NexTech High School Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan

Address of School District: 801 Broadway Ave NW Suite 225
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

District Code Number: 41929

Building Code Number(s):   01397

District Contact Person: Dan McMinn

District Contact Person Email Address: dmcminn@gr.nextechhigh.org

Local Public Health Department: Kent County Health Department

Local Public Health Department Contact Person Email Address:
Joann Hoganson joann.hoganson@kentcountymi.gov

Name of Intermediate School District: KISD

Name of Authorizing Body: Central Michigan University

Date of Adoption by Board of Directors: 09/22/2020

October 01, 2020 [via email]

Mr. Daniel McMinn
NexTech High School

Re: Approval of Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan ("Extended Learning Plan")

Dear Mr. McMinn:

I am pleased to inform you that the Extended Learning Plan for NexTech High School ("Academy") has been approved by The Governor John Engler Center for Charter Schools at Central Michigan University. The Center will transmit the Extended Learning Plan to the State as soon as an appropriate mechanism to do so is made available. The Extended Learning Plan is effective as of the date indicated in the document.

To fulfill one of the required assurances, immediately add a copy of the approved Extended Learning Plan to the Academy's Transparency Page of its website. An approved copy of the Extended Learning Plan is attached and can be found in Epicenter. The approved Extended Learning Plan constitutes a Charter Contract amendment and remains in effect as long as the Extended Learning Plan remains in effect.

Thank you for all your efforts to keep student learning moving forward in these trying times. If you have any further questions or need additional support, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Corey Northrop
Executive Director

cc: Andrew Emmitt, Board President
     Holly Kilburn, Board Corresponding Agent

Attachment: Approved Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE EXTENDED COVID-19 LEARNING PLANS ("ECLP") AND APPROVAL OF CHARTER CONTRACT AMENDMENT

NexTech High School (the "Academy")

A regular meeting of the Academy Board of Directors was held on the 22nd day of September, 2020, at 4:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Board Member Andrew Emmitt:

Present: Andrew Emmitt, Veronica Beitner, Ellen Harburn

Absent: Douglas Kuiphoff

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Board Member ____A. Emmitt____ and supported by Board Member _E. Harburn_ :

BACKGROUND

On August 20, 2020, in response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic affecting our state, Governor Whitmer signed into law certain amendments to the State School Aid Act of 1979, as amended, MCL 388.1601 et seq. ("Back to School Laws"). The Back to School Laws include additional requirements for all Michigan schools as they plan for a return of preK-12 education for the 2020-2021 school year. Under the Back to School Laws, a public school academy must provide for instruction under an extended COVID-19 learning plan ("ECLP") that is approved by its authorizing body ("Authorizer"). ECLPs includes many of the same subject matters addressed in a public school academy's charter contract, including measurable educational goals to be achieved by all subgroups in the school, measurement of those educational goals by one or more benchmark assessments, a description of how the educational program, including instruction, will be delivered, a description of the school's curricula and specific reporting requirements for the 2020-2021 school year. Under the Back to School Laws, schools retain the flexibility to tailor and adjust their ECLPs to meet the needs of their students and the community they serve.

The Back to School Laws require, among other things, that each public school academy do the following:

(1) Establish educational goals required to be included in the ECLP no later than September 15, 2020.

(2) Approve an ECLP and submit it to their respective authorizing body ("Authorizer") for approval by October 1, 2020. If approved by the Authorizer, the ECLP is transmitted by the Authorizer to the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Treasurer.

(3) Make an ECLP accessible through the transparency reporting link on the school's website by October 1, 2020.

(4) Within the first nine weeks of the 2020-2021 school year, administer 1 or more benchmark assessments from the list approved by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE)[1], a benchmark assessment provided by MDE, or local benchmark assessments, or a combination of the above, to pupils in grades K-8 to measure math and reading proficiency. In addition, by the last day of the 2020-2021 school year, administer another benchmark assessment to pupils in K-8 to measure proficiency in the same subject matter. The Back to School Laws require schools to use the same benchmark assessment(s) used in the 2019-2020 school year, if applicable.

(5) Provide each pupil's data from the benchmark assessment or benchmark assessments, as available, to the pupil's parent or legal guardian within 30 days of administering the benchmark assessment(s).

