must include details regarding changes to services to

students with disabilities and English language learners (“ELLs”), which may vary by school or grade level within schools, or be uniform across schools.

At this time, the Charter Schools Institute does not intend to process changes in program reflected in these responses for the 2020-2021 school year as formal charter revisions. Executive orders or other authority may make such revisions unnecessary, and many of the changes contemplated by schools may fit within section 9.6(a) of the SUNY Charter Agreement, which describes non-material changes to educational programs. In addition, SUNY intends, to the extent possible in light of executive orders, changes in law, regulation, or other binding authority, and DOH or local department of health mandates, to allow 2020-2021 plans to stay in effect for the entire 2020-2021 school year and be subject to renewal by the Institute should the need continue. The Institute team will review responses for, among other things, elements contained in the SUNY charter agreement and may require education corporations/schools to provide supplemental information if plans provided are unclear or details do not align with the most current information available regarding schooling in the fall of 2020.

Guidance for SUNY 2020 -2021 School Year Requests

- Education corporation boards of trustees should, at the next meeting after submitting these responses, review the responses provided to the Institute and ensure any required budgetary changes are reflected in the next quarterly budget submission. If any education corporation board makes changes to the responses please do provide the Institute such updates.
- Do assume the Institute is familiar with each charter school/education corporation’s plans and programs outlined in the current and active charter and refrain from providing descriptions for areas where there are not changes to approved charter elements.
- Education corporations are encouraged to provide responses that include in-person (compliant with social distancing and all health precautions) and/or blended instruction to the extent practicable under health and safety guidelines as well as Executive Orders with an emphasis on providing high quality education to all students.
- Responses should include flexibilities to account for multiple learning scenarios in 2020-2021 and;
 - Comply with the State-Issued Guidance and Minimum Standards detailed in the DOH Interim Guidance:
https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/Pre-K_to_Grade_12_Schools_MasterGuidance.pdf;
 - Address multiple contingencies that anticipate blended, in person, or other instruction as well as change in that instruction driven by executive order, local or state health department requirements;
 - Please include specific processes for instructing and supporting vulnerable and special populations including students with disabilities, ELLs, and very young students who may have difficulty accessing on-line learning and resources.
 - Virtual instruction, like all instruction, must be aligned with, and designed to “meet or exceed the student performance standards adopted by the Board of Regents and the student performance standards contained in the charter,” (N.Y. Education Law § 2854(1)(d)).
 - Plans for college prep high school programs offering Regents diplomas including those with Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, must follow Commissioner of Education regulations regarding diploma requirements and on-line or blended learning

(principally in 8 NYCRR § 100.5) in order to continue to grant Regents diplomas and CTE credentials, if applicable. Please note that the New York State Board of Regents is in the process of modifying several Commissioner of Education regulations related to high school requirements, which allow for increased flexibility. Information is available on the New York State Education Department (“NYSED”) website at <http://www.nysed.gov/> and then following the links in “Recent News.”

- The Board of Regents has or will issue broader K-12 guidance and made regulatory changes for flexibility in dealing with education during COVID-19, and introduced some new regulations and reporting requirements. Information is available on the NYSED website at <http://www.nysed.gov/> and then following the links in “Recent News.” Schools should review these regulatory changes and guidance and incorporate that information into the reopening plans to the best of their ability.

SUBMISSION OF REQUESTS

The Institute asks that each education corporation provide responses to the requests outlined in the remainder of this document through Epicenter, the online system used for document intake and management by the Institute is the only system through which schools should submit these responses to the Institute. Access to Epicenter does require a user account. If an education corporation requires a new user account to successfully accomplish submission of this plan, please contact the Institute at charter.epicenter@suny.edu. Please submit responses as identified below.

Please visit my.epicenternow.org to log in and upload all components. For Epicenter related questions, please contact the Institute at charter.epicenter@suny.edu.

2020-2021 PLAN ELECTRONIC FILE CONVENTIONS

Response	Required File Name	File Type	Due Date
Response 1	R-01 – Executive Summary	MS Word	August 14, 2020
Response 2	R-02 – Full New York Forward Reopening Plan as submitted through DOH portal	Adobe PDF	July 31, 2020
Response 3	R03a – Pre-Opening	MS Word	August 14, 2020
	R-03b – School Calendar	MS Word	August 14, 2020
	R-03c – Scheduling for Students	MS Word	August 14, 2020
	R-03d – Scheduling for Staff	MS Word	August 14, 2020
Response 4	R-04ab – Enrollment & Attendance	MS Word	August 14, 2020
Response 5	R-05ad – Academic Program	MS Word	August 14, 2020
Response 6	R-06 – Pre-Existing School Plans & Attachments	MS Word	August 14, 2020
Response 7	R-07 – Fully Merged Plan	MS Word	August 14, 2020
Response 8	R-08 – Charter Schools Included Under Plan	MS Excel	August 14, 2020

Response 1: Executive Summary

Provide a description of how the education corporation's plans for the 2020-2021 school year support attainment of its chartered mission, are informed with the best knowledge and information available regarding health, safety, support, and continued academic growth for students, their families, and staff.

