



Elm Community Charter School

2021-22 School Reopening Plan

Last Update Aug 19, 2021



IDENTITY

COMMUNITY

CREATIVITY



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RESPONSE 1: Executive Summary

MISSION STATEMENT

As a school seeking to invest in District 24 long-term, our vision is to see every child in Elmhurst discover their passions, talents, and power to enrich their community. Thus, our mission at Elm Community Charter School is to cultivate student leaders with the character and capacity to form their own identity, seize any opportunity, and shape the world around them through integrated studies and collaborative learning.

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Given these unprecedented times, our key design elements will continue to guide our decisions as we adjust our academic program to fit the needs of our students and the safety and health of all our community members.

- **Data-Driven Small Group Learning:** Elm CCS understands the importance of using accurate and timely data to place students in small groups based on their particular learning needs. In the time of COVID, formal and informal assessment will continue to be collected and analyzed regularly. If necessary, online platforms and tools can be used including: Zoom, Google Classroom and Nearpod. Teachers will use this data to inform the creation of small groups in various subject blocks such as Guided Reading, Writer’s Workshop, Phonics, and Math Workshop. Teachers will meet with their small groups daily following health and safety guidelines.
- **A Focus on Self-Exploration and Self-Awareness:** At Elm, we know how essential it is that students have the emotional intelligence and social skills necessary to identify, regulate, and express their feelings with team members, as well as within individual reflections. Throughout the extent of the 2021-22 school year, students will engage in a Character Development block using an in-house SEL program adapted from Yale’s RULER program. Skills learned during Character Development will continually be reinforced during virtual whole-class sunrise meetings.
- **Creative Courses: Doing and Making to Think Differently:** A key design element integral to Elm’s academic program is our Creative Courses. Our arts curriculum seeks to create well-rounded students led by teachers with expertise in related fields. In order to limit the exposure of COVID to creative teachers, who typically teach across all grades, each grade will receive one creative course for the duration of the 2021-22 school year. Each creative course will provide students with opportunities to explore and exhibit mastery of content and skills through other modalities. Due to the ramifications of social distancing and health restrictions, the Creative Courses will focus on prioritizing movement into their lessons in order to support all our learners in their engagement throughout the day.



- Student-Led Integrated Studies: At Elm CCS, we believe that learning should never occur in isolation. Good learning requires students to apply reading, writing, math, and critical thinking skills to real-world issues. Typically, students at Elm participate in two integrated studies blocks throughout the week: Humanities and STEM. During the start of the 2021-22 school year, students will receive STEM instruction and Humanities instruction throughout the course of the week.
- Collaborative Learning: At Elm, group work is at the forefront of each academic block. While we recognize that collaborative learning is nearly impossible in-person due to health and safety guidelines released by the NYSDOH and NYSED, we are committed to ensuring that students have multiple opportunities to collaborate with their peers while remaining socially distant with masks on. It is essential that students listen, ask questions, challenge, and refine ideas throughout the school day, in all subject areas.

While all the key design elements have been severely affected by the pandemic COVID-19, we do believe that temporary adjustments for these extreme times can be made to still hold the integrity of our key design elements. We recognize that one key element, Collaborative Learning, must be minimized given the health and safety guidelines issued by NYSDOH and NYSED.

IMPLEMENTATION & POPULATION

The following plan has been crafted by the School leadership team. This plan will be implemented by Elm Community Charter School, which currently serves Kindergarten through fourth grade students, and is located in District 24.



RESPONSE 2: Reopening Operations, Monitoring, Containment & Closure

REOPENING OPERATIONS

Elm will minimally follow the most recent guidelines published by the CDC and the NYSDOH. For the 2021-22 school year, Elm will follow the following operational structures:

CAPACITY:

Elm is located in an independent building which offers classrooms that are on average 750 sq ft and multi-use spaces including a full-sized gym, a cafeteria, an outdoor area, and multiple offices/breakout spaces. Knowing that in-person instruction is the most effective form of teaching and learning for our students, it is the School's ultimate goal to safely bring and keep our whole community of learners and staff in an in-person learning environment five days a week. The school believes this model will ensure the health and safety of students and staff, limit the number of inevitable interruptions to instructional changes, and ultimately enable the School to be responsive to the daily changes happening during this pandemic. As safety and health guidelines evolve, Elm will aim to bring back all students in-person safely.

SOCIAL DISTANCING:

- **Classrooms:** Students will be seated at individual desks minimally following student social distancing guidelines. Individual student desks will be a minimum of 3 feet away from each other and floor plans will allow teachers to maintain a 6ft distance from students and other adults.
- **Meals:** Following NYDOH guidelines, 6 feet distance will be required when eating meals or other times masks must be removed when indoors.
- **Common Areas:** Students will be expected to maintain 3-6 feet distance in common areas and outside of classrooms including lobbies, gyms, cafeterias, and hallways, where possible.
- **Bathrooms:** Social distancing will be maintained through student bathroom breaks. We will limit capacity in bathrooms to 1 person at a time.
- **Offices:** All office spaces will allow for 6ft distance between desks for adults.
- **Exceptions:** In the exceptional cases when social distance cannot be maintained in the classroom (ex. Paras), both staff and students will be provided with increased Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as gloves, gowns, and face shields.

PPE AND FACE COVERINGS

- **Expectations:**
 - Universal indoor and outdoor masking is required for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status and community transmission levels.

