

Archbishop Walsh-Southern Tier Catholic SEL Reopening Plan

As we return to school during the COVID-19 public health emergency, Archbishop Walsh Academy and Southern Tier Catholic School (Walsh/STCS) are prioritizing the mental health and social-emotional and physical well-being of all students and faculty/staff. Walsh/STCS acknowledges that students as well as faculty and staff will not return to school the same as when they left in March. Walsh/STCS acknowledges the importance of being able to meet students, families and faculty/staff where they are at. Walsh/STCS recognizes that faculty/staff social and emotional needs must be addressed before they are able to assist students with their needs. It is further acknowledged that basic human needs for physical and emotional safety must be met before students are ready for academic learning. By prioritizing social-emotional and physical well-being, of all students, Walsh/STCS recognizes the important of educational equity.

The Southern Tier Catholic/Archbishop Walsh administration team will be utilized as the working group for social-emotional well-being. The administration team consists of the principal, assistant principal, school guidance counselor, director of development, director of marketing and alumni relations, director of admissions and student life, elementary curriculum coordinator/instructional leader, IB coordinator, director of spiritual life and school business manager. Additional members will be added to the team as needed at the discretion of the administration team.

Implementation will be led by the school guidance counselor and school social worker with support from the school administration team. All members of the school community (including the administration, board of trustees, families, students, faculty and staff) are important to the successful implementation of SEL within the school. Administration, faculty and staff will:

- Prioritize social-emotional well-being in addition to physical health and well-being
- Attend professional development opportunities regarding social-emotional well-being
- Enhance relationships with students
- Model the use of social-emotional skills for students
- Provide classroom time for direct SEL instruction by the school guidance counselor and/or school social worker
- Integrate SEL into teaching activities
- Utilize Restorative Practices including but not limited to daily circles, restorative circles and mediation/conferencing

Walsh/STCS will assess the needs of all students Montessori-12. Walsh/STCS partners with the Catholic Charities In School Social Work Program (ISSWP). ISSWP staff will screen students with a form based on NCSTN's Skills for Psychological Recovery. Students with identified needs will receive follow up either directly or through the parent/guardian from the school social worker and/or school guidance counselor. Referrals will be made to community resources when the student's need is unable to be fulfilled at school.

Walsh/STCS will implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) offering SEL, mental health and well-being support at the universal level through direct instruction, teaching activities and daily contact with all students. At the secondary and tertiary levels, the school guidance counselor and school social worker will provide small group and individual interventions. Those students needing tertiary supports

that are unable to be met with school resources will be referred for services in the community. Students will be identified through the ISSWP screening form, and teacher or parent referral.

Professional development opportunities will be provided for faculty and staff on topics such as how to talk with students and their families and provide support during and after the COVID-19 public health emergency. Professional development opportunities will also address SEL and mental health (e.g., trauma-informed practices, symptoms of mental illness), and restorative practices. These opportunities will occur during professional development days occurring before the beginning of the academic year, throughout the academic year as well as at the end of the academic year. Faculty and staff will also receive professional development during team meetings which occur for the elementary team (Montessori-4th grade), the Middle Years Programme (MYP) team (5th-10th grades) and the Diploma Programme (DP) team (11th-12th grades). The school social worker and school guidance counselor will also provide support and training to individuals as needed throughout the academic year.

In order to strengthen partnerships with faculty, staff students and families, the school guidance counselor and school social worker will provide professional development as discussed above, provide information on the school website, include SEL and mental health information in the school newsletters, provide SEL lessons to students, provide small group and individual sessions, as well as attend conferences and meetings with faculty, staff, parents and students.

To enhance and strengthen social-emotional well-being initiatives, Walsh/STCS collaborates with community partners including but not limited to; Seneca Nation, Catholic Charities of WNY, Healthy Cattaraugus, and the Cattaraugus County Suicide Prevention Coalition.

