

Washington Township Schools



School Closure Plan

Planning for the Continuity of Instruction and Services
(In the Event of a Public Health-Related School Closure)

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Washington Township Schools

A Community of 21st-Century Learners

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Rationale

In anticipation of potential health-related school closures to limit the spread of contagion and/or support community-wide measures focused on social distancing and mitigation of exposure, the Washington Township Schools professional community, through on-going collaboration and open discourse, has identified a comprehensive approach to providing for the continuity of instruction (teaching and learning) based on the many district areas for which to plan, including but not limited to, a variety of modalities to support student progress using distance learning experiences. Fortunately, recent ventures in 1:1 Technology deployment (Grade 3 through 8) and integrated technological learning tools have allowed our district professional teams to harness and effectuate online experiences for the students in their charge. The District's technology platforms and resources will play prominent, though not necessarily exclusive, roles in continuing the teaching-learning process. Of course, the role of technology will shift for those families who do not have internet access (the District is identifying those families and tailoring necessary learning supports accordingly). In some ways, especially given the “asynchronous (anytime) and synchronous (live time) opportunities” planned for students the online architecture is likely to be quite familiar to many of our learners. In addition to online access, students may participate in paper and pencil experiences as planned and deployed by their teachers. The following represent areas of consideration for the comprehensive plan.

- Identifying sources of reliable data and key personnel on which to base decision
- Identifying sources of impact including, but not limited to transportation, staffing, food service, water, and air
- Identifying alternative ways of delivering education due to school closures
- Working with custodial staff to clean the schools to decrease the spread of the pandemic
- Encourage sick employees and students to remain home to offset the spread of communicable disease
- Ensure continuity of payroll for all school district employees

Goals

The following are the goals of the Washington Township School District's School Closure Plan:

- Ensure the continuity of instruction (teaching and learning) in the event of a health-related school closure
- Continue to provide students with meaningful learning experiences reflective of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards
- Limit and/or eliminate the spread of communicable disease and/or support community-wide measures focused on social distancing and mitigation of exposure to the known contagion
- Ensure compliance with all State and local statutes and regulations

For Teachers ... Thoughts to Ponder As You Begin This Journey!

Think about the ways you can ...

- Facilitate learning inside the children's homes in the event of a health-related school closure (directly and indirectly);
- Manage the structure of the 9:00am to 2:00 pm student school day (11:30am-12:30pm lunch break);
- Communicate with colleagues as part of the planning and readiness processes;
- Utilize the instructional resources you and your colleagues have (both traditional and technological) that can support the overall effort;
- Address the needs of children as outlined in their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs);
- Deliver that daily or weekly "Special" or "PE/Related Arts Class" in concert with your colleagues;
- Inform parents of your daily learning plans;
- Support your colleagues through these uncharted waters!;
- Be at your best and take care of YOU should WTS experience a school closure; and
- Welcome your students to each new day of learning.

For Parents: Tips for Supporting Your Child's Learning from Home

- The transition to home learning is a big change for children. During a big transition, students need consistency. Keep normal meal and bed times, and start learning when school typically starts each day.
- Create a designated learning space at home! Organize learning materials and designate a common area for learning. Ideally, the space is located where family members can participate in the child's learning. Empower children to have a voice in the design and set up of the space ... PRICELESS!
- It's more important than ever to check in with your child at the beginning and end of each day. Choose a time that works best for both of you (a quieter, more relaxed time). This helps children to experience a greater sense of safety and security, as well as process the changes that are occurring in their world.
- Children enjoy physical activity and social interaction ... and both are essential to their well-being (and yours!). While learning at home, rediscover the art of creative movement through dance and imaginative play. Bake, build, play board games ... social interaction is certain to result. You've got this!
- Keep in touch with your child's teacher(s) and support professionals. ***Parents + Faculty = Success for Children!***