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[1] MDE has approved four providers of benchmark assessments and continues to assess additional providers. See https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Benchmark assessments 700077 7.pdf

(6) Not later than February 1, 2021, create a report that addresses the progress made in meeting the educational goals in the ECLP that the academy expected would be achieved by the middle of the school year and make the report available on the transparency reporting link on a public school academy's website.

(7) Not later than the last day of the 2020-2021 school year, create a report concerning progress made in meeting the educational goals in the ECLP and make the report available on the transparency reporting link on a public school academy's website.

(8) No later than June 30, 2021, send the aggregate academy-level data from a benchmark assessment(s), excluding data from a local benchmark assessment or local benchmark assessments, to a regional data hub that is part of the Michigan data hub network that shall compile the data and send it to the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI).

(9) Thirty days after approval of the ECLP, the Board shall meet monthly to re-confirm how pupil instruction is being delivered at the school and whether it is consistent with the ECLP and to ensure that 2 2-way interaction, as defined in the Act, is occurring between students and teachers each week of the school year for at least 75% of students enrolled in the school. At each meeting, the Board shall: (a) publicly announce its weekly interaction rates of 2 2-way interaction since its last meeting; (b) allow for public comment on the ECLP; and (c) discuss whether changes to the method of delivery for pupil instruction under the ECLP are necessary.

THE ACADEMY BOARD THEREFORE RESOLVES THAT:

1. The actions taken by Academy representatives to prepare and submit the Academy's ECLP to Authorizer are ratified.

2. The ECLP, as approved by the Authorizer, is approved by the Academy Board as the ECLP and as the ECLP Amendment to the Contract.

3. All resolutions and parts of resolutions insofar as they conflict with the provisions of this resolution be and the same hereby are rescinded.

4. The Academy will deliver from time to time such information regarding the implementation of the Academy's ECLP as the Authorizer or Michigan Department of Education may reasonably request.

5. Any Board policies or provision of Board policies that prohibit or impede the Academy's compliance with ECLP are temporarily waived, suspended or altered.

6. This Resolution shall take immediate effect and continue through the end of the 2020-2021 school year. If the Back to School Laws are amended, and such amendments requires additional Board action relative to the ECLP, the Board may take such action to comply with existing law.

Ayes: __3/3_____

Nays: __None_____

Resolution declared adopted.

_____

Print Name: __Andrew Emmitt_____

President, Academy Board

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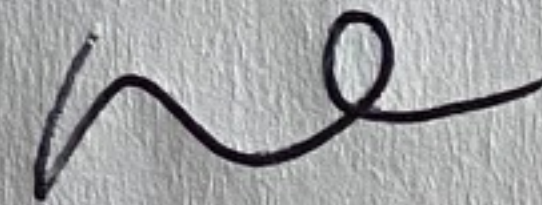
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5. Any Board policies or provision of Board policies that prohibit or impede the Academy's compliance with ECLP are temporarily waived, suspended or altered.

6. This Resolution shall take immediate effect and continue through the end of the 2020-2021 school year. If the Back to School Laws are amended, and such amendments requires additional Board action relative to the ECLP, the Board may take such action to comply with existing law.

Ayes: 3/3

Nays: None

Resolution declared adopted.

_____

Print Name: Andrew Emmitt

President, Academy Board

Assurances

- The Academy will administer an approved benchmark assessment, or local benchmark assessment, or any combination thereof, to all pupils in grades K to 8 to measure proficiency in reading and mathematics within the first nine weeks of the 2020-2021 school year.

- Within thirty days after the approval of its Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan, and every 30 days thereafter, the Academy, at a meeting of its board of directors, will re-confirm how instruction is delivered during the 2020-2021 school year and will solicit public comment, at a public meeting, from the parents or legal guardians enrolled in the Academy.

- If delivering pupil instruction virtually, the Academy will expose each pupil to the academic standards that apply for each pupil's grade level or courses in the same scope and sequence as the Academy had planned for that exposure to occur for in-person instruction.

- If delivering pupil instruction virtually, the Academy will provide pupils with equitable access to technology and the internet necessary to participate in instruction.

- The Academy will ensure that students with disabilities will be provided with equitable access to instruction and accommodation in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations.

