



East Brunswick Public Schools

Emergency Virtual Instruction Plan

2024-2025 School Year



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Introduction

The New Jersey Department of Education (Department) remains at the ready to assist every local educational agency (LEA) in returning to full-time, in-person instruction for school year (SY) 2024-2025. This includes providing LEAs with guidance in the event of declared emergencies resulting in a district-wide closure. The Department appreciates the challenges that LEAs had to overcome during the 2021-2022 SY as LEAs faced a myriad of decisions affecting both the safety of their students and staff as well as the instructional experience. The Department is encouraging LEAs to reflect upon their experiences with virtual and remote instruction when planning for the 2024-2025 SY.

In April 2020, Governor Murphy issued an executive order that became [P.L.2020, c.27](#). This law provides for the continuity of instruction in the event of a public-health related district closure so that LEAs can utilize virtual or remote instruction to satisfy the 180-day requirement pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9*. **In order to provide transparency and ensure that New Jersey students continue to receive high quality, standards-based instruction, each school district, charter school, renaissance school project and Approved Private School for Students with Disabilities (APSSDs) must annually submit its proposed program for virtual or remote instruction (Plan) to the New Jersey Commissioner of Education.**

This plan would be implemented during an LEA closure lasting more than three consecutive school days due to a declared state of emergency, declared public health emergency, or a directive by the appropriate health agency or officer to institute a public health-related closure. A chief school administrator or lead person must consult with the board of education or board of trustees, if practicable, prior to implementing the LEA's plan of virtual or remote instruction. A day of virtual or remote instruction, if instituted under a plan approved by the New Jersey Commissioner of Education, is considered the equivalent of a full day of school attendance for the purposes of meeting State and local graduation requirements, awarding of course credit, and other such matters as determined by the New Jersey Commissioner of Education.



Scheduling of Students

The East Brunswick Board of Education's Plan ensures continuity of learning while being responsive to our students' family members and caregivers.

School Day

The East Brunswick Board of Education is committed to maintaining quality instruction for students and abiding by the minimum requirements set forth in NJDOE regulations. The East Brunswick Board of Education's Plan includes resuming in-person instruction. Scheduling decisions have been informed by careful evaluation of the health and safety standards and the most up-to-date guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), as well as the input of stakeholders about the needs of all students and the realities unique to East Brunswick Public Schools.

Virtual learning will continue to be guided by P.L. 2020, c.27 and the school district's updated Emergency Closure School Preparedness Plan if schools are required to deliver instruction through a fully virtual environment during limited periods throughout the school year due to a local or Statewide public health emergency.

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3, a school day shall consist of not less than four hours, except that one continuous session of two and one-half hours may be considered a full day in kindergarten. East Brunswick Board of Education policies for attendance and instructional contact time will accommodate opportunities for both synchronous and asynchronous instruction, while ensuring the requirements for a 180-day school year are met.



Education Plan

Scheduling will support a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction which allows for contact time between educators and their students, as well as time for students to engage with their peers. Concurrent classroom strategies will be employed. Instructional activities will be planned according to what is developmentally appropriate for each grade band and appropriate for the instructional delivery of the content to enhance student learning.

East Brunswick educators will develop a shared understanding among staff, students, and families across grade-levels and schools regarding learning expectations, and anticipated environments and expectations for interactions to ensure all students have access to high-quality instruction. Instruction will be designed for student engagement and to foster student ownership of learning as well as student meta-cognition. All students in Grades K-6 will receive a Chromebook and will utilize Google Classroom to access all announcements, assignments, videos, daily schedule, virtual meeting links, and weekly planner. All students in Grades 7-12 will receive a Lenovo laptop and utilize Canvas Learning Management System.

East Brunswick educators understand that best practice and guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics is to limit screen time for students in grades Pre-K through 2. Developmentally appropriate practices show that young learners are most successful with hands-on learning, rather than worksheets or computer-based activities. In this grade band, mostly interactive learning activities will be planned.

Standard grading and assessment policies will be enforced. Assessment practices will be reviewed and will include locally developed pre-assessment; formative; interim; and summative. East Brunswick Public Schools will develop and communicate a plan of accountability that identifies how teachers will monitor and assess student performance, including how they grade students (Grades Pre-K through 12). Tutoring and credit recovery will be offered in the virtual setting.



East Brunswick Public Schools assesses data on how our MLs experienced instruction during remote or hybrid learning; particularly for newcomer students and students with lower English language proficiency levels, in the following ways: ESL teacher and ML parent telephone conversations, teacher-led virtual meetings with parents and MLs, teacher email communication with MLs' parents, teacher email interaction with MLs. Furthermore, at the elementary level, teacher review of student engagement in FlipGrid, Google Documents, Google Classroom, Padlet, RazKids, Newsela, ReadWorks.org, and United Literacy. At the secondary level, teachers review ML performance on Canvas assignments and participation in Microsoft Team meetings.