Prerequisites and Plan for the Learning Experiences

Delivery of Virtual & Remote Instruction

1. Learning Environment

- a. Learning activities and assessments may be administered via established using an online infrastructure including: interactive reading/writing, video/online exploration and reflection, teacher-directed assignments and tasks, and collaborative student models online, offline via technology and/or paper based activities. Google Meet and Zoom (utilizing Cornell University security protocols) will be a widely used tool to maintain real-time communications/interactions between students and teachers.
- b. Additional Online learning platforms/resources include, but not limited to: ClassDojo, Seesaw, Reading A-Z, Everyday Mathematics, Connected Mathematics, Foss Online, Quia, EduLastic, ExploreLearning Gizmos, Big Ideas, BrainPop, PebbleGo StarFall, See-Saw, Scholastic Typing Club, Dance Mat, Scratch, ReadWorks, Khan Academy, TedTalks for Kids, Musicworkshopedu, and Learnzillion.com. Reading A-Z, Everyday Math Online, Brainpop ELL, Big Ideas, Khan Academy and Newsela will be available throughout the summer to be accessed as needed by students.
- c. Combining G-Suite with OnCourse SIS functionality enables students/professional staff to coordinate instruction through interactive and cloud-based instruction

2. OnCourse Connect will be communicated to stakeholders as the primary outlet for online/remote learning activities.

- a. The district and/or each school will communicate daily with parents/guardians using the district's communication platform (BlackBoard).
- b. Communications will deliver pertinent information (community/health/scholastic/etc.) as well as requisite links (OnCourse, etc.) for students and parents to access learning experiences.

3. Scheduling of Instruction

- a. Online activities will be conducted daily from 9am-2pm, Monday through Friday, except for scheduled Breaks and Holidays.
- b. Faculty work days continue as reflected in the AGREEMENT between the Board of Education and the Washington Township Education Association. The student instructional day will be from 9:00am to 2:00pm. The student and faculty lunch break shall be from 11:30am to 12:30pm daily.

4. Course Content and Grade Band Instructional Models

- a. *Core Content Areas:* Maintaining their focus on relevant NJSLS, and curricular scope and sequences, professionals will access and use their OnCourse platform to provide focused activities aligning with curriculum goals and objectives.
- b. *Specials, Wellness and Related Arts Programs:* Teachers can post assignments and timelines for student completion. In addition, any live learning sessions need to be coordinated with teacher and school schedules to avoid potential conflicts.

- c. K-2: Live sessions at a minimum of 3x a week for 1/2 hour per content area for general education, students with disabilities and ELL students using Google Meet. Google classroom, Class Dojo and/or Seesaw are used for daily asynchronized instruction. All assignments are posted through electronic means and submitted by students electronically. All work is following district approved curricula and using district approved resources at a minimum. Additionally, session times for all students (general education, students with disabilities and ELL) are in response to individual needs and may be in whole group, small group and/or 1:1. The regular grading scales, indicators and report cards are being used.
- d. 3-5: Live sessions at a minimum of 5x a week for 1/2 hour per content area and/or office hours for general education, students with disabilities and ELL students using Google Meet. Google classroom is used for daily asynchronized instruction. All assignments are posted through electronic means and submitted by students electronically. All work is following district approved curricula and using district approved resources at a minimum. Additionally, session times for all students (general education, students with disabilities and ELL) are in response to individual needs and may be in whole group, small group and/or 1:1. The regular grading scales, indicators and report cards are being used.
- e. 6-8: Using Zoom and Google Classroom, teachers provide all students for general education, students with disabilities and ELL students synchronized and asynchronized daily sessions. All assignments are posted through electronic means and submitted by students electronically. All work is following district approved curricula and using district approved resources at a minimum. Additionally, session times for all students (general education, students with disabilities and ELL) are in response to individual needs and may be in whole group, small group and/or 1:1. The regular grading scales, indicators and report cards are being used.

Special Education Programming and Related Services

At-home learning will be consistent with the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to the greatest extent possible, including accessible materials and platforms. Teachers, Child Study Team professionals, related services personnel, and parents will work together to support the instructional process as well as equitable access to at-home learning.