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- All teachers, staff, and students - regardless of vaccination status - are required to wear a mask over their nose and mouth during public transportation to/from the school, including school buses.
- If a student or staff member arrives at school without an acceptable face covering, they will be given a disposable mask prior to entry to the building.
- If a student or adult is unable to medically tolerate face masks, accommodation requests can be made to the Principal and Director of Operations.
- **School Provided PPE:**
 - Elm will provide 5 reusable face masks for every student and staff member.
 - Elm will also have an adequate supply of face coverings, masks, and other required PPE on hand should faculty or staff need a replacement, or a student be in need.
 - The school will provide staff with disposable gloves for anytime they may need to distribute items to students (ie. meals, technology, etc).
 - The school will provide additional PPE for staff whose interaction with students requires additional protection. For example, school nurses will be provided with masks, gloves, gowns, and face shields.
 - The school will also provide a sneeze guard in the main office.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY

- **Cohorts:** According to CDC and NYDOH guidelines, Elm will cohort whenever possible, limiting transitions in the hallway and integrating virtual learning whenever feasible in order to support social distancing and maintain cohorts. For any staff that will need to instruct more than one cohort, proper social distancing will be maintained.
- Free play will be restricted so that social distancing can be practiced. The gym and outdoor area will be outfitted with 6-ft indicators and students will maintain social distancing during sports/movement or recess.
- We will limit guests in the building and restrict access to the main office. Parent pick up and drop off will be done outside the building, maintaining social distancing.
- While Elm highly believes in kinesthetic learning, during this season, the School will limit the sharing of objects and supplies whenever possible.
- Elm will designate a COVID-19 safety coordinator whose responsibilities include continuous compliance with all aspects of the school's reopening plan, as well as any phased-in reopening activities necessary to allow for operational issues to be resolved.
- Elm will continue to conduct required school safety drills with modifications ensuring social distancing between individuals.

HYGIENE, CLEANING & DISINFECTION

- Elm will ensure adherence to hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and NYSDOH.
- **Hygiene:**

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- Elm will provide and maintain handwashing stations in all bathrooms.
- Elm will additionally make hand sanitizing stations available throughout common areas, placed in convenient locations, such as at building and classroom entrances and exits.
- Elm will establish regular routines for learners to wash their hands for 30 seconds or use hand sanitizer at regular intervals throughout the day, including before and after recess, meals, and any transitions.
- Elm will place receptacles around the school for disposal of soiled items, including paper towels and PPE.
- **Cleaning & Disinfection:**
 - The school will provide ample cleaning supplies and all instructional and common spaces will be equipped with hand sanitizers and disinfectant spray.
 - Elm will ensure that cleaning and disinfection are the primary responsibility of the school's custodial staff. However, Elm may also choose to provide appropriate cleaning and disinfection supplies to faculty and staff for shared and frequently touched surfaces.
 - Elm will conduct regular nightly cleaning and disinfection of the facilities. In addition to the nightly cleaning, there will be more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk areas used by many individuals and frequently touched surfaces, such as door knobs and bathrooms, throughout the day.
 - Elm will work with our custodial staff to maintain logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection.
 - Elm will ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms. Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected more often depending on frequency of use.
- **Water Coolers:**
 - Water coolers will be considered a high traffic common space and will be sanitized frequently throughout the day.
 - Students will be encouraged to come to school with an approved, clear water bottle for drinking everyday.
- **Air Flow:**
 - Elm will increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible in all classrooms / offices while maintaining safety protocols. This will include ensuring each classroom is equipped with fans and opening all possible windows.

EXTRACURRICULARS & AFTER CARE

Elm has partnered with an afterschool program this year to support families' needs for academic and extracurricular activities. To the extent possible, Elm will support the afterschool program in having spaces and capacity to follow all health and safety guidelines published by the CDC and NYDOH, including:

- Whenever possible students will play/participate outdoors rather than indoor settings.

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- High-risk sports and extracurricular activities will be canceled or hosted virtually.
- Placing students in grade-level cohorts whenever possible.

Implementation and execution of health and safety guidelines during the afterschool program is the sole responsibility of the afterschool program, Cornerstone Thai Boxing. Elm staff will not be present during afterschool program hours and unable to ensure accountability. Any issues with health and safety protocols can be directed to the afterschool program's coordinator, Youyung Cho.

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

- **Students:** Unless otherwise instructed by the NY State Department of Education or the NYC Department of Education, all families will be expected to return to in-person learning for the 2021-22 school year. If a student has an increased risk for COVID-19, the school will work with the family on an accommodation, which will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.
- **Staff:** Elm will consider reasonable accommodation requests for employees with a disability under federal or state law. For situations that do not involve a disability requiring reasonable accommodation under federal/state law, such as where employees have increased risk conditions or have family members at home with serious health risks accommodation requests will be considered and workplace adjustments may be available.
 - Examples of accommodations might be the use of personal protective equipment (ex. face masks, gloves or surgical gowns), changes to work stations to limit exposure to others, etc.
 - Reasonable accommodations may be granted on a case-by-case basis after a cooperative dialogue takes place to determine the medical necessity for an accommodation and to ensure the modification does not cause an undue hardship (e.g. significant difficulty or expense) to the School.
 - In cases where an employee is requesting accommodation because of the employee's own serious health condition or that of a spouse, child or parent, the School will require the employee to submit a written medical certification from a healthcare provider verifying the need for the accommodation. The employee may also be required to provide the School with additional physicians' statements at regular intervals, upon request from the School, attesting to the employee's or family member's continued serious health condition and the employee's subsequent need for accommodation.

TRANSPORTATION

- Elm students will be required to wear masks at all times on school buses.
- Pursuant to the CDC's Order, physical distancing is not required on school buses.



- Elm will be using grade-specific entrances / exits to reduce density and congestion during arrival/dismissal.

FOOD SERVICES

- Currently students will be seated at individual desks, spaced 6ft apart, when eating all meals, although Elm will adjust in accordance with the most updated CDC and DOH guidelines.
- Qualified members of NYC's Office of School Foods will deliver grab-and-go breakfast and lunch that will be available to all students. Students will also be permitted to bring their own lunch if preferred.
- Hand sanitizer will be given to learners and surfaces wiped down before and after they eat.

MENTAL HEALTH, BEHAVIORAL, AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES & PROGRAMS

- **School Counselor:** Social Emotional Learning is a key design element of Elm's model, thus Elm has two full-time licensed School Counselors on staff who will work closely with the Leadership Team to address the mental health, behavior, and emotional needs of students during this pandemic.
- **Social Emotional Learning Curriculum:** Elm's SEL curriculum will be continually developed by our School Counselor in order to cultivate students' understanding of their feelings and apply helpful coping skills. Lessons will be adjusted as we learn how students are dealing with and responding to the ramifications of this pandemic.
- **Other Resources:** Beyond direct student practices, the school is committed to supporting the Elm community at large (including staff and families) as the community works through the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on our community which was an epicenter of cases in NYC. Elm will continue to provide mental health resources to families and staff members through regular newsletters.

