



# TAPA’s Comprehensive Back-to-School Plan 2021-2022

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## Message from the Head of School

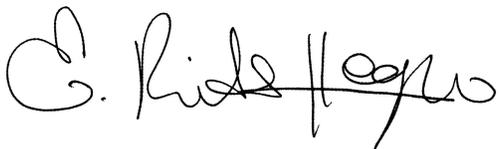
Welcome back to TAPA!

After 18 long months, TAPA has fully reopened for in-person learning, and we cannot wait! The TAPA staff is thrilled to have students back in the classroom for in-person learning, and are committed to a safe and joyful school year full of learning and art-making. This fall, we welcome the students back to engage in deep and creative learning that addresses the issues and challenges that arose throughout Distance Learning. As a small school, we are agile and flexible, and with the support of our amazing students and families, there's nothing we can't do! Since we've all last been in person, we have instituted the following health and safety protocols:

- Instituted a Universal Masking policy: everyone wears a mask at all times in TAPA.
- Improved our air quality to the point it circulates *as much as if we were outdoors!*
  - Tested our HVAC/air system, and discovered it exceeds CDC requirements for air circulation, and installed air scrubbers throughout the school to make sure that the well-circulated air is also clean.
  - Resealed all exterior windows and replaced all windowsills to ensure that there is no possibility of water or outside contaminants getting into the building.
- Implemented rigorous expectations for classroom and school-wide cleaning and sanitizing
  - Supplied all classrooms with disinfecting wipes, spray and hand sanitizer,
  - Installed hand sanitizer dispensers throughout the school building, including at all entrances/exits and washrooms.
  - Instituted a process of cleaning to ensure that all high-touch surfaces are cleaned frequently.
  - Replaced any non-sanitizable materials formerly used regularly by students.
- Made changes to ensure small class grouping with ample spacing:
  - We have hired additional staff to decrease the average class size from 20 students to 15.
  - Rearranged classrooms to provide a minimum of 3-feet physical distance between students.
  - Adjusted the schedule so lunches take place outside and/or in small distanced groups
- Shown our commitment to the health and vaccination of our full community
  - Hired a new School Nurse with extensive experience in the field of Community Health
  - Completed a vaccination clinic (June 2021) where 37 members of our community received their vaccination shot, and laid the groundwork for another clinic in September 2021.
  - 100% of our TAPA staff are fully vaccinated against COVID-19!

In order for this to be the best school year in TAPA history, we will be working closely with families, staff and students to build and fine-tune our COVID-safety plan. Expect regular communication from TAPA about what we're doing, and feel free to reach out with questions. Call 401-432-7881 for answers and support in both English and Spanish.

Welcome home to the TAPA Ensemble!



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## How did TAPA come up with our COVID Back To School Plan?

### 1. This plan is grounded in the following vision and principles:

At TAPA, we have grounded our Comprehensive Back To School Plan in the core values as laid out by the [LEAP Task Force Absolute Priorities](#), as laid out below:

1. Energize our community—students and educators—by launching an enthusiastic and joyful back-to-school campaign
  1. TAPA had 80% attendance on our first day of school (Monday 8/23); half of the absent students were excused due to previous late-summer commitments. By the second day of school, TAPA had 85% attendance; the increase came entirely from those students whose previous-day absences had been unexcused. Working with parents, students, families and a Restorative Justice system of support, TAPA will match our last-year average of 96% average daily attendance, we are on track for at least 90% prior to the end of our first week
2. Ensure all students have access to high-quality instruction as well as personalized support from adults, through extended learning, partnerships for before and after school, and summer learning opportunities that are undergirded by high-quality materials and resources.
  1. TAPA has committed the majority of our ESSR resources to hiring additional staff members to ensure that students have targeted and personalized support from adults to address learning gaps. We are fortunate that all of our internal data show that our students academically *maintained* (rather than decreased) during the pandemic, but that still leaves us with the gaps that previously existed, as well as a year of academic stagnation.
3. Universally screen all students and align resources to need.
  1. TAPA will identify those students who are most in need of the personalized support (listed above) using both routine and rigorous use of the STAR testing system and internal class-based metrics. At the middle grades level, there are porous boundaries between the intervention-level classes and the non-intervention classes, allowing for students to move as needed to address their needs.
4. Improve and support student transitions across grades and systems
  1. TAPA is committed to getting our students both *to and through* college. We are currently sending more than 85% of our students to college upon graduation, and the majority persist towards a degree within 6 years. However, each year we are able to identify areas where we could improve to support first generation students as they begin college. We have increased the hours that our Dual Enrollment Coordinator/College Prep instructor is able to spend with students in order to more strongly support students at this essential life transition.
5. Close the digital divide:
  1. TAPA is working with T-Mobile to continue to provide wifi-hotspots for all students who need them, and to get a grant to cover a 2-1 ChromeBook ratio (we are currently 1:1) so that students may have a device at home as well as in school.