- 1. Educational Settings Outside Washington Township (Both Private and Public School Settings):** The Washington Township School District's Office of Special Education and Related Services will oversee the continuity of instruction and related services for students in these settings. Communication between the District and the private/public placements is on-going. In addition, Case managers of out-of-district (OOD) students continue to maintain contact with parents.
- 2. Resource Room Settings:** District Professionals involved with Pull-Out/Resource Room programming will adhere to delivery models similar to their regular education/mainstream colleagues and in concert with the IEP for each student. Lessons and materials will be designed to support the needs of the learners with accommodations as outlined in Individualized Education Plans.

3. **In-Class Resource (ICR) Settings:** ICR Staff will participate in the activities/delivery models of their co-teaching partner. In addition, ICR Special Education Staff will establish unique times to offer redirection/re/pre-instruction and recitation for ICR Students in concert with students' IEPs.
4. **Self-Contained Classroom Settings:** Teachers of Self-Contained Classroom programs will establish daily opportunities to interface with students. Additionally, the Special Education professionals will assign and utilize developmentally appropriate learning activities to support IEP goals.
5. **Transitions Program (Long Valley Middle School):** Teachers will continue to utilize the individualized program model. Much of the standards and IEP-based programming is already premised in virtual modalities.
6. **Related Services:** Specialized related services will be provided in the form of suggested home activities as developed and shared by the District's team of therapeutic professionals. Related services (speech, OT, PT, counseling, consultation, behavior supports) are being provided through electronic communications, virtual, remote or other on-line platforms, as appropriate and as required by the student's IEP to the greatest extent possible. The case managers shall ensure the delivery of services as reflected in the IEPs.
7. **Referral and Related Processes:** Timelines governing the Referral Process, including Evaluation Planning Meetings, Evaluation Plans, IEP development, and Re-Evaluations, will be adhered to unless unforeseen circumstances arising from the health-related crisis do not permit. Child Study Teams (CST) continue to conduct meetings for evaluation planning, determination of eligibility, annual reviews and re-evaluations within time line requirements. CSTs will complete any parts of the evaluation plan that can be done. Standardized assessments will be completed when schools are opened.
8. **Parent Communication:** Communications with parents will be regular and ongoing as facilitated by teachers, related service providers, and case managers. Provisions for facilitating communications in the parents' native language will be made as is currently the practice of the District. Case managers will maintain communication with related service providers as well. Parent consultation required by the IEP may be done through e-mail as well as the virtual, visual format. Phone contact is also appropriate. Consultation sessions will be offered to all parents in order to facilitate their efforts to work on activities at home.
9. **Medically Fragile Students:** Students who are medically fragile will continue to be supported by District medical and mental health personnel through consultations with parents.
10. **Additional Services/Extended School Year (ESY):** The district's ESY services will be delivered using the current virtual, on-line format. This decision is felt to be the most appropriate given the uncertainty of buildings being open for instructional use. Regression/Recoupment data, collected throughout the year, will be used to determine the need for ESY services. Additionally, support services for students other than those eligible for ESY services will also be considered.

English Language Learners

Meeting the needs of English Language Learners: All identified students are being provided the opportunity for daily meeting with their certified ESL teacher. Students who have higher needs are being given more time and assistance with school work. Families have been contacted to ensure they have the internet access and devices with which to access both ESL services and general education programs. The four ESL teachers are meeting with the students and providing assigned tasks to address their specific needs. The ESL team across the district has been meeting with one another to ensure continuity of instruction and have also been meeting with grade level colleagues as well.

Communicating with Families of English Language Learners (including the translation of materials and directions): All ESL documents are translated into the home language for parents and the documents are provided in both English and the home language. Whenever possible and needed by the family, translation is provided for them during meetings and phone calls. The District web site contains a translation feature.

Providing alternate methods of instruction, differentiation, access to technology, and strategies to troubleshoot English Language Learners access challenges: No ESL family in the district has an issue with technology access. Wifi hotspots and devices have been provided to all ESL families from the very beginning of remote learning. Prior to remote learning, some ESL families had been already provided with a device and hot spot in the upper grades because they had limited resources but now all families K-8 have been supplied. Therefore, alternative methods of instruction have not been necessary. Learning continues to be differentiated by the ESL teachers in coordination with the general education, and in specific cases the special education, teachers.

