



## Remote Learning FAQ's for Elementary Schools

### **Introduction**

The governor and the NJ State Department of Education have tasked all school districts with preparing three possible models for the 2020-2021 school year:

- 1) a “normal” routine schedule
- 2) an all virtual “remote learning” model basically like we utilized for the closing months of the 2019-2020 school year
- 3) a “hybrid” plan in which we strive to provide as much in-person instruction as possible given the necessary health and safety protocols and our available resources

The governor has also stressed that if and when we are using the “hybrid” model, parents and guardians will have an option to keep their children on an all-virtual plan.

**Please refer to: The Road Back--Restart and Recovery Plan for Education--NJDOE:**

<https://www.nj.gov/education/reopening/NJDOETheRoadBack.pdf>

### Princeton Public Schools

As of the end of July, the Princeton Public Schools are currently planning to begin school with a full remote learning model on Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup> – a date which is delayed from the earlier calendar in order to frontload seven PD days so that our staff members can engage in deep, substantial, and meaningful professional development activities related to: a) improvements in the structure and delivery of virtual learning experiences, b) the development of expertise in how to use Canvas (our new interactive learning management system), and c) opportunities for collaboration and lesson planning with colleagues.

Our district and school administrators are continuing to review local and state COVID-19 rates with our local health partners – including the Princeton Board of Health and the Princeton Health Department – and their recommendations based on science will serve as an important guide for every decision that we make – including how we will respond to any potential case of COVID-19 in one or more of our schools. Please note that our plans will continue to evolve in the weeks and even months ahead, and we will share information with you often (including updates to this FAQ document) – specifically related to changes that need to be made to our plan and to additional details that develop.

Thank you for your support in helping to craft a plan that prioritizes health and safety and that is responsive to the needs of our community. We are certainly partners in this educational journey during this unprecedented time in our world.

**Please refer to The Restart and Reopening Plan for Princeton Public Schools:**

<https://resources.finalseite.net/images/v1595941716/princetonk12org/ntuhu1nn18i6zg2vqazu/PPSRestartandReopeningPlan-2.pdf>

## FAQ's

***Will there be an orientation for PK, K and new students?***

Yes. We will provide more details soon. The orientation sessions for PK, K and new students will take place prior to the start of school on September 14<sup>th</sup>. We will consider both an in-person and virtual model and will share specific details with families ASAP.

***When will we know teacher assignments, cohort assignments and schedules?***

Families will receive teacher assignments prior to Labor Day. Since we are starting the school year with remote learning, we will not distribute cohort assignments until we receive confirmation that a hybrid plan will be implemented. We recognize that there will be opportunities for families to choose all-remote or hybrid as that decision gets closer and we will honor that decision. More details about cohorts and hybrid learning plans will be disseminated at a later date.

***Will meal deliveries for families that are part of the subsidized lunch program continue during the school year?***

Yes, meal deliveries will continue to take place on Wednesdays. If you have questions regarding meal deliveries, please contact our Nutri-Serve Food Director: K.Lee Dixon at (609) 806-4280 ext. 2950 or [KLeed@nsfm.com](mailto:KLeed@nsfm.com).

***Are classes/programs allowed to take field trips this school year?***

There are no out of school/off campus field trips this fall. This will be reevaluated in mid-fall for the remainder of the school year.

***Will clubs, activities and events continue this school year?***

We will continue to promote clubs, activities and events that comply with district, CDC and health guidelines. We understand and value the importance these interactions have on our students and staff. While in-person after school clubs have been suspended until January 2021, online after school activities and clubs can continue. We will continue to inform you of what is approved as information and decisions are made.

***Although the plan is to start the year with remote learning, will school buildings be open and will visitors be allowed in the building?***

We will not allow any visitors (including parents/guardians) past the school's front office, and those adults who do come to school must have a symptom and temperature screening before they enter the main office suite. We strongly encourage all parents/guardians to schedule virtual meetings if possible, and if you do feel as if you need an in-person meeting with a teacher, administrator, or CST member, we strongly encourage you to schedule that in advance.

## **Learning Models**

*If we opt for the online only model, will classes be similar to the spring semester of last year?*

Last spring, as a district and as a community, we were responding to emergency circumstances. We pivoted to remote learning in two days. Using feedback loops (surveys, focus groups, etc.) we have focused on our ability to implement virtual learning and provide the best instruction we can to our students. Our use of digital tools and live, synchronous instruction has grown as well. The district will be going 1:1 in the fall with iPads for PK-1 and Chromebooks for grades 2-5. We are pushing the start date of school until 9/14/2020 to have a professional development series that will allow us to meet the needs of all students, whether in a hybrid or remote learning model.

*Will there be more interaction between the student and teachers during virtual instruction?*

It is our expectation that much greater interactions take place during the 2020-2021 school year. Regardless of the model selected, all students should expect to attend virtual classes throughout the day. Classroom teachers will share schedules and expectations with students and families as we begin the new year.

*What online platform will be used for instruction?*

The district has purchased the CANVAS platform for our learning management and online platform. All staff and students will be trained on how to use the platform and all staff are required to use this platform. The platform allows for video conferencing, connection to PowerSchool, and deliverer of instruction/assessment.