### 2. This plan reflects the Strengths/Challenges of 2020-2021, as reported by our Ensemble:

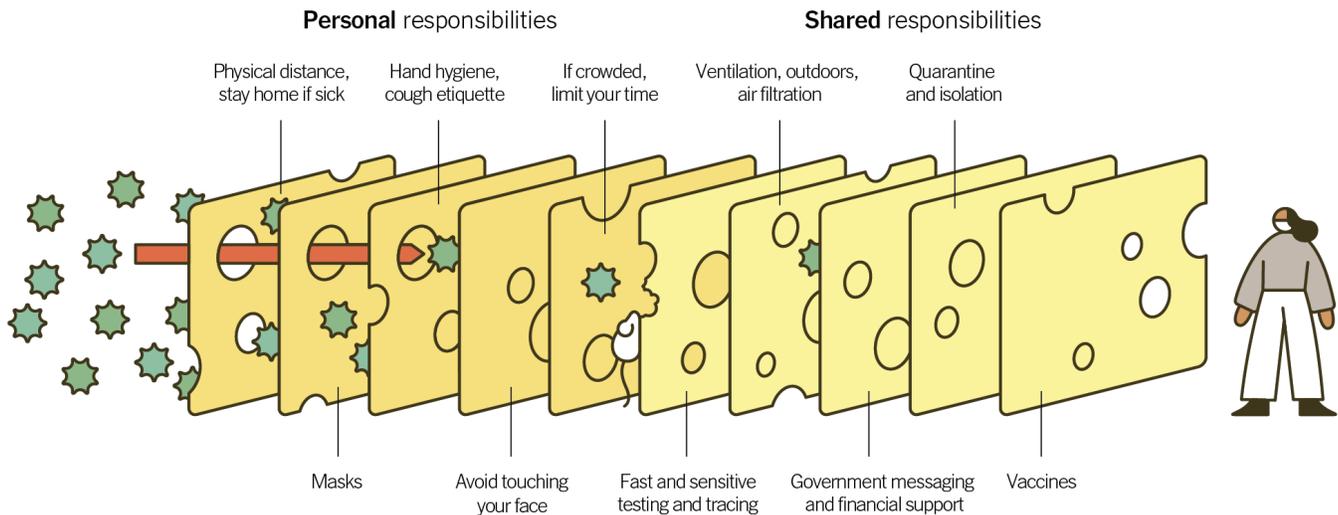
As TAPA planned a return to school we sent out the TAPA Ensemble School Reopening Survey to all students and families. This form (available in Spanish, Portuguese, and English) aimed to collect feedback from the full TAPA ensemble (families & students) regarding the vision for reopening as well as the logistical focus areas our ensemble wanted us to organize around. We received 157 responses to the survey, key takeaways from the responses included:

- Over 82% of the TAPA ensemble felt somewhat or more comfortable returning to school in person
- TAPA ensemble wanted a steady consistent schedule that provided as much normalcy in our reopening
- 26.7% of TAPA ensemble members were relying on TAPA for support to supplement their families food supply
- Of those relying on TAPA support, flexible use gift cards were the preferred method of food support
- 31.8% of TAPA ensemble relied on TAPA tech support to consistently access reliable internet.

Full responses can be seen [here](#).

### 3. This plan follows the “Swiss Cheese Approach”

The Swiss Cheese Respiratory Pandemic Defense recognizes that no single intervention is perfect at preventing the spread of the coronavirus. Each intervention (layer) has holes.