Please identify or provide a link to a document listing the chartered names of schools, and grade levels served by each charter school included under this plan. Please also include the link to where the education corporation's/charter school's plan required by the New York Forward DOH request is located on your website.

Response 2: Full New York Forward Reopening Plan as submitted through DOH portal

Please include the final plan submitted under the New York Forward/DOH requirements as outlined at this link <https://forms.ny.gov/s3/ny-forward-affirmation>.

Response 3: Pre-Opening, School Calendars & Scheduling

If the education corporation/school has already designed a plan or created additional documents that include information fully responsive to the requests below, the Institute provides the option of attaching that plan as Response 6 (see Submission & Posting Requirements and the 2020-2021 Plan Electronic File Conventions above) and, where appropriate, citing specific page numbers or sections of that plan that provides the detail requested in Responses 3a to 3d.

a. Pre-Opening

- Describe the activities and people (staff, students, administrators, parents, community partners, etc.) that were surveyed/consulted or involved in plans for the 2020-2021 school year (amelioration of learning loss sessions, staff professional development, technology distribution, training/support for families, etc.);
- Include a schedule and description for any pre-opening plans (professional development, on-boarding of new students and families, etc.);
- Include a statement of assurances that the education corporation/school will, when instruction is provided in-person in a bricks and mortar setting, conduct fire, safety and other drills as required using social distancing strategies for normal bricks and mortar instruction; and
- Provide a description of what technologies students will need in order to fully participate in planned instructional programs for the 2020-2021 school year. Describe how the education corporation/school will support every student's access to necessary technological devices and connectivity required. Include information as to any supports the education corporation is putting in place to introduce new students and families to the technology as well as technological problem solving supports for families to maximize student learning and minimize lost instructional time. If the education corporation anticipates material technology budget implications not previously made part of a budget, please include them in a quarterly budget revision.

3b. School Calendars

Provide an anticipated calendar for the 2020-2021 school year that includes anticipated holidays and breaks. Please specifically provide the total number of instructional days, which generally may not be less than 170 per section 3.8(a) of the Charter Agreement. Include a description that identifies when students, broken out by grade level, cohort or other grouping will receive what type of instruction (in-person, remote, blended, etc.). Please note that the Board of Regents has passed amendments to 8 NYCRR § 175.5 that permit district schools to provide less days of instruction and fewer required hours when school is closed pursuant to an executive order. (See <https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/720bra7.pdf>.)

SUNY will permit similar school day and total hour reductions including reductions for any day when a school is closed pursuant to a DOH or local health department order. When drafting calendars schools must consider that the Office of the Governor does not anticipate making an initial determination on school opening dates by region until the week of August 1-8, 2020. Schools, therefore, should not start instructional calendars before August 10, 2020. Non-final guidance from the Governor's Office puts a framework in place for opening schools, which can only open for in-person instruction if their region is in Reopening Phase 4 and its daily infection rate remains below 5 percent using a 14-day average since PAUSE was lifted. After August 1st, if the region's infection rate rises above 9 percent, using a 7-day average, schools will be directed to close.

3c. Scheduling for Students

Include plans for instruction of cohorts of students, hours of instruction, and sample schedules for primary, upper elementary, middle school, high school, students with disabilities, and ELLs, as appropriate, for the students served in the charter school(s) covered in the plan. Clearly identify the following;

- The planned days and times students (by grade level, cohort, or other grouping function detailed by the education corporation/school) will attend in-person instruction along with the planned total of in-person instructional hours for the 2020-2021 school year;
- The planned days and times students will attend remote instruction (by grade level, cohort, or other grouping function detailed by the education corporation/school), the total planned remote instructional hours broken out by synchronistic vs. asynchronistic instructional hours students will receive in the 2020-2021 school year;
- The planned total number of instructional time for each cohort (by grade level, cohort, or other grouping function detailed by the education corporation/school). The Institute notes that instructional time requirements per Commissioner of Education regulations at 8 NYCRR § 175.5 include 900 hours per school year for grades K-6 and 990 hours per school year for grades 7-12, However, the Board of Regents has passed amendments to 8 NYCRR § 175.5 that permit a reduction in the annual hours required if schools are closed due to an executive order. For this reason, schools do not need to provide information about how the school will meet the state minimum annual instructional time unless it is the school's intention to do so. And,

- Please reference how schedules may divide between in-person and remote synchronous and asynchronous learning.