COMMUNICATION

- **Family Communication:**
 - Elm believes strong communication systems are imperative to ensuring our community is able to navigate reopening.
 - Elm will continue to produce consistent and frequent newsletters that are shared with families and staff members through Parent Square and via email that communicate school information and important public health information related to COVID-19.
 - Elm will also continue to share important information through other communication means, including but not limited to:
 - Social Media: Instagram & Facebook
 - Elm's Website

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- Parent survey / feedback structures
 - Direct parent call/texting
 - Google Classroom
 - All communication will be made available in both English and Spanish, and whenever possible, additional languages.
- **Signage:** Elm will post signs throughout the school consistent with CDC and NYSDOH guidance. Signage will be used to remind individuals to:
 - Stay home if they feel sick.
 - Cover their nose and mouth with an acceptable face covering when unable to maintain social distance from others or in accordance with any stricter policy implemented by the school.
 - Properly store and, when necessary, discard PPE.
 - Adhere to social distancing instructions.
 - Report symptoms of, or exposure to, COVID-19, and how they should do so.
 - Wash hands with soap and disinfectant throughout the day.
 - Follow hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection guidelines.
 - Follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

MONITORING

- **SCREENING:** Currently Elm will implement daily health screening for adults and periodic health screenings for students, but will minimally always follow the screening guidelines provided by the CDC and DOH.
- **Daily Screening Questionnaires:** Elm will use a screening questionnaire for staff and students reporting to school to be completed remotely by electronic survey or digital application (ex. Parent Square) before reporting to school.
- **Temperature Checks:**
 - Temperature checks will be conducted per U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or DOH guidelines.
 - Temperature checks will not be part of the daily screening questionnaire and will be managed on site for all students, staff, and any vendors or visitors entering the building.
 - If an individual presents a temperature of greater than 100.0°F, the individual will be denied entry into the building or sent directly to an isolation area prior to being picked up.

HEALTH TESTING PROTOCOLS

- **Symptomatic:** If a student or staff member is symptomatic upon the arrival or duration at school, he or she will be sent to the nurse to be examined. If the symptoms are

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determined by the nurse to be COVID-like symptoms, the student or staff member will be sent home and further instructions will be given based on the most updated state health guidelines and practices.

- **Positive Test:** If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, regardless of whether the individual is symptomatic or asymptomatic, the case will be reported to the DOH, who determines actionable next steps based on the most recent health and safety guidelines and data. The School will follow all next steps including, but not limited to, the quarantining/isolation of classes, close contacts, and bus routes.
- **COVID-19 Randomized Testing:**
 - Within our fiscal capacity, Elm will provide on-site testing for staff and students that follow all state mandates related to the frequency and execution of COVID-19 testing.
 - Students and staff are also required to report any positive test result, either taken independently or through this random COVID-19 testing program, to the school. The School shall report all positive COVID-19 cases to the NYC Test & Trace Corps.
- **Recent Travel:** Elm will follow all current travel restrictions and guidelines provided by the New York State Travel Advisory.
- **Vaccination Status:** Elm will collect submission of documentation of COVID-19 vaccination status for all staff members, compliant with FERPA statutory and regulatory requirements as well as all relevant state, tribal, local, or territorial laws and regulations. Unvaccinated individuals, or individuals who do not wish to disclose their vaccination status, may be required to take weekly COVID-19 tests.

EARLY WARNING SIGNS

Elm will follow the local and New York State DOH guidelines on identifying the metrics for early warning signs that positive COVID-19 cases may be increasing beyond an acceptable level. These warning signs at the community level include:

- an analysis of new cases
- Testing
- Hospitalization
- ICU Capacity

We will monitor against such metrics daily by checking the NY Early Warning Monitoring Dashboard found at <https://forward.ny.gov/early-warning-monitoring-dashboard>.

CONTAINMENT

SCHOOL HEALTH OFFICES:

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Elm will use the following protocols for safely caring for a student or staff member if they develop symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day:

- A staff member will notify Leadership through a school communication system if an individual develops symptoms.
- The leader will notify the nurse that there is an individual with symptoms.
- The leader will put on additional PPE and will go to the class with a set of additional PPE for the individual in question.
 - If the individual is a student, the Leader will walk the student to the nurse's office.
 - If the individual is a staff member, the Leader will stand in on instructional duties so the staff member can go to the nurse's office.
- The nurse will take the individual's temperature and conduct a health screening in accordance with DOH guidelines.
- The individual will remain supervised until a family member has arrived to pick up the individual.
- Elm will use disposable equipment and supplies in the health office as much as practicable.
- Should the nurse need assistance, a member of the operations team will come to support the nurse.
- When their approved pick up arrives, a member of the Leadership and Operations team will sign out the student and escort them to the front of the building, deliver verbal and written instructions that the student must be seen by a health care provider.

INFECTED INDIVIDUALS

- Elm will refer all infected individuals to a healthcare provider and provide resources on [COVID-19 testing](#).
- Discharge from isolation and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the local health department and updated CDC or NYSDOH guidance.

EXPOSED INDIVIDUALS

- In accordance with the New York State Department of Health, Elm will consider "close contact" to be someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes in a 24hr period.
 - Exception: In the K-12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3-6ft of an infected student if both the infected student and the exposed students correctly and consistently work well-fitting masks the entire time.
- Elm will work closely with the NYSDOH, who determines actionable next steps for exposed individuals based on the most recent health and safety guidelines and data.



The School will follow all next steps including, but not limited to, the quarantining/isolation of classes, close contacts, and bus routes.

HYGIENE, CLEANING & DISINFECTION

- If an individual suspected/confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in the building, Elm will follow procedures outlined by the CDC's guidance on [Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities](#):
 - Close off areas visited by the ill persons. Open outside doors and windows and use ventilating fans to increase air circulation in the area. Wait 24 hours or as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection.
 - Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.
- All Elm staff will be immediately notified of the areas that are closed down for cleaning due to possible exposure of an infected person and alternative spacing plans will be communicated.