#### **TAPA’s Shared “Cheese Slices” are:**

1. **Universal Masking Policy**, with consistent enforcement. All people, all the time, all the way over your mouth and nose.
2. **Vaccines:** 90% Staff Vaccination rate, 30% student vaccination rate, with plans for a vaccine clinic and vaccine promotion.
3. **Two-step daily symptom screening** for all unvaccinated people:
  - 1. "Stay at home when sick" policy 2. Daily check during AM advisory.
4. **On-site symptomatic and asymptomatic testing** (established upon Nurse Hernandez’ arrival)

5. **Ventilation is maximized:** TAPA's HVAC system exceeds the CDC's requirements for air quality and air purifiers will be in all rooms.
6. **Cleaning, disinfection and hand hygiene protocols** are in place in alignment with CDC expectations
7. **Seven-day + Test Quarantine Policy** for all close contacts of a positive case, defined by RIDOH/CDC as:
  - Unvaccinated students who were within 0 to 3 feet of the infected student in an indoor classroom for a total of 15 minutes
  - Unvaccinated students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student in an indoor classroom for a total of 15 minutes do not need to be quarantined because TAPA is following steps 1-6, above.
8. **3 foot physical distancing between all people in the building.** Note: there is no expectation for physical distancing, per RIDE/CDC recommendations for populations that are vaccine eligible, so this is put in place out of an abundance of caution.

## Critical Components to TAPA's Health and Safety (COVID-19 Control Plan)

<b>In order to keep the entire TAPA community safe, TAPA commits to doing the following:</b>
<b><i>Promoting vaccination</i></b>
TAPA will promote the vaccination of the whole school community, as everyone at TAPA is eligible for the COVID-19 Vaccine. TAPA will do this by providing vaccine-positive messaging and support to reluctant students and families. TAPA has already attained 90% Vaccination rates in staff and 30% vaccination rates in students. TAPA will work with RIDOH to plan and execute a vaccine clinic on-site to increase the percentage of vaccinated students.
<b><i>Physical distancing</i></b>
Per CDC and RIDOH policies, TAPA will not utilize physical distancing as a mitigation method because 100% of our school population is in middle/high school and is vaccine eligible.
<b><i>Face coverings</i></b>
TAPA will have a Universal Masking Policy, with consistent enforcement. All people, all the time, all the way over your mouth and nose. We will ensure exceptions for specific categories of people as outlined in Health and Safety guidance, and refer to <a href="#">CDC guidance</a> for the use and care of masks.
<b><i>Minimizing access by COVID-19-positive or symptomatic individuals</i></b>
Two-step daily symptom screening: 1. "Stay at home when sick" policy 2. Daily check during AM advisory.
Seven-day + Test Quarantine Policy for all close contacts of a positive case, defined by RIDOH/CDC: 1. Unvaccinated students who were within 0 to 3 feet of the infected student in an indoor classroom for a total of 15 minutes 2. Unvaccinated students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student in an indoor classroom for a total of 15 minutes do not need to be quarantined because TAPA is following steps 1-6, above.
Posting symptom screening signage at the entrance of the school building.
<b><i>School-based testing</i></b>
TAPA has just hired a new school nurse. Once she is onboarded, in early September, she will arrange for TAPA to implement (1) Symptomatic Testing, (2) Outbreak Testing, (3) Asymptomatic Testing, by consulting RIDOH.
<b><i>Cleaning, disinfection, and hand hygiene</i></b>
TAPA has, and will continue to utilize CDC guidance for <a href="#">cleaning, disinfection</a> , and <a href="#">hand hygiene</a> .
<b><i>Responding to staff and students who are sick</i></b>
TAPA will continue to follow sick policies in alignment with <a href="#">The Outbreak Response Protocols: PreK-12</a> and communicate it to staff, students, and families.
Until the School Nurse is onboarded, Dave Sousa, the Dean of Students (Cell: 401-465-4095) will work with RIDOH on testing staff and students, contact tracing, case investigation, isolation and quarantine, and any other follow-up related to outbreak containment.
TAPA will follow the CDC's <a href="#">What to do if a Student Becomes Sick or Reports a New COVID-19 Diagnosis at School</a> flowchart.
<b><i>Communication with staff and students</i></b>