East Brunswick Public Schools assesses MLs' levels of engagement and access in a virtual learning environment in the following ways:

1. Teacher review of ML performance in Canvas assignments.
2. Teacher review of how MLs respond to formative assessment comments, anecdotal information from conversations during Zoom meetings with ESL teacher, teacher-student daily emails with questions and answers, teacher-student questions and answers in Canvas modules, chats in Microsoft Teams asking about the work. Each student received a district device and was able to access the online environment, via the Internet.

Students will be provided with the opportunity to participate in safe work-based learning remotely (simulations, virtual tours, etc.). East Brunswick Public Schools will offer work-based learning opportunities addressed in the administrative code and will have simulations/scenarios to expose our students to situations that they will encounter when they are back in the job.



Special Education

Every child and adolescent with a disability is entitled to a free and appropriate education including special education services based on their individualized education program (IEP). Students receiving special education services may be more negatively affected by distance-learning and may be disproportionately impacted by interruptions in regular education. It may not be feasible, depending on the needs of the individual child and adolescent, to adhere both to distancing guidelines and the criteria outlined in a specific IEP. Attempts to meet physical distancing guidelines and the needs of the individual child may require creative solutions, often on a case-by-case basis.

Ensuring the delivery of Special Education and Related Services to Students with Disabilities Under the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and New Jersey state special education regulations, students with disabilities are entitled to special education and related services, such as accommodations and modifications to instruction, speech-language services, occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), and counseling. Since the onset of virtual instruction, the NJDOE has engaged a variety of stakeholders, including educators, related service providers and advocacy groups to gain insight, share best practices, and consider policies to support districts in providing services to students with disabilities in virtual or hybrid learning environments. Consistent with guidance from the United States Department of Education, the District must continue to meet their obligations to students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible. The NJDOE will continue to update school districts and receiving schools with any additional guidance from the USDE on implementation of IDEA. Specific strategies and considerations for students with disabilities must be critical points of discussion for every return-to-school scenario.

We have reviewed the NJDOE recommendations that school districts should consider when addressing the education of students with disabilities:

- We have procedures to address the return to school of medically fragile students and students with physical or health impairments who may require accommodations and modifications as part of a 504 Plan. We will communicate frequently with the families of students with significant medical risk factors to determine if additional precautions or unique measures are necessary prior to a student's return to school.
- Our IEP teams will review student data/student progress to determine whether critical skills were lost during the period in which virtual instruction was being provided to students and determine the need for additional services to address learning loss.
- Our IEP teams will consider the impact of missed services on student progress towards meeting IEP goals and objectives and determine if additional or compensatory services are needed to address regression and recoupment of skills within a reasonable length of time.
- Our IEP teams will develop procedures to complete overdue and/or incomplete evaluations to determine eligibility for special education services.
- We will use school guidance department staff and child study team personnel to identify students whose postsecondary plans may have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and provide support, resources, and assistance, which may include facilitating



connection to community organizations, scholarship programs, county, state, and federal opportunities to access support.

- We will communicate to parents/guardians the procedures for student referrals and evaluations to determine the eligibility for special education and related services or a 504 Plan as required by federal and state law.



Student Transportation

The protocols described below shall apply to student transportation services provided by East Brunswick Public School District buses as well as by contracted student transportation service companies. It is imperative that parents review these protocols with their children to ensure a clear understanding of responsibilities. Students who fail to follow protocols will lose bus privileges for the remainder of the school year.

Student Health Monitoring

- a. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their child is healthy to attend school. Parents shall monitor their child's temperature prior to boarding the school bus.
 - i. If the child's temperature is not normal, the child must be kept at home. At no time shall a child who is unwell or showing signs of illness be sent to school.



Cleaning Practices

The District's existing facilities cleaning practices will be expanded to encompass the protocols described below. These protocols are supplemental to existing practices, and all practices not specifically delineated herein shall continue to be implemented.

- I. Building Zones and Custodial Responsibilities
 - a. Each custodian will be dedicated to specific zones of the building to which they are assigned. It is the custodian's responsibility to ensure that they adhere to all facilities cleaning practices.
 - b. The cleaning and disinfecting protocols shall consist of the following in the order listed:
 - i. Wiping all seats, desktops and high touch surfaces with a cleaner disinfectant.
 - ii. HEPA vacuum carpeted floor surfaces.
 - iii. Sanitize interior building spaces with an electrostatic sprayer dispersing hospital-grade disinfectant twice per week.
 - c. Individual use items such as telephones, keyboards, two-way radios, computer monitors will be wiped/disinfected by the individual user.

- III. Hand Sanitizer, Paper Towel, and Soap Dispensers
 - a. Custodians shall check and refill as necessary hand sanitizer, paper towel, and soap dispensers while performing protocols.

- IV. Food Service Operations
 - a. Food service staff will continue to follow regular protocols.
 - i. Food contact surfaces (i.e., prep tables, pots, pans) will be washed, rinsed, and sanitized prior to use, between task changes, and before closing down each day's operations.
 - ii. All other high touch surfaces such as door handles for refrigerators, freezers, ovens, steamers, storage rooms, carts, phones, and bathrooms will be cleaned and sanitized upon opening the kitchen and before closing down each day's operations. In the event a staff member touches any of these items without the use of gloves, the item will be cleaned and sanitized each time.
 - iii. Food service lines (if being used) will be sanitized upon opening the kitchen, between every meal period, and before closing down each day's operations.