For high schools offering Regents diplomas, Regents credit hours for mandated courses and electives are required (unit of study and unit of credit requirements). Please note that the Board of Regents has passed amendments to 8 NYCRR § 100.1(a) regarding high school units of study that permit significant flexibility in the 180 minutes of required instruction. (See <https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/720bra8revised.pdf>.) Schools may provide “alternative instructional experiences, including but not limited to digital technology or blended learning, that represents standards-based learning under the guidance and direction of an appropriately certified teacher. Instructional experiences shall include, but not be limited to: meaningful and frequent interaction with an appropriately certified teacher; academic and other supports designed to meet the needs of the individual student and instructional content that reflects consistent academic expectations as in-person instruction. Any alternative instructional experience must include meaningful feedback on student assignments and methods of tracking student engagement. Charter school teachers may be exempt from certification in accordance with the New York Charter Schools Act of 1998 (as amended). High schools must also follow the on-line or blended learning instruction requirements of 8 NYCRR § 100.5 (described in Request 5a below).

3d. Scheduling for Staff

Include a description and sample schedules as to how the school plans to deploy staff to support student scheduling. Provide details as to staff deployment in settings that include planned in person, blended and/or remote only instruction as detailed in your school’s plan.

Response 4: Enrollment and Attendance

4a. Enrollment

Provide a narrative that includes the following:

- Anticipated effects on student enrollment given the in-person and remote learning plans the charter has in place for the 2020-2021 school year;
- The evidence and information the education corporation will collect that corroborates and justifies the student enrollment count the education corporation will use for billing during the 2020-2021 school year; and,
- Identify touch points with families and students, and the evidence the education corporation/school is or will collect to support the enrollment count and who at the education corporation is responsible for ensuring accuracy and documentation collection. If the education corporation anticipates material enrollment budget implications not previously made part of a budget, please include them in the next quarterly budget revision.

4b. Attendance

In alignment with the above, NYSED has released draft guidance related to attendance stating, “Schools are responsible for developing a mechanism to collect and report daily teacher/ student engagement of attendance regardless of the instructional setting.” As NYSED decides district billing intercept issues, the guidance is instructive. Provide a narrative that includes the following:

- The evidence the education corporation will collect to corroborate the school’s justification for the student attendance on all instruction days remote, blended or in-person;
- The documentation the education corporation will retain to support any challenge to the validity of a school’s attendance rates (full time equivalents or FTEs);
- The plan for contacting and engaging students that dis-engage from on-line learning; and,
- A description of the review process and approval authorization of the attendance records.

Response 5: Academic Program

5a. Curriculum

Describe changes or modifications from the curriculum outlined in the education corporation’s current charter, broken down by grade levels, cohorts, or primary, upper elementary, middle school grades, and high school grades as appropriate to the education corporation/school plan. Include curricular changes that focus on serving students with disabilities and ELLs. Include any curricular plans for socio-emotional learning supports.

An important note on High School Programs:

In order to continue to grant Regents diplomas and CTE credentials, high school programs must continue to follow Commissioner of Education regulations at 8 NYCRR § 100.5 and other applicable regulations including 8 NYCRR § 100.5(d)(10)(ii) with respect to on-line or blended courses. In addition, the Board of Regents has passed regulations introducing flexibility with respect to the career development and occupation studies (CDOS) commencement credential, and science lab requirements (that permit certain simulated labs) in order to be eligible to sit for a Regents exam. Schools should consult <https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/720bra8revised.pdf> for more information.

For any new virtual or blended high school course content provide an assurance that the education corporation/school has defined and will make available upon request to the Institute or other interested parties the following:

- The basis for determining successful course completion;
- How students will demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes for the subject/course;
- Any changes to Regents course exam administration, which must be included on the list of NYSED Approved Alternative Examinations Acceptable for Meeting Requirements for a Local or Regents Diploma;
- The documentation the education corporation will retain to demonstrate student mastery of the learning outcomes;
- That the content is in alignment with the applicable New York State learning standards for the subject area;

- That courses will be taught by or instruction supervised by N.Y. State certified teachers or teachers qualified under Education Law § 2854(3)(a-1);
- An explanation of how regular and substantive interaction between the student and the teacher providing direction and/or supervision will take place, and the documentation that will demonstrate same; and
- A description as to how any virtual or blended instruction satisfies the unit of study and unit of credit requirements in section of 8 NYCRR § 100.1(a) including any flexibilities afforded by the Board of Regents.