TAPA has submitted our COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies to RIDE by August 13, 2021 and will publicly post this Back-to-School Plan by August 27, 2021 at: <a href="http://www.TAPApvidence.org">www.TAPApvidence.org</a>
Upon the TAPA staff (8/16) and students' return to school (8/23), we will share this plan which includes reminders to stay home if they are sick and inform them of updated sick-time and attendance policies.
We have posted signs or posters describing our policy and practice for wearing of masks, physical distancing, and specifying, at the entrance of facilities, that sick individuals should stay home.
TAPA will utilize the quarantine plan listed above upon learning of a staff or student who has tested positive for COVID- 19. As we have in the past, the Admin Team and the school nurse will work with RIDOH to identify which other staff or students will need to be quarantined.
This document is being kept short and straightforward so it can easily be translated into Spanish, the most common language spoken by our TAPA parents.
TAPA will receive and review concerns via email, phone message, and in-person conversation

## 1. TAPA's Universal Masking Policy

### Purpose

Students benefit from in-person learning. Safely returning to in-person instruction in the fall 2021 is a priority. Each student, staff member, teacher, and administrator as well as volunteers, independent contractors and consultants who access TAPA on a recurring basis, has a right to attend and/or work at a school which is safe and conducive to learning. Accordingly, in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it shall be the policy of the Board of Directors/Trustees to guard against community spread of the virus by taking reasonable precaution to protect the health and safety of all students, employees, visitors and others lawfully present on TAPA property or at TAPA-sponsored events. Due to the circulating and highly contagious Delta variant, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends universal indoor masking by all students (age 2 and older), staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.

### Scope

For the 2021-2022 academic school year, universal indoor masking is required for all employees, students, and visitors while on the TAPA premises and/or attending school functions or events, regardless of vaccination status. The mask or face covering must cover the nose, mouth, and chin. The TAPA Board of Directors/Trustees will revisit this policy as necessary throughout the school year to ensure it complies with applicable laws and executive orders and is consistent with relevant guidance from the CDC, the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), and the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE).

### Mask Requirements

Acceptable face coverings include medical procedure masks (sometimes referred to as surgical masks or disposable face masks), masks made with breathable fabric (e.g. cotton) that are tightly woven (do not let light pass through when held up to a light source, masks with two or more layers and/or masks with inner filter pockets. Neck gaiters, as well as loosely tied bandanas, are not acceptable, nor are masks having exhalation valves or vents. Masks must cover the nose and mouth and must fit snugly against the side of the face with no gaps. Face shields do not replace the need to wear a face covering. TAPA shall

have a supply of masks for employees, students and/or visitors who forget their masks or who may need a replacement mask during the day.

### **Masking/Face Covering Indoors**

Masks or face coverings are required for all employees, students and visitors when inside the school building. Per the CDC, consistent and correct mask usage by people who are not fully vaccinated is especially important indoors and in crowded settings, when physical distancing cannot be reliably maintained.

### **Mask Requirements for School Buses**

In accordance with an order from the CDC dated January 29, 2021, RIDE guidance, and subsequent directives from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), masks are required to be worn on school buses regardless of vaccination status, unless a student receives a medical or behavior exemption. TAPA expects its transportation employees and contractors to enforce this directive, to maintain seating charts, to seat family members together, and to keep windows open as much as possible.

### **Mask Requirements for Performance**

During sports and related activities, all performers must follow guidance specific for their art. Masks will be required for spectators for indoor events.

### **Masking Exceptions/Exemptions**

The following persons are exempted from the requirement to wear a mask or face covering:

- A child under the age of 2 years;
- A person with a disability who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).
- A person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by the relevant workplace safety guidelines or federal regulations.

Temporary removal of the mask or face covering is permitted where necessary for the following purposes:

- Actively engaging in an arts activity that requires freer use of the mouth;
- Consuming food or drink;
- For any emergency or medical purpose.
- During a designated, school-approved mask break period that is supervised by a teacher to ensure appropriate distancing and air circulation conditions are in place.
- If/when a person is alone in a room/office, that person may temporarily remove their mask.

### **Penalties for Noncompliance**

School employees not in compliance with this policy will be placed on unpaid leave until their employment status is determined through appropriate channels of administrative review. In accordance with applicable guidance, there will be no adverse academic penalty for a child not wearing a face covering. Instead, reminders, along with additional safety protocols, may be appropriate. If the child is being willfully disobedient and refuses to comply with TAPA's COVID-19 Face Covering/Mask Policy, that behavior will be addressed according to regular disciplinary policies, and may subject the student to removal of school or suspension.