Mental Health and Trauma Responsive Practices

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma can have a negative impact on students' social-emotional well-being resulting in diminished capacity for learning. The current COVID-19 pandemic, economic recession and civic unrest have been traumatic for many in our school community. Whether, a new trauma, exacerbation of previous trauma, or new or worsened mental health issues, learning capacity may be negatively impacted for many of our students. By using a trauma-informed practices, we are shifting our reactions to inappropriate student behavior and considering the root cause of the behavior to better meet student needs. Faculty, staff and administration receive professional development regarding mental health and trauma-informed practices as previously outlined.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

Walsh/STCS utilizes a MTSS approach to address academic and behavioral concerns and challenges. Services are available at the universal level (proactive for all students) through direct instruction, teaching activities and daily contact with all students. These interventions are provided by the school guidance counselor, school social worker, faculty, staff and administration. Secondary and tertiary interventions for at-risk students are provided by the school guidance counselor and school social worker through small group and individual interventions. Tertiary interventions for high risk students that exceed the resources at Walsh/STCS are provided in collaboration with community resources including but not limited to the Olean City School District's Committee on Special Education and Cattaraugus County Community Services. The school guidance counselor and school social worker assist families with linkages to community resources. The services students receive are based on individual

student needs as assessed utilizing input from academic performance, teacher evaluation, parent evaluation and school guidance counselor/school social worker assessments.

Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) Roles within MTSS

At Walsh/STCS, the PPS staff are the school guidance counselor, school social worker and part-time school nurse. These staff members have the expertise to assist the school community with social-emotional and physical well-being; strengthening family, school and community partnerships; and promoting a positive school climate. Due to the small nature of Walsh/STCS, the school guidance counselor, school social worker and school nurse collaborate to provide interventions at all levels.

The DP coordinator, elementary curriculum coordinator/instructional leader and school guidance counselor (who also serves as the MYP coordinator) are responsible for the development and implementation of academic curriculum. Included in this domain are career development and college preparation. The DP coordinator, elementary curriculum coordinator/instructional leader and school guidance counselor collaborate with faculty to ensure that students' academic needs are met so that students' full potential can be met.

It is the responsibility of the school guidance counselor and school social worker to develop and oversee implementation of social-emotional programming. The school guidance counselor and school social worker collaborate with faculty to ensure that all students receive universal interventions. The school guidance counselor and school social worker provide professional development for faculty, staff and administration. Information is also provided for parents/guardians through newsletters, conferences, emails, the school website and phone calls. Secondary and tertiary interventions are provided by the school guidance counselor and school social worker for students identified as at-risk or high risk. These interventions are based on evidence based best practices and unique to individual student needs. When student needs exceed school resources, the school guidance counselor and school social worker collaborate with community resources to assist students.

Collaboration between the school administration team, the school guidance counselor, the school social worker, the faculty and staff as well as students and families is essential for promotion of a positive school climate. A positive school climate facilitates academic achievement, student engagement, and equitable access to educational opportunities. It is through this collaboration that we assist students in reaching their full potential.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Transformative SEL

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines SEL as "the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions." SEL competencies include self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, social awareness and relationship skills. The development of these competencies provide students with protective factors such as resilience, empathy, self-confidence, self-discipline, and respect for others. These protective factors enhance students' abilities to cope with adversity and stress in turn decreasing the potential for mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. By prioritizing the development of SEL skills in Walsh/STCS students, we are assisting our students in reaching their full

potential academically and personally. SEL is taught to all students at developmentally appropriate levels and included at the universal, secondary and tertiary levels as previously outlined.

Restorative Practices

Walsh/STCS has been committed to using restorative practices for several years to address inappropriate behaviors at the school. Each year, administration, faculty and staff receive professional development and individual consultation on the use of restorative practices. Restorative practices require the faculty, staff and administration to utilize a whole child perspective when addressing student behavioral concerns. For this to occur, students and faculty/staff must develop and use the SEL competencies discussed in the previous section. Additionally, it is important for administration, faculty and staff to understand the impact of ACEs and trauma informed practices. Through the use of restorative practices, the sense of community and strength of relationships is improved leading to a more positive school climate. Restorative practices focus on relationships and repairing damage to those relationships when inappropriate behavior occurs as opposed to the use of traditional consequences such as detentions, suspensions and expulsions. Administration, faculty and staff will provide students with the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and learn how to value and strengthen relationships. Administration, faculty and staff will include restorative practices such as affective statements, restorative dialogue, circles, mediation and conferences in their interactions with students.