CONTRACT TRACING

- Elm will notify the state and local health department immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 diagnostic test result by an individual within school facilities or on school grounds, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors.
- In the case of an individual testing positive, Elm will develop and maintain plans to support local health departments in tracing all contacts of the individual, in accordance with the protocols, training, and tools provided through the New York State Contact Tracing Program.
- Confidentiality will be maintained as required by federal and state law and regulations.
- Elm will cooperate with all state and local health department contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine efforts.

COMMUNICATION

- Elm will share protocols and safety measures taken by the school with all relevant parties including parents/legal guardians, faculty, staff, students and the local community.
- State and local health departments will implement monitoring and movement restrictions of COVID-19 infected or exposed persons, including isolation or quarantine.
- Elm will ensure that reporting plans are in place for individuals who are alerted that they have come into close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19, and have been alerted to such exposure via tracing, tracking or other mechanism.



CLOSURE

CLOSURE TRIGGERS

Elm will follow the most updated guidelines published by the CDC and the NYSDOH. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Quarantining a single class when presented with asymptomatic or positive individual, where appropriate social distancing was not maintained
- Temporarily switching and in-person class to virtual instruction
- Temporarily closing a single class for an allotted time due to investigation
- Temporarily closing the entire building for an allotted time due to investigation

Other factors that will be considered in determining school closure include:

- New York State Guidelines: Elm will follow the local and New York State guidelines on identifying the metrics for school closure that positive COVID-19 cases may be increasing beyond an acceptable level. These indicators include an analysis of new cases, testing, hospitalization, and ICU Capacity.
- NY Monitoring Dashboard: We will monitor against such metrics daily by checking the NY Monitoring Dashboard found at <https://forward.ny.gov/covid-19-regional-metrics-dashboard>.

COMMUNICATION

- Elm will maintain timely communication internally and externally throughout the closure process.
- Notices about school closure steps will be communicated through the following avenues:
 - Paper notice to go home with in-person students
 - Virtual notice via Parent Square (app, text, email)
 - Direct email to all Elm staff and families
- Elm will frequently update families on all status updates associated with closures and will be sure to provide all notices in English and in Spanish.



RESPONSE 3: Pre-Opening, School Calendars & Scheduling

PRE-OPENING

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT:

Elm Community Charter School strives to be a community-based school that takes into account the concerns and input of all stakeholders including families and staff. Feedback from stakeholders were collected through the summer via Google Forms and will continue to be received as the school year evolves.

- **Families & Staff:** Surveys are sent out periodically to gauge parent and family needs. Questions included, but were not limited to:
 - Since June 7th of this year, NYCDOH updated the social distancing guidance to allow students to be placed at individual desks 3ft apart from each other with masks on (with the exception of eating, when students need to maintain 6ft while masks off). Elm plans to follow this updated guidance to allow for 100% of in-person students at 3ft in classrooms and 6ft during meal periods.
 - How comfortable are you with the following safety parameters in place?
 - Any concerns or suggestions
 - Since June 7th of last year, NYC DOH guidance on mask wearing varied in different settings (i.e. indoor vs. outdoor). Elm believes mask wearing to still be a best practice, so we plan to require students to wear masks at all times (indoor and outdoor) except during meal periods.
 - How comfortable are you with the following safety parameters in place?
 - Any concerns or suggestions
 - Since June 7th of this year, NYDOH lifted the need for cohorting in most schools. Moving forward, Elm believes this is still a good practice to keep in place and will continue to practice this whenever possible. This means that there may be components of in person instruction that utilize computer / virtual learning aspects (ie. level-specific Guided Reading small groups through Zoom).
 - How comfortable are you with the following safety parameters in place?
 - Any concerns or suggestions
 - Since June 7th of this year, NYDOH guidance now allows for gatherings in multipurpose spaces, with specific social distance requirements. For lunch this year, we plan on

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holding lunch blocks in our large multipurpose space with groups of 3-4 classes, all eating at individual student lunch tables, and maintaining 6ft distance.

- How comfortable are you with the following safety parameters in place?
 - Any concerns or suggestions
 - Since June 7th of this year, NYCDOH removed the need for COVID-19 testing. Elm plans to implement some form of on-site testing.
 - How comfortable are you with the following safety parameters in place?
 - Any concerns or suggestions
 - Do you plan to utilize OPT yellow bus services even if social distancing is not practiced (as determined by the Office of Pupil Transportation)?
 - We have learned that keeping the whole community safe is contingent on each community member's efforts. Are you committed to teaching and reinforcing health and safety practices with your students as well as yourself (including washing of hands, mask wearing, staying socially distanced from peers)
- **The Elm Board:** As we progressed through this pandemic, board members are updated monthly and members are asked for their input, particularly those serving on the academic committee who are educators themselves, as well as those with young children.
 - **Third Party Consultants:** Elm's leadership team connected with consultants who also have insight on various charter and district schools across the city. These consultants provided suggestions and best practices that would best support our families and students during this time. Our consultants included:
 - Blanca Ruiz, who works with the School on staff development around Race & Equity
 - Lavinia Group, who works with the School on the development of our curriculum and staff development
 - **NYSDOH / NYSED / SUNY:** The School has attended all webinars with our authorizer (SUNY), the Department of Health (NYSDOH), and Department of Education (NYSED) to ensure our plans adhere to all NYSDOH and CDC guidelines.
 - **Representation:** The School has additionally consulted with the following representation throughout our reopening planning process:
 - General Counsel: Cohen Schneider Law, P.C.
 - Labor Counsel: Bond, Schoenech & King, PLLC
 - Human Resources: Emplova

SUMMER TEACHER INSTITUTE:

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Community
Charter School

At Elm, we believe that staff professional development is one of the major levers in ensuring student success. Elm teachers will start the school year on August 9, 2021, for our annual Summer Teacher Institute. During Teacher Institute teachers have the opportunity to receive professional development around our school design, school policies and procedures, and instructional planning for all academic components.

This year, we will be holding Teacher Institute in-person, integrating the use of virtual meetings whenever possible.

STUDENT & FAMILY ORIENTATIONS:

In order to guarantee a strong start to the school year, the Elm team will hold an in-person orientation for new families. This will allow our teachers to assess new students with a diagnostic assessment. We will also hold a virtual orientation for returning families. Both will occur in August 2021.