## How Will TAPA Update Instruction in response to COVID-19?

**In order to ensure students' academic success, TAPA commits to doing the following:**

### *Instruction*

Develop a plan for assessing students' learning progress and loss that includes multiple forms of assessment (diagnostics, formative, student work) for **all** students. This plan must include an assessment of learning for multilingual learners and differently-abled students.

In alignment with LEAP Task Force Priorities and Recommendations, identify how to account for learning loss (reteaching, ability grouping, adjust pacing guides, increased focus on core subjects, etc.) for all students. Plans should include specific detail for multilingual learners and differently abled students as well as the information for all students generally.

Develop a plan for how services and educational programming will be provided if a student must remain home for short periods of time due to illness, isolation, or quarantine.

Develop methods for assessing student engagement and mastery. Be sure to prioritize vulnerable students for re-engagement.

Develop a system to continually monitor learning progress and loss.

Determine changes, if any, to testing, grading, report cards, attendance, and promotion policies from SY20-21 to SY21-22.

### *Remediation and Intervention*

Develop a process for identifying students potentially in need of additional supports (academic or social/emotional) and a process to determine when students may no longer need additional services (entrance and exit criteria for interventions). In alignment with LEAP Task Force Priorities, interventions specific to multilingual learners, differently abled students, and other student groups that have been historically marginalized should be noted in the plan.

Inventory intervention programs and services that are available to students, especially those transitioning back to in-person instruction from distance learning.

### *Special Education Services*

Develop a plan to revisit students' Individualized Education Plans in partnership with teachers and parents to reflect evolving needs.

### *Staff Supports*

Assess professional learning needs for administrators, educators, support staff, nurses, and non-certified staff members.

Develop professional development plan on curriculum implementation and instruction that considers developmental appropriateness.

Provide training for restorative supports and professional learning offerings for teachers around trauma, social emotional learning, restorative practices, and culturally responsive education.

### *Family and Community Engagement (communication and partnerships)*

Gather feedback from families, students, teachers, and leaders on the SY20-21 experience and hopes for SY21-22. Incorporate feedback into LEA Back-to-School Plan. Provide to RIDE evidence that data has been collected and key takeaways from the responses.

Refine the school-level parent communication strategy to keep parents informed on (1) student progress and (2) changes in health and safety guidelines.

Develop plans to reestablish student and classroom culture through emphasizing relationships with students and parents.

## **1. Tapa's Plan For Assessing Students' Learning Progress**

Students will take the STAR assessment at the beginning of the year and quarterly to assess their growth. STAR assessments will take place in mathematics and English Language Arts. Additionally, each class formatively assesses students on a daily basis with the use of exit tickets and checks for understanding.

Students progress will be tracked in data meetings using the tools and graphs available in Renaissance Learning. Our multilingual learners are assessed in both English and Spanish allowing us to identify a student's strengths and needs in both languages.

In math, we will use two platforms to assist with the formative assessments of student learning. The LearnZillion platform that is used to deliver the Illustrative Math curriculum, allows students to demonstrate learning multiple times throughout the lesson. Instructors will use the prompts and "checks for understanding" built into the curriculum to formatively assess students multiple times a day. Lessons are concluded with an exit ticket, allowing teachers to assess student progress for the standards addressed each day. TAPA will be participating in the ReThink RI program this school year and will Achieve3000 to provide intervention to our students who show a need for intensive remediation in math. Students will be assessed continually through their use of this program and instruction will be informed by the results of these assessments. A more detailed description of these assessments is [here](#).

## **2. Tapa's Process For Identifying Students In Need Of Additional Supports**

TAPA has revisited and revised its MTSS & RtI system to target the unique needs of all of our students as we return from and continue to live through the COVID pandemic. In this model we aim to use this years data to establish grade-level baselines and then leverage those grade level baselines in the identification of tiers for support.

Over the next two to three years we will be growing from baseline average to grade level mastery as the metrics for intervention and support. Special attention was paid to research and implementing MTSS & RtI practices that interrupt historical marginalization and the school to prison pipeline including requiring our TA's to be bi-lingual.