Adult SEL and Well-Being

Walsh/STCS is committed to the social-emotional and physical well-being of all faculty, staff and administrators. As many faculty, staff and administrators have experienced significant stress, trauma and grief during the COVID-19 pandemic, economic recession and civic unrest, it is important that they engage in self-care in order to better help students. As students are not able to learn when they have physical and social-emotional well-being needs, adults are not able to fulfill their roles until their social-emotional and physical well-being needs are met. To assist the Walsh/STCS faculty, staff and administrators, the following will occur:

- Senior faculty, staff and administrators will mentor those who are new to their positions.
- Faculty, staff and administrators will be given opportunities to heal and process their experiences during faculty and team meetings, professional development days and through one on one interactions with each other, administration and the school guidance counselor and/or the school social worker.
- Faculty, staff and administrators are encouraged to spend time together to strengthen their relationships with one another (e.g., have lunch together, go for a walk at lunch, talk to one another during free periods or before/after school).
- Professional development regarding self-care, SEL, restorative practices, mental health, trauma-informed practices and other topics will be provided at staff development days before the school year begins as well as throughout the school year. Professional development will also occur during faculty and team meetings each month.
- During the professional development days before the school year begins, faculty, staff and administrators will be given the option to participate in circles to discuss their experiences, losses, grief, and concerns for the new school year.

- The principal, assistant principal, school guidance counselor and school social worker will complete regular check-ins with faculty, staff and administrators. These check-ins will occur on a weekly basis.
- Faculty, staff and administration have access to mental health supports at school. These supports are provided by the school guidance counselor and school social worker. Linkages to community resources are also available.

Student SEL and Well-Being

Walsh/STCS has made the social-emotional and physical well-being of students a priority. It is critical that all faculty, staff and administrators collaborate to provide all students with a school environment where they feel safe, valued, respected and included. This occurs through the development of trusting, respectful relationships with students and their families. The following will occur to assist student social-emotional and physical well-being:

- At a minimum, the first day of the new school year will focus on students' non-academic needs. This time will be spent to assist students in processing their experiences and emotions, adjust to the new school environment and limitations, build relationships etc. These steps will help prepare students for academic learning. The length of time devoted to this step beyond one day will be determined by the faculty in consultation with the school guidance counselor and/or school social worker. Faculty will devote time and facilitate student discussions on difficult topics such as civic unrest and racism.
- All faculty will hold daily community-building circles so that students' voices are heard and relationships strengthened between faculty and students and well as between students.
- Faculty, staff and administrators will develop student resiliency and prepare them for the possibility of having multiple transitions through the school year between remote and in-person learning. This will occur through direct instruction, teaching activities, circles and small group and individual interventions.
- Faculty, staff and administration will ensure that all students feel safe and supported while at school. Learning environments will foster social-emotional development at all times.
- All students will have a faculty check-in at least once a day whether instruction is in-person or remote. Faculty will receive a list of students that they are required to check-in with daily. Faculty are encouraged to check-in with students who are not on their list as well.
- As social-emotional and physical well-being are interconnected, students will be provided movement and physical activity opportunities throughout the day when safely possible. It is extremely important for this to occur during block day classes. Examples of movement opportunities include brain breaks, in place stretching/yoga exercises and the use of Go Noodle.
- Faculty will survey student needs on a daily basis. This will occur through daily faculty check-ins and community-building circles.
- Faculty, staff and administrators will allow students to access mental health and trauma support from the school guidance counselor and school social worker when needed.
- All faculty and staff are encouraged to share their perceptions on student well-being and student needs with the principal, assistant principal, school guidance counselor and/or school social worker.

- Faculty, staff and administration will receive professional development on understanding and supporting student social-emotional development and well-being as previously outlined.
- SEL will be provided following the MTSS framework. The school guidance counselor and school social worker will provide class lessons. Faculty will incorporate SEL into their teaching activities. All faculty, staff and administrators will utilize restorative practices. The school guidance counselor and school social worker will provide secondary and tertiary interventions to students at-risk or high risk. Students whose needs exceed school resources will be linked with community resources.
- When using restorative practices, faculty, staff and administrators will also incorporate SEL and trauma-informed practices.
- Faculty and staff will encourage student socialization in the absence of school social activities. This can include encouraging students to connect remotely outside of school, remote clubs, remote homework helpers program etc.

This plan is considered relevant regardless of the mode of instruction (In-person, hybrid or remote).