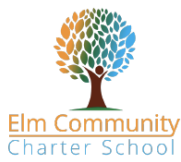
STUDENT TECHNOLOGY:

Elm provides 1:1 technology/devices for all learners. We will continue to use virtual learning during some of learning blocks in order to maintain social distance protocols. Continuous and consistent use of technology will also enable the School to transition to virtual learning if at all necessary during the school year.



SCHOOL CALENDAR

Elm’s school calendar was created to maximize instructional learning time and strategically integrate professional development and data analysis with the ultimate goal of equipping teachers with the ability to monitor student achievement and tailor instruction. Elm students will receive a total of 183 instructional days and 1,097 hours of instruction. Below is the tentative school calendar for the 2021-22 school year that includes anticipated holidays and breaks.



2021 - 2022 [Tentative] School Calendar

KEY	
	FIRST AND LAST DAYS OF SCHOOL
	HOLIDAYS (No School)
	INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS
	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS (No School)
	SUCCESS CELEBRATIONS
	EARLY DISMISSAL DAYS (12:30PM Dismissal Every Wednesday)

August 2021				
M	T	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

September 2021				
M	T	W	TH	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

October 2021				
M	T	W	TH	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

November 2021				
M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

December 2021				
M	T	W	TH	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

January 2022				
M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

February 2022				
M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28				

March 2022				
M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

April 2022				
M	T	W	TH	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

May 2022				
M	T	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

June 2022				
M	T	W	TH	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

Total Days: 183

Important Dates	
August 30, 2021	First Day of School!
September 6, 2021	No School: Labor Day
September 7, 2021	First Day of OPT Busing & After School
October 11, 2021	No School: Indigenous Peoples' Day
November 8, 2021	No School: Teacher Professional Development Day
November 17, 2021	Q1 Success Celebrations
November 11, 2021	No School: Veterans Day
November 24, 2021 - November 26, 2021	No School: Thanksgiving Break
December 24, 2021 - December 21, 2021	No School: Winter Break
January 17, 2022	No School: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
January 24, 2022	No School: Teacher Professional Development Day
February 2, 2022	Q2 Success Celebrations
February 21, 2022 - February 25, 2022	No School: Mid Winter Recess
April 15, 2022	No School: Teacher Professional Development Day
April 19, 2022 - April 22, 2022	No School: Spring Break
April 13, 2022	Q3 Success Celebrations
May 30, 2022	No School: Memorial Day
June 15, 2022	Q4 Success Celebration
June 17, 2022	Last Day of School & (Tentative) Moving Up Ceremony

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RESPONSE 4: Enrollment and Attendance

ENROLLMENT

Understanding the ramifications of COVID-19, Elm remains conservative with our anticipated enrollment numbers, knowing that COVID-19 continues to affect families and their decisions. Currently, Elm is fully enrolled and has a considerable waitlist. Another factor that significantly impacts our enrollment is transportation. We anticipate that bussing will be available and allow accommodation for all our eligible students.

Elm's Founder and Director of Operations will continue to monitor the school's enrollment count and budget on a consistent basis and will ensure accuracy and proper documentation of enrollment by the Operations Associate and Office & Community Coordinator.

ATTENDANCE

Elm Community Charter School will continue to maintain accurate attendance records throughout the year. Attendance protocol will be executed in the following manner:

- Teachers submit attendance by 7:45am daily.
- Students arriving after 7:45am will be marked tardy.
- At Elm, communication with families with poor attendance is of utmost importance. The Elm Team will reach out to families in the following manner, with the hope of creating supports for the family:
 - Daily: The Main Office will reach out to guardian(s) of every absent learner
 - After 3 consecutive absences: The Main Office will email and mail home a letter requesting the family immediately contacts the school.
 - After 5 consecutive absences: The Main Office will email and mail home a letter requesting the student's guardian(s) attends a mandatory meeting with School Leadership.
 - The School Counselor will be looped into these conversations and together will conduct solution-oriented conversations with families.

In the case where virtual learning becomes a necessity, Elm will additionally track attendance based on school setting and follow all NYSED state mandates.



RESPONSE 5: Academic Program

CURRICULUM

Elm’s Educational Philosophy & Curriculum Choice

As per Elm’s charter, “Elm Community Charter School ascribes to an inquiry-based model of teaching and learning, where students’ genuine inquiries are at the heart of every unit and lesson.” We believe that whether through virtual, hybrid, or in-person modes, we can continue to place our learners’ questions and interests at the center of our lessons.

Elm’s academic program has a balance of inquiry and mastery based learning blocks, both working hand in hand to cultivate a rich and relevant learning environment. The curriculum implemented reflects the same curricula listed in the charter, but will be tailored as we maneuver through these unprecedented times. When necessary, Elm’s leadership team will adjust to student needs.

A breakdown of the subjects at Elm that fall under these two types of instruction can be found in **Response 6, table 5a.1.**

INSTRUCTION

In-Person Instruction For All

Elm’s academic program includes a combination of whole group classroom instruction and data-driven small group instruction. At Elm, we understand the importance of varied instructional opportunities to be inclusive of a diverse range of learning styles. Elm CCS is committed to retaining the integrity of the vision of each academic block throughout the phases of reopening. Our primary emphasis is on delivering quality instruction to ensure all learners are achieving growth goals in reading, writing and math.

A breakdown of our academic program vision for the 2021-2022 school year can be found in **Response 6, Table 5b.1.**

In accordance with all literacy and math mastery learning blocks, Elm’s aim is always to develop the skills and understandings necessary to prepare students for various forms of assessment, including traditional assessments such as the New York ELA & Mathematics State Tests. To supplement our mastery blocks,

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third and fourth grade students at Elm CCS will engage in additional test preparation during literacy and math blocks in the Spring of 2022.

As we get closer to Spring 2022, Elm's test preparation schedule will adjust accordingly in response to student need and state guidance.

1:1 Student Support v. Small Group Support

Elm Community Charter School is rooted in the belief that in order to effectively meet every student's needs, there must be opportunities throughout the entire day for data driven small group learning. Our learning schedule will allow teachers the flexibility to create small group learning environments daily through co-teaching models and virtual small groups. A key design element at Elm is the use of co-teaching practices within heterogeneous classrooms to help meet individualized and small group student goals.