The full MTSS & RtI system can be found in [this folder](#) including research, calendar, protocols and forms.

### **3. Tapa's Plan To Account For Learning Loss For All Students**

TAPA will engage in a 5-Step process to identify and remediate student learning loss, especially concerning the COVID-19 pandemic. The five phases of the plan are: Identify, Research, Plan, Implement & Monitor, and Examine. Here is how this plan will come to life:

#### **Identify:**

Week 1 & 2 of School: TAPA will provide multiple assessments to determine student needs. This will include scheduled STAR assessments, a language acquisition assessment, bi-weekly student grade-report analysis, advisor check-in, and prior student work and data reviews. The support team will review this data, and students will identify areas of critical need. This data will be the foundation for learning loss intervention.

#### **Research:**

TAPA will review research-based practices to create an evidence-based procedure to support critical student needs. Some of the essential programs/interventions (backed by research) will be:

- MTSS-System: Identification of student need with specific student supports based on individualized tiers of student support.
- ILP: Individualized student plans for interventions and growth-tracking
- Interventionists + Smaller Class Sizes: Hiring of HQ educators to engage in small group interventions and support (Hattie)
- Support Services Push-In: TAPA used a pull-out model, but we are transitioning to in-class support and dual language support.
- Language Acquisition Support: WIDA-based language acquisition support, Multi-lingual learner specialist in-class support, Orton-Gillingham resource block.
- IEP + SPED Support: Hiring an additional special educator to provide embedded academic support of students based on IEP details.

#### **Plan:**

TAPA will plan around the six research-based interventions above by scheduling educator and certified personnel bi-weekly check-ins, data-dives, and intervention plans. This will involve goal setting, the procedure of implementation, and intervention documenting (progress monitoring). We will be embedding these collaborative learning opportunities within the school day, in staff PD's, and after-school staff meetings (department-based).

#### **Implement & Monitor:**

TAPA will implement the six critical initiatives listed in "research." Then, we will monitor student progress on a bi-weekly schedule that will include:

1. Student Work Analysis
2. Grade Report Analysis
3. Support Service tracking and notes
4. Advisor Check-Ins
5. MTSS review

#### **Examine & Refine**

Educators will either engage in a formal observation cycle or an informal observation cycle. The school's observations will be aligned to student achievement goals and instructional practices. This will also include a minimum of 5 touchpoints per year. The examination of an educator's practice will lead to either support plans or improvement plans and goal setting and data reviews.

Furthermore, students will be re-sorted in terms of "high, medium, low" regarding the

effectiveness of student growth based on educator support, and interventions will be re-evaluated and refined quarter to quarter. Some of the key takeaways from student data will lead to additional intervention measures such as Professional Development sessions on Supporting Multilingual Learners, review of IEP and academic supports, review of WIDA goals/norms, and embedded practice goals set on supporting students with unique learning needs.

In short, this teaching and learning process will include:

- Student Data-Dives into MTSS tracking and support.
- Curriculum-Based department sessions that prioritize essential standards and areas of academic focus.
- Review and tracking of green-standard curricula and materials (curricular fidelity, especially in Math & ELA).
- Interventionists and support personnel engaging with data-driven student supports, especially around student ILP's.
- Schedules and consistent progress monitoring tools, for data-informed supports, especially for students who identify as Multi-lingual or have an IEP.

Through smaller class sizes, additional employees centered on student supports, consistent monitoring, and data dives, TAPA hopes to directly reduce student learning loss and accelerate learning outcomes by at least 5% above sending districts.

#### **4. TAPA's Plan to review and revise our Back to School plan**

TAPA will build the review of our Back-to-School Plan into three existing systems: our **Schoolwide Improvement Planning Process** (which includes meetings at least four times a year with parents, students, staff, families and partners), our **Parent Ensemble Meetings** (which are quarterly meetings of TAPA parents and family members) and our **Daily Staff Meetings** (the TAPA staff meets from 3:15-4pm every day; we will bring this plan into at least one meeting per month).

By building the review of this plan into existing systems, we will ensure that it will be reviewed no-less-than-quarterly by our students, families, school and district administrators, teachers, other school staff, and other stakeholders.