5b. Instruction

Describe the education corporation/school's plans for virtual synchronous and asynchronous instruction, use of break-out groupings, one to one video meetings, phone calls, and other instructional strategies the education corporation anticipates utilizing across its schools (by grade level, cohort or other grouping) to deliver high quality instruction to all students including medically vulnerable populations, those with disabilities as well as ELLs. Describe how regular and substantive interaction between the student and the teacher providing direction and/or supervision will take place, and the documentation the school will retain to demonstrate that interaction. Describe changes in the education corporation's plans for in-person instruction that differ from those the Institute has reviewed in the current, approved charter.

5c. Assessment

Provide a description that includes the following by grade level, subject area or other student cohort, subject area, as appropriate to the plan:

- A description of the education corporation's plan for assessing student instructional needs at the start of the 2020-2021 school year. Explain any assessments planned and how administrators and teachers will use the data to inform instructional strategies;
- A description of any changes from what exists in the current approved charter regarding interim assessments, data analysis procedures, and provision of feedback to students for the 2020-2021 school year; and,
- A description of how students will demonstrate, and how the education corporation will document, student mastery of subject matter.

5d. At-Risk Populations

As with all students, SUNY authorized charter schools must continue to meet the learning needs of students with disabilities and ELLs during the 2020-2021 school year. This includes meeting mandates required in Individualized Learning Programs ("IEPs") as well as continued support for the language acquisition needs of ELLs.

NYSED has released draft guidance related to flexibility in serving students with disabilities (<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/4.%20Regulatory%20Flexibility%20for%20the%20Reopening%20of%20Schools.pdf>) directed mainly to local educational agencies. Charter schools should review the guidance and consult with district Committees on Special Education when formulating plans to education or in serving students with disabilities during the 2020-2021 school year.

Please provide details the education corporation/school's plan it will ensure the most vulnerable students will have sustained, equitable access to the charter's education program in the environments planned for the 2020-2021 school year.

If the education corporation/school has already designed a plan that includes information fully responsive to the requests below, the Institute provides the option of attaching that plan as Response 6 (see Submission & Posting Requirements and the 2020-2021 Plan Electronic File Conventions above) and, where appropriate, citing specific page numbers or sections of that plan that provides the detail requested in Response 6d. Responses should include the following:

- A description as to how the education corporation will adapt the Response to Intervention ("RTI") program to address remote learning. Include a description of identification, monitoring, and program delivery;
- A description of the school's plans for fidelity in providing all enrolled students with disabilities the services and supports identified in any IEPs within the schedule provided for the school as well as any additional supports not identified in IEPs students will receive. To the extent social distancing and other safety considerations affect the ability to provide certain settings or services in IEPs including behavioral intervention plans ("BIPs"), describe the plans to modify or provide alternative settings, services, and BIPs;
- A description of how the education corporation's Child Find procedures will work under the remote portion of the plan for the 2020-2021 school year;
- The education corporation's plans for provision of Section 504 requirements in identifying, monitoring, and accommodating students during remote instruction periods for the 2020-2021 school year;
- A description of the education corporation's plans to identify, monitor, and provide appropriate programming for ELLs during virtual or remote instruction, and how the education corporation will ensure all virtual or remote instruction, programming, and communications will be accessible to ELLs and their families;
- A description of the education corporation's plans to serve very young students remotely, who may have difficulty accessing on-line learning and resources, especially in cases where no parent is available to assist the student.

Response 6: Pre-Existing School Plan Attachment(s)

Please provide any pre-existing school plans or documentation that is referenced and provides a fulsome support to any of the responses herein.

Response 7: Fully Merged Plan

Please combine all the individual documents included in the Plan (Responses 1 – 6) and submit them as a complete Microsoft Adobe PDF file. Please ensure all individual requests are included in the merged document.

Response 8: Charter Schools Included Under Plan

The Institute requests that education corporations must complete a template (will be made available in Epicenter) that includes the name of the individual charter school (if a single charter education corporation) or a list of all charter schools (if a multi-school education corporation) open and operating in the 2020-2021 school year including:

8a. physical address for each site where a charter school will operate during the 2020-2021 school year;

8b. grade levels served at each site for the 2020-2021 school year;

8c. number of school students at each site, whether by grade level or cohort for the 2020-2021 school year. Note that this is not the total number of students in the building if the school is co-located – only the number attributable to the school;

8d. number of school staff at each site for the 2020-2021 school year. Again, this is not the total number at the site, only the number of staff employed by the one school;

8e. whether the school is co-located in a New York City Department of Education facility. If so, list the names of other schools and community based organizations (“CBOs”) in the facility; and

8f. whether the school is co-located in with another public, private, or religious school, or CBO. If so, list the names of such schools and CBOs.