Whenever possible, small groups will be pulled to a separate location in the school, while following all safety guidelines. Teachers will use a combination of summative assessments and weekly formative assessment data to inform grouping and determine what specific skills and strategies students need in order to close the achievement gap.

If, after the implementation of data-driven small group and individualized instruction, we notice that specific students still need additional support, Elm leaders and teachers will determine whether that student qualifies as at-risk and requires further interventions. Please refer to section 5d for additional information on at-risk students.

ASSESSMENT

Data driven instruction is one of Elm's key design elements. As such, Elm will implement diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments to measure student achievement toward mastering learning standards and monitor the effectiveness of each academic component. Teachers will use the data from the assessments to make adjustments to lessons and create homogeneous small groups based on learners' shared needs.

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In the weeks leading up to the 2021/2022 school year, diagnostic assessments will be administered to new learners in reading and math. The data from the diagnostic assessments will be used to create and/or update homogeneous small groups for learners.

At the end of each cycle, Elm's quarterly benchmark assessments will occur.

Please refer to **Section 6** for more information on:

- Diagnostic Assessments (**Table 5c.1**)
- Summative Assessments (**Table 5c.2**)

Teachers will continue using data to analyze where students stand in relation to their individual goals and learning standards to identify next steps for individual learners. Teachers will attend professional development sessions to analyze student data and identify their students' strengths and knowledge gaps. That data analysis will then be used to make adjustments to units, lessons, and small group instruction.

AT-RISK POPULATIONS

At Elm CCS, we have a diverse population of learners with a variety of needs and learning styles. We believe that in order to effectively meet the needs of every learner, our academic learning program must include opportunities for targeted small group learning. As such, our academic program and schedule will ensure that at-risk learners, including learners with IEPs and Emergent Bilingual Learners (EBLs), will receive targeted small group instruction on a daily basis.

Response to Intervention

Elm's academic program has mastery learning blocks to ensure that students are receiving the foundational skills needed to be independent readers, writers, and mathematicians. In these learning blocks, learners will be explicitly taught strategies and skills aligned to the New York State Learning Standards, given opportunities to practice the strategies and skills taught, and provided with differentiated instruction in targeted, homogeneous, small groups. The targeted small groups are meant to be flexible and will be strategically created based on diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment data. Teachers will frequently analyze the data of the learners in their small group to determine progress, identify growth areas that will be addressed in instruction, and set goals, which will be aligned to Individualized Learning Programs (IEPs) and language acquisition benchmarks for our Emergent Bilingual Learners when applicable.



Throughout the school year, we will identify learners as at-risk when they are not scoring proficient on assessments and show little to no academic growth over two or more cycles of assessments. Once a student is identified as at-risk, the student's teacher will contact the parent for home-school partnership support, begin collecting evidence of the perceived student's struggles, and refer the child to the Student Success Team (SST) to schedule a grade level Kid Talk Meeting to start the RTI process.

During a Kid Talk Meeting, all members of a grade team and other relevant staff will meet to discuss the learner's academic progress and determine possible Tier 2 interventions. These interventions will be administered by the student's lead teacher with support from the Special Education and/or Emergent Bilingual teacher(s) on the grade team. All involved parties will monitor the student's progress to determine the success of the intervention and refer the student to the Student Success Team (SST) if there is little to no academic growth.

The SST, made up of the grade level's Special Education and Emergent Bilingual teachers, the instructional leadership team, and all other relevant staff will then proceed to create, administer, and monitor the Tier 3 interventions in collaboration with grade level teachers. Interventions from Tier 1 and 2 that were helpful for students will continue as teachers work with the SST during Tier 3 interventions. Tier 3 support will include specific curriculum interventions to be implemented for a minimum of six weeks.

If the student is not responding to Tier 3 interventions, the SST will refer the student to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) for evaluation to determine if the student qualifies for special education supports and services.

Elm will continue to comply with its obligations under the Child Find requirements of IDEA through the execution of the above described RtI process, which will be overseen by the SST. The use of strategic RtI interventions ensures that Elm is providing individualized support for students of all learning backgrounds.

Students with Disabilities

In collaboration with the Committee on Special Education (CSE), students with a mandate for related services on their IEP will be offered those services in-person. In the event that we move to a remote setting, students will receive their mandate for related services via Teletherapy. Students with a recommended program of ICT will receive instruction from the special education teacher on the grade team for the subjects and amount of time specified on the IEP.

Emergent Bilingual Learners

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During enrollment, Elm typically identifies new students who are potential Emergent Bilingual Learners (EBLs) using the Home Language Information Survey (HLIS). Based on the results of the HLIS, trained personnel will conduct the in-person interview during our New Student and Family Orientation prior to the start of the school year.

New students who have a home language other than English will take the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) to determine initial speaking, listening, reading, and writing levels. Students who are not determined to be proficient in the above domains will be eligible for ELL services.

Elm continues to remain committed to creating a learning environment for our EBLs to thrive. Our EBL supports will include the following:

- At least one English Language Learner specialist on every grade team. This specialist will support all teachers on the grade level with the implementation of strategies to support the acquisition of language skills and providing supplemental unit/lesson materials for EBL students to develop academic and domain-specific language.
- A flexible schedule that allows for approximately twelve hours of targeted, small group instruction in addition to small group or 1:1 instruction that can include language routines where teachers can focus on vocabulary, language development, or previewing/reteaching lessons.

In alignment with Elm's RTI process, teachers will monitor the academic growth and achievement of all of their students, including EBLs. Each spring, Elm will administer the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) to all students who are identified as EBLs. The NYSESLAT will determine if a student has reached proficiency levels that allow the student to exit from ELL services.