District Demographic Profile

Category	#
Special Education - Elementary	201
Special Education - Middle	164
Limited English Proficient	56
Speech Only	77
Low Income	63
Homeless	4
Total Student Enrollment	2,035

Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch

The District has teamed with its regional K-8 partner school districts (Chester, Mendham Boro, and Mendham Township) and the West Morris Regional High School District to coordinate a plan with Pomptonian Food Service to arrange for students who are eligible for free/reduced lunch to receive those lunches on a daily basis. Meals will be prepared under the supervision of Pomptonian Food Service. The site for meal preparation will be the Black River Middle School located at 133 North Rd, Chester Township, NJ 07930. A team of Washington Township Schools bus drivers will work closely with the District Transportation Supervisor, under the direction of the School Business Administrator, to coordinate a lunch delivery schedule to ensure lunch delivery for the 11:30am hour. Parent pick up will be provided as an option to parents/guardians. Meal delivery to participating families will begin on Tuesday, March 17, 2020. A total of 58 lunches are scheduled to be delivered each day school is in session. Coordination with Pomptonian Food Service is essential to ensure successful implementation of the plan.

Addressing the Needs of Students Who are Homeless

The District's Homeless Liaison will engage in communication outreach to the parents/guardians of homeless children for the purpose of conducting wellness checks and identifying any needs the families have regarding the children's participation in at-home learning. Additional needs will be identified in conjunction with families relative to providing for basic needs with resources being provided as appropriate.

Notification of School Closure

In the event of a health-related school closure, parents/guardians and staff will be notified using the District's Blackboard Communication System. The announcement will also be posted on the District's website and Facebook page. The Washington Township Police Department will be notified accordingly.

Attendance

In the event a child is unable to participate in a given instruction day, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to report the child's absence, and reason for the absence. This procedure remains unchanged. Parents will be instructed to call their child's school and report absences via the Absentee Voice Mailbox. The automated call to parents feature alerting parents of their child's absence will be turned off by the District during school closures for health-related reasons (or long-term weather-related incidents). The school administration shall track and record student attendance based on the guidelines provided by the New Jersey Department of Education on March 13, 2020. If a child is not participating in virtual/remote instruction contact shall be made to the child's parent/guardian by the teacher. The teacher shall also notify the Principal (or her/his designee). Support shall be provided to the child and parent/guardian as needed with support from each school's mental health/wellness professionals. The goal of the attendance guidelines is to provide support that results in regular attendance by the child. If applicable, a Student Support Plan

shall be developed in order to promote positive attendance. These support procedures are also used for students who are not submitting assignments.

Faculty/Staff members who are unable to work due to illness shall report their absences consistent with district-established protocols. The Aesop Substitute Teacher Notification feature will be turned off during the school closure period.

Essential Personnel - Roles/Responsibilities

The District’s Leadership Team consisting of 12 administrators/supervisors will continue to carry out professional responsibilities as outlined in district-adopted job descriptions. The District’s Organizational Chart will remain in effect. Guidance from the New Jersey State Department of Education will be sought by the Superintendent and School Business Administrator with regard to State Mandates that may be affected by a local, State, or National health crisis. Principals (4), Assistant Principals (3), and Supervisors (2) will support their faculty/staff and directly oversee the instruction and services delivered to students. Central Office business operations will continue in terms of finance (2), human resources (2), payroll (1), accounts payable (1), transportation (3), and facilities (1). The Assistant Superintendent (1) will support the overall instructional process, providing guidance and resources to building-level leadership and the professional staff as the District continues its support of the students’ learning, social, and emotional needs. The District Technology Team (3) will support the ongoing operation of the technology infrastructure and the hardware needs of students and personnel. For a list of all personnel within the Washington Township Schools please click below:

