

METUCHEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Virtual or Remote Instruction Plan - July 2023

County: Middlesex

Chief School Administrator: Dr. Vincent Caputo

Phone: 732-321-8700

All districts required to “annually submit its proposed program for virtual or remote instruction (plan) to the Commissioner of Education.”

- Board of Education needs to approve on July 18
- Due to County office by July 31
- Must be posted on website

This plan would be implemented during a district 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 day of virtual instruction under this plan 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 such other matters as determined by the Commissioner of Education.

Equitable Access to Instruction and Opportunities

This plan and all components of the plan are designed to ensure equitable access to instruction and opportunities for learning that are age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate for all students.

- Access to devices and broadband - We have significantly upgraded our bandwidth over the years and have had no issues at school. We have a number of mobile hotspots that we distribute to families as needed. Students in grades 3 through 12 are issued Chromebooks for use at school and home. Students in grades 1 and 2 are individually assigned Chromebooks that remain in carts in the classroom. In the event remote instruction became necessary again, those devices would be removed from the carts (by the IT Office) and distributed to the students with a charger. For tech support, the IT staff would operate remotely via email until such time that a return to one of the buildings is deemed safe. Then they would offer on-site tech support via appointments and scheduled drop-in hours.
- Learning platform – Virtual instruction will take place via Google Meet and links and assignments will be posted on Google Classroom (or Class Dojo for early learners). Each teacher would provide a link to all students to participate in synchronous instruction. Follow up practice activities and independent work may be completed asynchronously and is monitored by the teacher. Student growth and learning will be monitored through

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local benchmark assessments, class assessments, and online assessment tools (i.e., iXL, Google Suite, etc.)

- Grading – Business as usual; teachers have discretion to postpone assessments that might be best administered when all students are in person.
- Quarantine instruction – In most circumstances, supplemental quarantine tutoring services would not be necessary when the entire class is implementing remote instruction. Supports for supplemental quarantine instruction would be considered on an “as needed” basis.
- Required school day length - Our default is full days, five days per week, according to regular school schedules. The superintendent reserves the right to call planned early dismissal days (four hours) for snow removal, storm damage cleanup, or other reasons, as necessary.
- Remote learning student expectations – Cameras on is the starting expectation. Some teacher discretion is allowable. Cameras should be on for the whole group instruction (I do) time. Camera rules can be more flexible for the “We do” and “You do” portions of the workshop model. No recording of lessons should happen unless the teacher initiates as an instructional support tool. A developmentally appropriate level of student independence is expected. See the Remote Learning Model* below for further details.

Addressing Special Education Needs

Special education programs and IEPs will be implemented to the greatest extent possible. Special education staff will provide specially designed instruction as outlined in IEPs through virtual platforms or methods adapted to address the developmental levels of the learner. Materials and instructional methods will be designed based on student needs and developmental levels. Progress will be monitored and recorded based on assessments and data collection tools aligned to each student’s instructional programs and the goals and objectives of their IEP. Modifications and accommodations will be implemented as intended. Case Managers will provide services remotely using Zoom or Google Meet for formal and informal meetings and collaboration. IEP meetings, documentation and participation will continue according to the procedures and timelines outlined in the special education code. Evaluation plans will be made to take into consideration any factors that limit access to in person testing.

District plans will be shared with districts or schools that the district has a send/receive relationship with for Metuchen students (i.e., Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities, APSSD). The virtual and remote plans of these schools will be requested and reviewed by a district representative.

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Attendance Plan

Attendance should be taken and recorded by the teacher and monitored by administrators in case of extenuating circumstances. Daily attendance and class attendance will be recorded. Remote learners will be considered present. Any attendance issues, and the impact of the absences on academic performance, will be communicated to parents by the staff. Attendance intervention and support plans, which include meetings with families, will be developed when attendance and participation presents concerns. Reasons for absences and individual situations will be reviewed and considered in the plans and considered in promotion, retention, graduation, and discipline decisions. When absent, students will have access to missed work through the online platform, such as Google Classroom or Class Dojo. Make up work and missed assignments will be submitted through these platforms and/or via email.

Safe Delivery of Meals Plan

In prior years, we worked closely with our food services provider to ensure that all families could have access to free meals. We would do the same thing in a future situation if that option were allowed and paid for by the government. In other situations, students not eligible for free/reduced lunch, could pay as usual. Meals would be distributed from MHS, mindful of traffic concerns at arrival or dismissal. For families eligible for free/reduced lunch, and without the means to pick up meals, we would again use volunteer parents to deliver around town and/or use our school buses midday to deliver meals to homes.

Facilities Plan

As essential employees, maintenance and custodial staff will report to work with necessary PPE to maintain facilities and systems.