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RESPONSE 6: Pre-Existing School Plan Attachments

PICTURES OF SOCIALLY DISTANT CLASSROOMS

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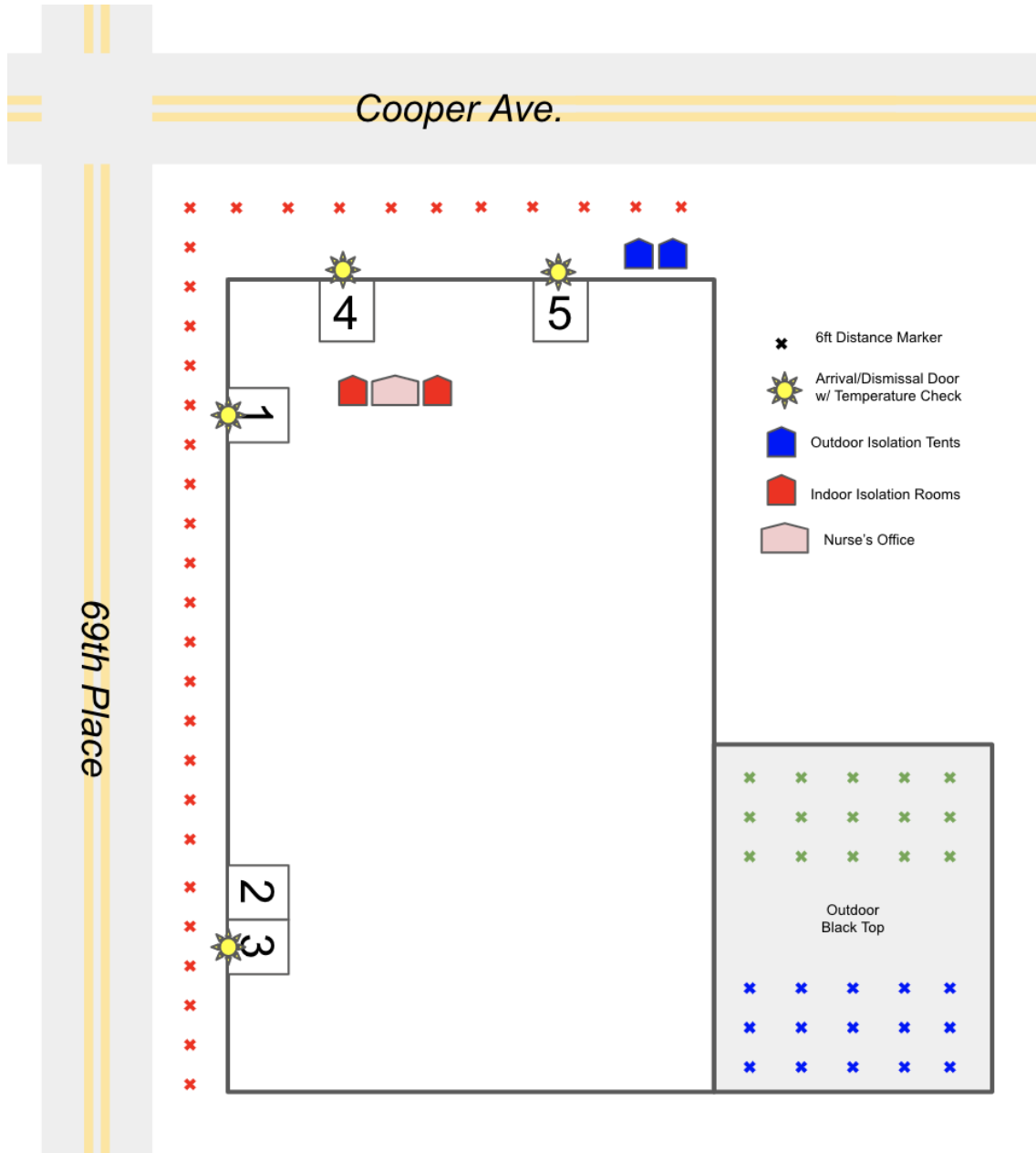
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WAYFINDING



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SIGNAGE

Keep Our Workplace Safe!

Practice good hygiene

- Stop hand shakes and use **non-contact greeting methods**
- Clean hands at the door and schedule **regular hand washing reminders**
- Disinfect surfaces** like doorknobs, tables, and desks regularly
- Avoid touching your face** and cover your coughs and sneezes
- Increase ventilation** by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning

Limit meetings and non-essential travels

Use **video conferencing** instead of face-to-face meetings

When video calls are not possible, hold your meetings in **well-ventilated rooms and spaces**

Suspend all **non-essential travels** and trips

Stay home if...

- You are feeling sick
- You have a sick family member at home

Take care of your emotional and mental well-being

Outbreaks are a stressful and anxious time for everyone. We're here to support you! Reach out to hr@reallygreatsite.com anytime.

SOURCE: CDC.GOV

Know the COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

The following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath

Seek medical advice if:

- You develop worsening symptoms
- You have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19
- You live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [CDC.GOV](https://www.cdc.gov)

No mask, No entry.

NO EXCEPTIONS

Students and staff are required to bring their own cloth or surgical masks to school every day. If you forgot one or it is damaged, we will provide you with a replacement.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

WASH YOUR HANDS

- WATER AND SOAP
- PALM TO PALM
- BETWEEN FINGERS
- FOCUS ON THUMBS
- BACK OF HANDS
- FOCUS ON WRISTS

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TABLE 3c.1: Sample Student Schedule

Class	MONDAY	
	KA	KB
7:15-7:45	Breakfast	
7:45-8:10	Sunrise Meeting	
8:10-8:55	STEM A (Perez)	Sports & Movement
8:55-9:00	Transition	
9:00-9:45	Music	STEM A (Perez)
9:45-10:30	Guided Reading	
10:30-10:35	Transition	
10:35-11:20	Lunch	
11:20-11:25	Transition	
11:25-12:10	SFA	
12:10-12:55	Math Workshop	
12:55-1:30	Number Stories (1/2 Class Snack)	
1:30-2:15	Humanities	
2:15-2:35	Math Routines	
2:35-2:55	Sunset Meeting	
2:55-3:00	Pack-up	
3:00-3:30	Dismissal	

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TABLE 5a.1: Inquiry-based Learning vs. Mastery Learning

	Inquiry-based Learning		Mastery Learning	
Literacy and Humanities	Integrated Studies: Humanities	45 minutes 3x week	SFA (K-2)	45 min. 4x week
	Close Reading (Gr3)	45 minutes 4x week	Guided Reading	45 min. 5x week
			Writing Workshop	45 min. 2x week
			Readers Workshop (K-2)	15 min. 2x week
Math	Cognitively Guided Instruction	45 min. 3-4x week	Math Workshop	45 min. 3-4x week
			Math Routines	20 min. 2x week
Science	Integrated Studies: STEM	45 min. 4-5x week		