Meals

The District will continue to recognize food safety as a top priority. The standard will continue to be that all Child Nutrition workers will wash their hands during the following scenarios: upon entering the kitchen, in between glove changes and any time they touch their face or hair. It will also be mandatory that gloves are to be replaced in between task changes. All Child Nutrition workers will have a mask on at all times.

Staff training and follow-up will be paramount. The district will be having multiple staff meetings before the start of school. Monthly food safety audits and follow-up meetings will be held throughout the course of the school year.

The school district will continue to use wrapped utensils (forks, spoons, knives and sporks).

The district will distribute several days or a full week's worth of meals (breakfast and lunch) to students. The distribution will take place at key schools based on location, parking lot capacity and kitchen size. Meals will be packaged and consist of food that can be eaten cold and/or warmed up. All meals distributed as part of the weekly food distribution plan or individually will be pre-packaged.



Field Trips and Extra-Curricular Activities

Field Trips

- No field trips will be scheduled during virtual instruction.

Clubs, Activities and Enrichment Programs

- All students registered for a club or activity will be able to participate in that club or activity virtually.

NJSIAA Guidelines

- The district will follow all NJSIAA guidelines as presented to the District.



Academic, Social, and Behavioral Supports

The East Brunswick Board of Education’s Plan includes a comprehensive RtI model for identifying individual students who need extra academic, behavioral or emotional support. This model is a systematic approach to prevention, intervention, and enrichment in grades Pre-K through 12 which includes tiered criteria, tiered interventions, and I & RS meetings. This process is facilitated by principals, teachers, reading specialists, math specialists, student assistance specialists, counselors, and other building administrators.

Wraparound Supports

The Board awarded a contract for Therapeutic Services to Effective School Solutions at its June 25, 2020, meeting. Effective School Solutions shall provide three (3) full time New Jersey-licensed mental health professionals for the 2020-2021 school year (“Full School Year”), defined as the period of September 2020 through June 2021 to provide therapeutic mental health services to students that include:

- individual psychotherapy sessions
- group therapy sessions multifamily
- group therapy session each month
- professional development for staff

These services are in addition to and will complement the school counseling and student assistance counseling programs that are currently provided by District staff members.



Community Programs

In the event that the District should be faced with remote virtual learning for an extended period of time, the Community Programs Department would be ready to offer the following:

1. 1.5 hour per day parent-paid remote preschool virtual program. It would include ensuring the students are engaged with small group breakouts for social/emotional assessment, as well as circle time (weather, days of the week, phonics) and following our units on letters, sounds, signs, etc.
2. Virtual parent-paid enrichment programs for grades K-12 ranging from 1 hour to full day programming inclusive of science, cooking, languages, chess, art, etc.
3. If it were deemed not to be a health risk, a Remote Learning Center can be offered to assist in the virtual instruction for families that would need in-person care for their children.



East Brunswick Public Schools Virtual Instruction Committee

Dr. Victor Valeski, Superintendent
Dr. Joyce Boley, Asst. Superintendent of Academics
Bernardo Giuliana, Asst. Superintendent for Business and Support Operations
Louise Sultana LoRocco, Director, Special Education
Joseph Crotchfelt, Director, Financial Services
Nicholas LaTronica, Chief Information Officer
Paul Natalicchio, Director, School Security Operations
Nicole Tibbetts, Director, Human Resources
Gerald Schenck, Director, Facilities Management
Danielle DiNinno, Director of Elementary Education
Christine Sce, Director of Secondary Education
JoAnn Chmielowicz, Principal, Irwin Elementary School (PSA President)
Dr. Dana Zimbicki, EBEA President
Kristin Gristina, Principal, Bowne-Munro Elementary School
Dr. Michael Gaskell, Principal, Central Elementary
Tatianna McBride, Principal Chittick Elementary
Nyree Delgado, Principal, Frost Elementary
Rachel Weitzenkorn, Principal, Lawrence Brook Elementary
Cheryl Jones, Principal, Memorial Elementary
Joseph Csatari, Principal, Warnsdorfer Elementary
Russell Petronko, Principal, Hammarskjold Upper Elementary School
Matt Hanas, Principal, Churchill Junior High School
Dr. Edward Bocior, Principal, East Brunswick High School
Mike Cappabianco, Director, Food Services Director – Aramark
Mark Jeffreys, Director, Custodial Services – Aramark
Yanina Vesely, Sr. Manager for Application Support
Ann Marie Gilbert, Sr. Mgr. Community Programs
Joyce Forsberg, Sr. Mgr. Transportation
Roy Brendel, Sr. Foreperson for Maintenance
Patrick Hoelz, Foreperson for Grounds Maintenance
Karen Mandleur, Sr. Mgr. of Registration and Executive Assistant to the Superintendent