Addressing ELL Plan Needs

ESL education program is aligned with State and Federal requirements (district does not require a bilingual education program per current enrollment) to meet the needs of all identified ELLs. Per the plan, the LEA utilizes Google translate for the LEA to be able to communicate with families. All ELLs in grades 1-12 receive devices from the district and any K ELL students in need are provided a device to borrow from the district when remote. All ELL students receive ESL services via a certified ESL teacher according to their eligibility per the same remote plan as all other students in the district. ESL teachers are trained in SEL evidence-based practices to support students affected by forced migration from their home and any students in need of multi-tiered supports are addressed by the same RtI services as offered to all students. If a student requires a translator or certified professional who speaks the native language, the district

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contracts such services as needed to ensure all students receive the full RtI/multi-tiered district SEL and mental health interventions and support services.

Essential Employees

The district has identified administrators, maintenance and custodial staff as essential employees to maintain the buildings and will provide a list to the county at the time of the LEA's transition to remote or virtual instruction.

Other Considerations

- Accelerated learning opportunities- These opportunities will be delivered remotely by assigned teachers.
- Title I Extended Learning Programs and 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs- The district does not offer these two programs and therefore will not offer during remote or virtual instruction:
- Social and Emotional Health of Staff and Students - School Counselors, School Psychologists, School Social Workers, Student Assistance Counselors, and Clinicians will be available to provide online support to students, staff and families. This may include direct counseling services delivered through remote or online platforms (phone, Zoom, Google Meet, etc.). Services may also include collaboration and consultation. We will work directly with our mental health agency partners (i.e., ESS, Rutgers, Well Spring) to ensure continuity of services. Consultation and collaboration with community agencies will be maintained and referrals will be made as appropriate. Service logs will be maintained on the services provided.
- Credit Recovery- Credit recovery will be offered in the same way it is offered during the school year and delivered through an online platform.
- Other Extended Student Learning Opportunities- Services like 504, I&RS and RTI will be implemented to the greatest extent possible. 504 accommodations will be implemented as intended and as applicable to remote learning formats. RtI services would continue as prescribed and delivered remotely. Meetings to monitor progress will be held remotely. All other extended student learning opportunities will continue remotely.
- Transportation - we would work with our transportation providers like we did during spring 2020. We could use our own buses to deliver lunches and instructional materials/devices as needed during the period of closure.
- Extracurricular programs- When possible and meaningful, school-sponsored extracurricular activities will be held remotely. Decisions regarding which programs will

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pause and which will continue will be made between the advisor/coach and district administration, and will include guidance from other relevant organizations.

- District-provided childcare programs and childcare-programs provided onsite by community partners will not run during periods of extended closure when buildings are closed and staff is working remotely.
- Community programming that utilizes the district facilities would be closed in the case of school closings or transition to a fully remote situation. At the request of police or OEM, the buildings would be opened as a resource for the community if needed. All other programs listed would be provided remotely or virtually.

Additional Expectations for Remote Learning Model*

If there is group remote learning, the nature of group remote learning, means that students' names and live video could potentially be seen by anyone in the background of the students who are participating, and that students may see actions in the background of other students. Students' information, such as, but not limited to, classification status, accommodations, related services, academic levels and/or skills may also be inadvertently disclosed to others during group sessions. In order to protect the confidentiality of the students and their performance, parents should not be present during virtual learning unless prearranged and approved by the District.

When one or more students are learning remotely, the superintendent or designee may authorize an instructor to live stream a classroom lesson, as long as it is announced prior. In addition, it is expected that students and parents adhere to the following guidelines during all virtual learning:

- Students must be prepared for virtual learning, i.e. have devices ready and charged if needed, papers/notebook, pencil/pen, etc. at least 10 minutes before the scheduled start time
- Be on time.
- Video must be turned on, unless specified otherwise by the teacher, administrator or support staff
- Expectations for behavior, language and overall conduct should be consistent with the expectations for regular in person class time. This includes attire, language, behavior, topics discussed, by way of examples. In other words, if it wouldn't be appropriate in the physical classroom, it isn't appropriate in the virtual setting. See district HIB policy for explanation of virtual/cyber bullying.
- Chats should only be used to ask questions related to the lesson. Any inappropriate language will not be tolerated.
- Always behave as if your camera and microphone are on.
- Parents may not make an attempt to listen in on sessions and/or record them.

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- Do not screenshot or record anything during the meeting.
- Do not have side conversations. The microphone will pick up other noises in the room.
- School devices should always be treated with respect and handled in a manner that will allow them to function properly.
- Students and parents are required to adhere and comply with all applicable Board policies governing the use of technology.
- See the District's acceptable use policy for further explanation of technology use.
- Students may not use cellular devices during virtual classes, unless approved by the teacher.
- No eating during class; snack breaks for younger students will be built into the schedule as well as lunch for all students on full virtual days. Eating during class is very distracting to other students.
- We understand that for younger students, parent help/support may be required for logging on. We ask that once a student is logged in, the space be used as a classroom and parents do not engage in the classroom setting. Parents should not respond to student questions or interact with the class. We further ask that parents please be cognizant that conversations off screen are picked up by the microphone and can be heard by the class.
- The District takes the confidentiality of our students' educational information and personally identifiable information very seriously. We also hold the same high regard for the integrity, privacy, educational practice, and professionalism of our faculty and staff.