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TABLE 5b.1: Academic Program Vision

Component	Vision Snapshot	Times Per Week	Time
Sunrise Meeting	Morning meeting is the launch of the day in K-4 and wears many hats, both academic and social emotional. It is where students engage in opportunities to build relationships with their peers and teachers, and to share their thoughts and feelings about the world they live in. In our return to school in the fall, Sunrise meeting will be essential in preparing student minds for a successful day of learning.	5x week	30 minutes
SFA	Our phonics curriculum was chosen based on their structured, phonetic approach to language development through ability-based small groups that focus on comprehension skills, phonics, sound blending, and decoding. After an initial lesson, students will be placed in breakout groups to work on targeted phonics skills.	4x week	45 minutes
Close Reading	Our close reading block is essential in developing the comprehension strategies that students use in order to reach the deepest level of meaning within a text of any genre. During independent work time, teacher will circulate and provide feedback.	3rd-4th Grade 4x week	45 minutes

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<p>Guided Reading</p> <p>Independent Reading & Conferring</p> <p>Reader’s Workshop</p>	<p>Phonics knowledge alone does not make successful readers. It is the synergy of decoding strategies, comprehension skills from the micro to macro parts of text, and joy of reading that makes a reader.</p> <p>Through daily guided reading, teachers are able to make data-driven decisions on which reading skills and strategies the different profiles of learners in their class need to work on, in order to develop into on- and above- grade level readers.</p> <p>Through independent reading, students are able to discover their interests and their passions as they self-choose leveled texts to practice meaning-making strategies.</p> <p>Two days a week, teachers in K-2 will begin their guided reading block with a 15 minute Readers Workshop mini-lesson. This mini-lesson will teach young learners word-solving strategies to practice when they read independently.</p>	<p>5x week</p> <p>GR: 5x week</p> <p>RW (K-2): 2x/week</p>	<p>45 minute minutes independent reading/digital learning</p> <p>15 - 20 minute GR blocks</p>
<p>Writers Workshop</p>	<p>Our writers workshop curriculum, adapted from TC’s writers workshop, gives students the skills and the writing time they need to become confident writers. Students will virtually cycle through the different stages of the writing process (brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, publishing, and sharing), as they learn the skills necessary to write within each genre (narrative, informational, and opinion writing).</p>	<p>2x week</p>	<p>45 minutes</p>
<p>Humanities</p>	<p>Our humanities curriculum is adapted from Lavinia Group’s Insight Humanities curriculum. It is an interdisciplinary block that requires the use of higher order thinking skills, where students are constantly adapting their knowledge and understanding to conflicting perspectives and scenarios. Humanities is heavily student-led and teacher facilitated, and each unit will include a final project.</p>	<p>3x week</p>	<p>45 minutes</p>
<p>Math Workshop</p>	<p>During Math Workshop, learners will learn the fundamental math skills through explorations that require them to think critically, draw conclusions based on mathematical thinking and reasoning, and prove their ideas to others. The focus will be on learners building a strong conceptual foundation that they can use to solve problems in their everyday experiences.</p>	<p>3-4x week</p>	<p>45 minutes</p>

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Number Stories	Number Stories is a math framework that builds on learners' prior knowledge and experiences to develop a deep understanding of mathematical concepts through word problems leading to efficient and sophisticated problem solving.	3-4x week	45 minutes
STEM	During STEM, learners will build their understanding of science and engineering concepts through an engaging, problem-based context.	4-5x week	45 minutes
Creatives	To maintain our commitment to the development of the whole child, students will participate in creative courses daily. Each grade will be assigned one creative course per quarter.	4-5x week	45 minutes
SEL	Elm will continue to monitor and address learners' social emotional needs through our Social Emotional curriculum. Through the curriculum, learners will be able to check in with their emotions and learn effective coping strategies.	1x week	30 minutes



TABLE 5c.1: Pre-Phase Diagnostic Assessments

Subject	Grade(s)	Assessment Summary	Response to Data
Reading	K-4	Fountas & Pinell (F&P): Teachers will meet 1:1 with each student to administer F&P assessment, starting at the onset of the school year.	Form guided reading groups based on reading level Informs which students need extra 1:1 conferring (2x week)
	K-2	Reading Roots: Teachers will meet 1:1 with each student to administer the	Monitor mastery of phonics and phonemic awareness to form small-group phonics instruction
	K	Emergent Literacy Skills: Teachers will meet 1:1 with each student to administer the Emergent Literacy Skills assessment which assess letter name and sound recognition.	Informs teaching points for whole group SFA lessons.
Math	K-1	Counting: Teachers will meet 1:1 with each student to assess their counting proficiency up to 43.	Informs teaching points for Counting & Collections during Number Stories.

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TABLE 5c.2: Summative Assessments

Subject	Grade(s)	Assessment Summary	Response to Data
Reading	K-4	Fountas & Pinell (F&P): Teachers will meet 1:1 with each student to administer F&P assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form guided reading groups based on reading level Informs which students need extra 1:1 conferring (2x week)
	K-4	Reading Roots: Teachers will meet 1:1 with each student to administer the Reading Roots assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor mastery of phonics and phonemic awareness to form small-group phonics instruction
	K-4	Benchmark Assessments: Learners will independently complete an assessment that assesses progress toward mastery of New York State Literacy Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of instruction Humanities small groups Guided Reading small groups
Close Reading	2-4	Main Idea: Teachers will meet in small groups with students and present a passage to students. Students will read the passage from the screen. Students will independently identify the main idea of the passage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informs small group coaching Informs skills to be retaught
Writing	K-4	Published Piece: Throughout the unit, learners will work on a genre specific writing piece. Learners will submit their published piece via Google Classroom. Their final product will be evaluated using a rubric.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of instruction (taking into consideration remote instruction) Writing small groups, 1:1 conferring, and RTI
Math	K-4	Benchmark Assessment: Learners will independently complete an assessment that assesses progress toward mastery of New York State Math Learning Standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of instruction (taking into consideration remote instruction) Math small-group and 1:1 instruction

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