- The Academy, in consultation with a local health department, and district employees, will develop guidelines concerning appropriate methods for delivering pupil instruction for the 2020-2021 school year that are based on local data that are based on key metrics. A determination concerning the method for delivering pupil instruction shall remain at the Academy Board's discretion. Key metrics that the Academy will consider shall include at least all of the following:

  o COVID-19 Cases or Positive COVID-19 tests
  o Hospitalizations due to COVID-19
  o Number of deaths resulting from COVID-19 over a 14-day period
  o COVID-19 cases for each day for each 1 million individuals
  o The percentage of positive COVID-19 tests over a 4-week period
  o Health capacity strength
  o Testing, tracing, and containment infrastructure with regard to COVID-19

- If the Academy determines that it is safe to provide in-person pupil instruction to pupils, the Academy will prioritize providing in-person pupil instruction to pupils in grades K to 5 who are enrolled in the Academy.

- The Academy will ensure that two (2), 2-way interactions occur between a pupil enrolled in the Academy and the pupil's teacher or at least one (1) of the pupil's teachers during each week of the school year for at least 75% of the pupils enrolled in the Academy. The Academy will publicly announce its weekly interaction rates at each Academy Board meeting where it re-confirm how instruction is being delivered , beginning 30 days after approval of its Extended

COVID-19 Learning Plan, and every 30 days thereafter. The Academy will make those rates available through the transparency reporting link located on the Academy website each month for the 2020-2021 school year.

- The Academy will create and make available on its transparency reporting link located on the Academy's website, a report concerning the progress made in meeting the educational goals contained in its Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan not later than February 1, 2021, for goals its expected would be achieved by the middle of the school year and not later than the last day of school of the 2020-2021 school year for goals the Academy expected would be achieved by the end of the school year.

Andrew Emmitt
Board President

Board approved: 09/22/2020

Introduction and Overview

The COVID-19 global pandemic is impacting our school community in a number of ways: we are experiencing a traumatic event, many students may have significant gaps in their learning, and equity issues are more pronounced.

As we return to school in the fall, our first priority will be to ensure the well-being of all members of our school community. Because of the wide range of experiences students had during the remote learning portion of the 19-20 school year, we anticipate that students will come to school in the fall of 2020 with a wider than usual range of competencies. We expect that many students will be behind and will need opportunities to catch up. Teachers will need opportunities to collaborate with each other as they examine student work and determine what comes next in the learning for each student.

As NexTech High School plans to begin the school year in a hybrid learning environment, we will need to ensure that there are structures in place to ensure student engagement and achievement for all. This plan will focus on teaching and learning with an emphasis on equity for all learners and the well-being of students and staff. This plan also will provide additional safeguards in place to encourage and support student engagement throughout the school year.

Educational Goals

The NexTech High School District believes that benchmark assessment evidence can be used to monitor and evaluate patterns and trends in school/district academic performance and to identify effective instructional programs. We believe it can provide guidance for standardizing or adjusting curriculum and instruction across grade levels, schools, and districts.

However, we will not use benchmark assessment data to make high-stakes instructional decisions about individual student learning. Rather, NexTech High School will continue the use of (and professional learning around the use of) the formative assessment process as a powerful practice embedded in the teaching and learning process to continuously observe where our students are in order to modify instruction.

We believe the use of the formative assessment process, which is supported by an extensive body of research, provides in-time data for both our teachers and students to accelerate their learning and progress and gives us a more complete picture of what our students know and are able to do. This practice may begin with pre-testing options in courses that allow for proper course placement and carries on to course completion for all classes.

Although high school are not expected to report out on benchmark assessments, in order to stay within the spirit of the current law NexTech High plans to report out on the following goal(s): At least 70% of completed courses will earn credit for each trimester through the school year keeping students on graduation pace.

We will continue to offer the PSAT, SAT, and other items within the MME as required and will use this data to further understand deficiencies and learning loss, and help to prepare supports for students around these aspects.

Instructional Delivery & Exposure to Core Content

Mode of Instruction:
NexTech High school students will begin the year in a similar fashion as previous years with a hybrid model that allows for more personalized schedules. With this model, all students are placed in either an AM or PM schedule. Students follow these schedules whether they are in an online or face to face setting, attending at the proper scheduled time. Teachers are providing live links to the classroom that ensure virtual students can see and communicate as though they were in the live environment.