*Do you envision live streaming the classroom with the teacher teaching the in-person students? How will the virtual students interact with the teacher in this situation?*

This is definitely a possibility, but the details will be further worked out in the weeks ahead. Each Instruction model will be impacted greatly by the numbers of families that select virtual versus in-person and the corresponding schedule we can then finalize.

*How is attendance taken?*

All students will be required to attend a Morning Meeting with their teacher. This will be used to designate the student present for the day. Teachers will also take attendance at all of the direct instruction/small group/whole class interactions that students will be expected to participate in throughout the day.

## **Curriculum and Instruction**

***There were modifications in the Spring in terms of grading, will there be any modifications to grading assignments/assessments?***

We value quality learning experiences and plan to deliver those experiences to students in virtual environments. Those experiences include measuring students' progress in mastering standards. Grades will be issued and PowerSchool will be open. Assessments will look different in remote environments. We are currently working through what that will look like in order to ensure a fundamental fairness between any learning model, remote or hybrid. No student should be disadvantaged in grades due to the selection of one model over another.

***Will students participate in specials during remote learning?***

Yes. Students can expect to participate in specials like PE, Art, Music, Library, and Spanish with their special area teachers. These "subjects" will be taught in a variety of diverse and engaging ways depending upon the lesson and/or unit. These areas of learning will be considered an integral part of your child's learning experience.

## **Special Education**

***How will the schools accommodate students with IEP's?***

Our special education department is currently developing guidelines to support students based on the various groups and needs within special education. This guidance will cover a wide variety of issues and topics such as determining compensatory services, making up missed evaluations, and how services will be delivered under the current health guidelines. When instructional staff return to work, they will be trained in these guidelines. Families will work with their school-level team to resolve individual concerns.

***For students who are typically in general education classes and special education classes, will there be major changes to their schedule?***

For most students, there should not be any significant changes. Placement in special education and services are unique to the individual students. Once the health guidelines are finalized, then the special education department will develop guides for the school team to consider when making individual student decisions regarding their schedule and how services will be delivered.

## **Class Schedule**

***What will my schedule look like in the fall?***

No matter if a student is remote or hybrid, we are asking students to adhere to the schedule and the times of that schedule. Not only will this help with executive functioning, but it will also help in scheduling synchronous learning opportunities.

## **All-Remote Elementary Scheduling**

For this period of all-remote learning, our elementary schools will operate on an 8:30 am – 3:00 pm daily schedule – with the exception of Wednesdays when we will be “in school” from 8:30 am – 1:00 pm so that teachers can: 1) work collaboratively on lesson planning and development, 2) review and analyze student-progress data, and 3) engage in professional development activities. Each principal is developing a formal “master schedule” for his/her school community, and it will delineate periods of time for each class to be engaged in Reading, Writing, Math, Science, Social Studies, and a variety of “specials.” This structure is important for a variety of reasons – including protecting our ability to provide support services for students with unique needs (from special education to speech to Occupational Therapy to ESL to AIS). Thus, some students will have Reading and Writing in the morning but Math in the afternoon while other grade levels may be reversed.

Every class will begin each day with a “Morning Meeting” in which our teachers will work with our students on social-emotional development as well as their “executive functioning” skills. The rest of the day will involve blocks of time allocated for core academic subjects as well as “specials,” lunch, and recess, and those teachers who offer special support services will be working with homeroom teachers and families to use our daily FOCUS period and to find other appropriate blocks of time to provide instruction. The developmental needs of our students vary greatly – including the vast difference in maturity and cognitive ability between a four-year-old and a 5<sup>th</sup> grader – and our scheduling will reflect those important distinctions.

Your child’s teacher will provide all of the information that you will need to navigate each week and each day. The following chart reflects the approximate time allocations that our master schedule will provide for each area, though we need to offer two notes of clarification:

1) The time block allocated does not suggest that the student will be on Zoom the entire time. Rather, the teachers will be combining some synchronous instruction along with independent work time, small group meetings, and other activities.

2) Due to differences among our schools in the number of classes at each grade level and other factors, the specific number of minutes for various blocks of time indicated below may vary between schools and even between different grade levels within the same building.

<b><i>SUBJECT AREA</i></b>	<b><i>GRADES K-1 (# of minutes per day)</i></b>	<b><i>GRADES 2-5 (# of minutes per day)</i></b>
Morning Meeting	30	30
Language Arts/Social Studies	100 - 120	100 - 120
Math	45 - 60	45 - 60
Science	30 (3x per week)	30 (3x per week)
Spanish	---	30 (3x per week)
Specials (See Chart Below)	30 - 60	60
FOCUS	30	30

<b><i>SPECIALS</i></b>	<b><i># of minutes per session</i></b>
Art	60 x 1
Health / Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)	30 x 1
Library	30 x 1
Music	30 x 2
Physical Education	30 x 2
STEAM	30 x 1
Spanish (Grades 2 – 5)	30 x 3

***If I have further questions, what should I do?***

If you have further questions (and we expect that you will!) please reach out by phone or email. We will continue to address this ever-changing learning environment with the goal of improving the experience for ALL children. All children are unique and so are all educators. Together, we can do amazing things!

In addition, if parents have further thoughts, comments or questions regarding the 2020-2021 school year: Please email [communications@princetonk12.org](mailto:communications@princetonk12.org)