

# 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, (explore your yard and pick up sticks 😊) ... 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**

### **1. Learning Environment**

- a. Learning activities and assessments may be administered via established Google Classroom 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 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.
- 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**

- 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.

## **Special Education Programming and Related Services**

At-home learning will be consistent with the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to the most appropriate extent possible. 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. The District's special education private and public schools will continue to provide instruction and services should they remain open and are prepared to provide such in the event officials at these schools decide to close. Transportation for students in out-of-district school placements will be provided for as long as schools remain open. The District's Transportation Supervisor oversees the coordination and communication of such services.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## **District Demographic Profile**

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

### **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. 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. Should there be a sudden need to move to an alternate plan, the District will purchase ShopRite Gift Cards to enable families to purchase the food necessary for the serving of lunch in the home setting.

### **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.

**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](mailto:jewer@wtschools.org)

Mrs. Morogiello [nmorogiello@wtschools.org](mailto:nmorogiello@wtschools.org)

### **Flocktown-Kossmann School**

Mrs. Peppas [mpeppas@wtschools.org](mailto:mpeppas@wtschools.org)

Mrs. Antonov [aantonov@wtschools.org](mailto:aantonov@wtschools.org)

### **Old Farmers Road School**

Mrs. Braithwaite [nbraithwaite@wtschools.org](mailto:nbraithwaite@wtschools.org)

### **Long Valley Middle School**

Mrs. Meara [nmeara@wtschools.org](mailto:nmeara@wtschools.org)

Mrs. Pinto [kpinto@wtschools.org](mailto: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. 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](mailto: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.

## **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!***