Additionally all coursework has a virtual back end which provides a calendar and direct links to courses which allows students to move forward at their own pace. These courses can be done both synchronously and asynchronously as student needs require. Teacher mentors will be providing support each week providing two way contacts.

Curriculum and Instruction:
The NexTech High School District curriculum for core academic areas is aligned to state standards and housed in our online system Buzz. Students will be using the same course content that we have used previously no matter the location they choose to work from. As teachers navigate the wider than usual range of competencies expected this fall, they will use these courses to provide guidance to help them design new (or best utilize existing) pre-assessments to plan for differentiation of content, use results from pre-assessments to inform instruction and prioritize K-12 instructional standards for the 2020-2021 School Year. Staff will prioritize student needs as they return to school in the fall, identify assessment ideas that allow students to demonstrate understanding in a variety of ways, assess and provide instruction in the content areas in face-to-face, virtual, and blended classroom environments, and incorporate well-being and SEL/trauma-informed practices into instruction.

As our high school core/ elective teachers work to engage students remotely, they will use Best Practices for Remote Learning:
- Remember Maslow
- Nurture a positive home climate for learning and parental involvement
- Establish and maintain remote classroom norms and learning routines
- Implement culturally responsive teaching practices
- Encourage student collaboration and discourse
- Create opportunities for and attend carefully to feedback
- Engage students in meaningful learning opportunities

Assessment and Grading:

The NexTech High School District bases its assessment system on the Michigan Standards. We regularly assess students at the district and classroom level to determine if they are making progress toward meeting those standards. We place a heavy emphasis on formative assessment. This is critical in the instructional process so that students receive timely feedback that helps them know what they need to do to improve. It also gives the teacher important information to know how to adjust the teaching and learning process to meet each student's needs.

We also have a system for delivering summative assessments at the district and classroom levels. These are given at the end of a period of learning as an evaluation of what has been learned and are part of our district grading process. For example, our teachers deliver summative assessments at the end of each unit of study in our curriculum. These assessments are based on a coherent set of standards in the subject area that focus on a related group of skills and disciplinary knowledge.

There currently is not a requirement for high school benchmark settings in the Extended COVID-19 Learning Plan laws. In keeping with the spirit of this law NexTech High plans to create identifiable goals built around credit earned to gauge student progress and increase supports. NexTech High plans to have a 70% or higher passing rate for completed courses in each trimester. Along with this goal each mentor teacher aims to have 70% of full term students earn 2 or more credits each trimester through the school year in order to maintain graduation pace. These goals will help to identify students that may fall off-track, or get behind in coursework during the year, while allowing for scheduling changes and supports during and between trimesters.

We make available to our parents and legal guardians a web-based system that allows them to see their children's grades at any time. Our teachers keep up-to-date information on student grades in this system. We also send progress reports to our parents and guardians during each marking period. This is in addition to the expectation we have for all teachers that they keep parents and guardians abreast of any concerns regarding a student's grade through emails and phone calls. Finally, we send out to parents report cards at the end of each marking period.

Equitable Access

Technology:

The NexTech High School District ensures all students will be provided equitable access to technology and the internet as described in our Continuity of Learning Plan that was previously approved by our authorizing body and submitted to the state. The NexTech High School District system for maintaining student access to technology devices and the internet is described in the Continuity of Learning Plan, and again in the District COVID-10 Preparedness and Response Plan.

To summarize, all students are provided Chromebooks and chargers upon enrollment, along with full access to curriculum. Families also have the availability of hot spot devices if wifi/ internet issues are a concern that can be checked out.

Students with identified special needs:

When school starts, students' IEPs and 504 plans will be reviewed in coordination with general and special education teachers and/or providers to address any data-driven accommodations and/or services that are needed due to known changes in students' needs.

For students with identified special needs, and those attending CTE programming, intervention and support services will be integrated into the student's program immediately upon the start of school.

The district has established structures for general and special education teachers and/or providers to collaborate and communicate regarding student performance and student needs on IEP goals and objectives with special consideration regarding assistive technology and accessibility.

The district ensures a continuation of services for students receiving speech and language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or social work services within their IEP. The district also ensures a method for the continuation of evaluation for students suspected of having a disability as well as those requiring re-evaluation.