Benedict A. Cucinella School
[Leadership/Office Team](#)
[Faculty/Staff](#)

Flocktown-Kossmann School
[Leadership/Office Team](#)
[Faculty/Staff](#)

Old Farmers Road School
[Leadership/Office Team](#)
[Faculty/Staff](#)

Long Valley Middle School
[Leadership/Office Team](#)
[Faculty/Staff](#)

Central District Office
[Superintendent’s Office](#)
[Business Office](#)
[Facilities & Maintenance](#)
[Transportation](#)

Health Offices

School Nurses are available for consultation with families (e.g. prevention methods, health plans, health concerns). Parents can begin the communication process by contacting their child’s School Nurse via email.

Benedict A. Cucinella
Mrs. Ewer jewer@wtschools.org
Mrs. Morogiello nmorogiello@wtschools.org

Flocktown-Kossmann School
Mrs. Peppas mpeppas@wtschools.org
Mrs. Antonov aantonov@wtschools.org

Old Farmers Road School
Mrs. Braithwaite nbraithwaite@wtschools.org

Long Valley Middle School
Mrs. Meara nmeara@wtschools.org
Mrs. Pinto kpinto@wtschools.org

Equitable Access to Instruction for All Students

Every student in the Washington Township School District has a Chromebook in grades 3-8 for use with distance learning experiences. Students in grades K-2 are issued a chromebook on an as needed basis. The district continues to monitor students who may not have internet access and is providing the service via wifi/internet access mobile hotspot devices or an alternate method of continuity of instruction. Any and all District-provided “hotspot” devices will be at no charge to families.

Meeting the Social & Emotional Needs of Students

As health-related crises lead to school closures, the District is prepared to support children's social and emotional needs while they learn from home. Likewise, during this time, it is paramount for the adults—as school leaders, educators, and parents—to focus on their own social-emotional wellbeing as they look to support the social-emotional development of students while at home.

The District’s mental health professionals will team to support children, families, and faculty during this difficult time. A list of information resources, articles, and guides will be compiled and shared, and will be updated as new, relevant resources are found. In addition, our mental health professionals will continue their work with children already receiving counselling and support services.

Technology Support for Students, Parents, and School Professionals

Every student, parent and school professional has access to our technology support staff through WTschoools.org on an as needed basis. Blackboard notifications and responses established a baseline of internet connectivity needs throughout the district. Technologies were given to families and professionals on an as needed basis. As our Distance Learning Model continues, students, parents and school professionals monitor student access, progress and technological challenges. Parents and faculty members across the District are informed of the technology support available. District websites contain a message that any issues with school owned technologies, contact should be made to Dr. Battitori at jbattitori@wtschools.org. A structure of repair and/or replacement model is in effect at the district level. Additional hot spots, chromebooks and document cameras have been purchased in anticipation of future need. The District’s Technology Team prepares and repairs devices as necessary and monitors the fidelity and operation of the district network.

Facilities

The schedules of essential custodial and maintenance workers will be coordinated by the Facilities Manager in consultation with the School Business Administrator and the Superintendent. The Facilities Manager will communicate directly with the Custodial Supervisor at each school site who will, in turn, share schedules directly with the custodial team members. Shifts may be lessened and staggered depending on the restrictions in place relative to a school closure for health-related reasons.

School-Home Communications

The Washington Township Schools understands the importance of ongoing communication between school and home, especially during unprecedented times in our community, State, and Nation. The members of the District's *Professional Family* will provide ongoing communication to families and faculty throughout any period of school closure resulting from a public health crisis (or long-term weather-related incidents).

Meeting the NJDOE's 180-School Day Requirement

Per the New Jersey Department of Education's guidance memorandum to school districts dated March 13, 2020, any day on which all students impacted by a public health-related closure have access to home instruction services will count as a day on which the board of education has provided public school facilities toward its compliance with the 180-day requirement in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9. The District is aware of the requirement to consult with the Local Board of Health prior to making the decision to close school for health-related reasons.

We Will Get Through This ... Together!

