

HOPE ACADEMY OF NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

2021/2022 District Support Plan

OVERVIEW

Our district has one open-enrollment charter school, Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas (Hope Academy). The mission of Hope Academy is to provide students with a safe, positive, trauma-informed academic environment that will nurture their love for learning and confidence in life. At Hope Academy, trauma is defined as “detrimental events that have occurred in a child’s life that significantly impact the child’s ability to cognitively and behaviorally function in a classroom setting.”

Trauma in the life of a young child can manifest itself in a number of ways. At Hope Academy, our definition of trauma will include the following:

- Physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse
- Physical, emotional, or educational neglect
- Abandonment
- Time in foster care
- Witness to domestic violence
- Experience living in a chronically chaotic environment in which housing and/or financial resources are not consistently available
- Experience living with household dysfunction (mental illness, substance abuse, incarcerated relatives, absent parent)

Hope Academy is an affiliate of the Northwest Arkansas Children’s Shelter (NWACS). NWACS is a private, non-profit organization that provides 24-hour residential, emergency triage care for children throughout Arkansas who are victims of abandonment, abuse or neglect. Our mission is to provide these children in crisis with a safe haven, high-quality care and hope for the future.

The NWACS program focuses on meeting the basic needs of the children so they can feel safe and begin to heal from the trauma they have experienced. Meeting these basic needs is one of the first ways that our staff can begin to build trust with the children in our care – many of whom have never been able to trust the adults in their lives. These basic needs include:

- A warm bed
- Consistent, balanced meals
- Healthy snacks
- Clean, well-fitting clothing
- Access to baths/showers and personal hygiene items

And most importantly

- Loving care provided 24-hours per day

Beyond meeting basic needs, we offer or facilitate a wide range of services that help our kids begin the process of healing and trusting adults, including medical, dental and counselling. For more than 21 years, NWACS has operated a school on site for residents of the Shelter. Our goal now is to expand those much-needed services to children throughout Northwest Arkansas who will benefit greatly from a trauma-informed educational setting. This expansion of services will allow us to begin to break the cycle of abuse and trauma and provide hope to vulnerable children and families.

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On October 10, 2019, the Arkansas Department of Education Board of Directors unanimously ratified the Arkansas Charter Authorizing Panel approval of Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas! Hope Academy, the first trauma-informed school in Arkansas, will open on the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter campus in August 2020. The charter school will be an expansion of the mission of the Shelter and fill an educational gap that currently exists in Northwest Arkansas. Children who have experienced trauma, many of whom have the same profile as our current residents, will now be able to find specialized, small classes taught by trauma-trained teachers who strive to create a safe environment for the children to learn, cope, manage and thrive. Our teachers and staff are specially trained to provide an educational space for learners with unique needs. Our team-based approach fosters student success by understanding and meeting physiological, social and emotional needs of students.

ASSURANCES

- We will ensure the continuity of teaching and learning by providing a guaranteed and viable curriculum that includes on-site learning and diagnostic assessments.
 - Our learning platforms include EngageNY (mathematics), Wit & Wisdom (English language arts), Wilson Foundations, Phonics First (literacy), Positive Action (social and emotional learning) and Foundations (phonics, spelling and handwriting).
 - Our learning models include on-site instruction 5 days a week. In the event we must modify on-site instruction and pivot to remote learning, the school will follow its approved Alternate Method of Instruction (AMI) plan.
- We will address learning loss from the prior year through a robust Response to Intervention system and weekly Professional Learning Communities, updated curriculum and instructional materials, and learning extension opportunities.
 - Student screening will occur in the first several weeks of school. The PLC process will be employed to determine student need.
- We will utilize a Learning Management System (LMS).
 - We will utilize Seesaw as our LMS. It is user friendly for small children and provides a digital environment that is more suitable for our students.
- We will continue to provide teacher training.
 - NWAESC Sessions
 - DESE training and certification opportunities
 - APSRC training opportunities
 - Specific topics requested by teachers
 - Training requested by teachers supporting their professional growth plans
- We will support students and families with all aspects of schooling in the pandemic.
 - Chromebook and charger will be provided to each student
 - We will provide materials on Google Classroom and Seesaw for parents of students to demonstrate the use and functions of the LMS so that parents can assist their children at home during periods of closure. If we are unable to hold a face-to-face event, we will provide the option to participate via Zoom.
 - Teachers will be available to families to provide academic support whether we are on or off-site. This includes students enrolled in Virtual Arkansas. Families and students will be able to communicate with teachers through the following:

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- Email
 - Phone call
 - Zoom/Google Meet conference
 - Zoom/Meet office hours
 - In person conference by appointment with health and safety guidelines in place
- Special Populations will be continually supported through implementation of their collaboratively developed individual plans. Teachers will be in consistent contact with families to ensure continuity of services. Zoom meetings will be scheduled individually with families and include a translator for non-English speaking parents to provide support as needed.
 - Ongoing regular communication with families regarding student progress is the standard expectation for onsite and virtual students.

Parent Teacher Conferences will be held as scheduled according to the calendar. At this time, we plan for conferences to be held on-site. If circumstances are such that it is safer to hold them virtually, the conferences may be virtual through Zoom, on-site, or a combination.

In the event that conferences must be held virtually, each building will develop a schedule and sign up procedures for their conference events.

Directions on how to sign up for a virtual conference will be explicitly explained and advertised to families in a language they can understand.

- We will implement a written communication plan for interacting with parents, students, and the community.
 - We will communicate with parents, students, and the community regarding day-to-day expectations. All communication will occur regularly and promptly at the district and building levels. Initial communication regarding the Ready For Learning Plan has been and will continue to occur regularly and transparently.
 - Methods of communication will be our webpage, social media and Zoom.

SAFETY PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS

On August 19, 2021, the Hope Academy Board of Directors, desiring to keep students, and families safe as the number of COVID cases are rising in our area; and the CDC and Department of Health are recommending masks be worn; authorized Hope Academy to mandate the wearing of masks by students and staff for a period of 30 days. After 30 days, we will reevaluate the necessity of the mask mandate after the initial 30 days.

We will continue to implement and evaluate our safety measures for the 2021-22 school year in an effort to prevent the spread of illness. Updates in state guidance for the 2021-22 school year include:

- Masks are recommended for people who are not fully vaccinated including students and staff.
- Individuals who have been fully vaccinated will not be quarantined if they have no symptoms.

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- Individuals exposed to a confirmed case will not be quarantined if they have no symptoms and both the infected and exposed individual correctly and consistently were wearing a mask.
- Physical distancing of three feet is recommended between students and six feet recommended between adults and students. Six feet is recommended for all adults who are not fully vaccinated.

Close Contact Identification:

