



**WATCHUNG BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Chapter 27 Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction  
Programs for 2024-2025 School Year**

**Presented to the Watchung Borough Board of Education**

**August 29, 2024**

## Overview

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 closure so that school districts can utilize virtual or remote instruction to satisfy the 180-day requirement pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9. This plan would be implemented during a school district closure lasting more than three consecutive days due to a declared public health emergency, or a directive by the appropriate health agency or officer to institute a public health-related closure. School districts must annually submit its proposed program for virtual or remote instruction (Plan) to the Commissioner of Education.

The Watchung Borough School District has prepared this plan following guidance from the New Jersey Department of Education and includes these key areas:

- I. Equitable Access and Opportunity to Instruction
- II. Addressing Special Education Needs
- III. Addressing Multi Language Learner (ML) Needs
- IV. Attendance Plan
- V. Safe Delivery of Meals
- VI. Facilities Plan
- VII. Other Considerations

Each school has designed a virtual plan that is focused on advancing learning through a balance between academic instruction and social and emotional support. Our objective is to continue instruction while ensuring student well-being during a school closure. The plans share a framework and are substantially similar in design, but nuances exist based on grade-level appropriate strategies.

It is anticipated that additional or revised considerations may need to be included in this plan during a school closure.

Pursuant to PL 2020, c.27, this plan was approved by the Board of Education on August 29, 2024, and submitted to the Commissioner of Education through the Executive County Superintendent with the required attestation form before September 30, 2024. The plan also has been posted on the district website.

### **I. Equitable Access and Opportunity to Instruction**

#### **Instructional Schedule and Resources**

The emergency virtual instructional plan includes full-day programs that follow the current in-person schedule. The district will continue to follow the current board-approved calendar, which has early dismissal days scheduled during the year. On those days, the instructional day will exceed the minimum four-hour requirement, excluding lunch and recess.

## Current Full-Day Schedules

### Bayberry Elementary School

8:45 am - 3:25 pm

### Valley View Middle School

8:05 am - 2:55 pm

The online program will be a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction designed to maximize student growth and learning to the greatest extent possible. Assessments, including i-Ready, will continue to measure student growth. Teachers will use large- and small-group instructional strategies and individual support throughout the day.

The central platforms for instruction and assessment will continue to be Google Classroom, Google Meet, and GoGuardian. Teachers will continue to use *i-Ready* for assessment and differentiation of instruction.

In addition to the Google Suite (Google docs, slides, classroom, forms, sheets), the following online tools will continue to be available as resources:

- [Quizlet](#)
- [Kahoot](#)
- [Achieve3000](#)
- [SmartyAnts](#)
- [GoMath - Think Central](#)
- [Mathseeds: Home](#)
- [RazKids](#)
- [Reading AtoZ](#)
- [Newsela](#)
- [Mystery Science](#)
- [GoNoodle](#)
- [Class DOJO](#)
- [StoryBoard](#)
- [BrainPop](#)
- [Edmodo](#)
- [Symbaloo](#)
- [SchoolTube](#)
- [Edpuzzle](#)
- [TED-ed](#)
- [Socrative](#)

Grading and assessments will continue and be recorded in Genesis.

## **Access to Broadband, WiFi, and Technology Devices**

The school district will measure and address digital divide issues through ongoing communication and make arrangements to provide Internet access for any families who indicate that they do not have sufficient broadband and WiFi service, which will allow participation in emergency virtual instruction. Our district employs a 1:1 program with chromebooks for grades 2-8. K-1 students are provided district iPads. Our technology department will work with the administration to ensure that families' needs, including the repair of chromebooks and iPads, are addressed.

## **II. Addressing Special Education Needs**

All special education, related services, and ESL programs will continue virtually, to the greatest extent practicable, through Google Meets or other online platforms. IEP implementation will continue to be documented through tracking of services, student progress, and ongoing accommodations and modifications, as required by the IEP. Case managers will continue to monitor progress and communicate with families and conduct remote meetings and evaluations as allowed by law.

## **III. Addressing Multilingual Learner (ML) Plan Needs**

The ESL program will continue to address the needs of our students through personalized learning strategies and varied supports, including Universal Design for Learning and equitable access to technology, to ensure delivery of the same standard of education. Ongoing professional development for teachers and support from supervisors will continue equitable educational access with a focus on culturally responsive and trauma-informed teaching strategies as well as those strategies that focus on social-emotional learning, particularly for any students affected by forced migration from their home country (refugees or asylum seekers that are residing within the Watchung Borough community). Communication with families of ML students will be offered in the families' home language, as necessary and appropriate. Translation services also will be available when necessary and appropriate.

## **VI. Attendance Plan**

Attendance will be taken in accordance with DOE regulations and documented in Genesis based on student attendance in online classes. Administrators will follow up with families of students who are absent frequently to provide support for better attendance. Board of Education policy 5200 reflects that prolonged or repeated absences may result in various consequences as outlined including retention at grade level.

## **V. Safe Delivery of Meals**

The school district does not participate in the federal school lunch program. Nonetheless, our nurses will communicate with our families who qualify for the free and reduced lunch program to determine whether any assistance is needed. Should the need for access to meals arise for any

families, the district will facilitate the delivery of meals through either our PTO or our regional high school.

## **VI. Facilities Plan**

The district buildings and grounds staff members are essential employees and would continue working in-person, to the extent practicable. They would continue to maintain the facilities. The list of essential employees will be provided, as required, to the county education office at the time of the district's transition to virtual instruction.

The school district will follow all recommendations outlined in numerous government publications and advisories, which are already established and will adjust procedures and policies accordingly as new advisories are released and updated.

## **VII. Other Considerations**

Accelerated learning opportunities are provided through the district's use of *i-Ready* and other extension learning activities and would continue in a remote context.

The district maintains online resources for wellness, which are shared with staff and families. The district's SEL Second Step program would continue remotely.

Extended learning strategies and supplementary learning opportunities would continue for our Title I students online.

Our 21st-century community learning programs, including opportunities created by our Youth Services Grant would continue remotely to the extent practicable.

As a PK-8 district, credit recovery is not an issue, but students will be supported to ensure they meet grade-level requirements.

Transportation contracts would be suspended, to the extent permitted by law, if they are not being used.

Extra-curricular clubs and activities would be continued remotely to the extent practicable, but athletics would have to be suspended.

Before and after care services would have to be suspended, if in-person settings were not possible.

Board of Education meetings and information sessions would be conducted through Zoom, if in-person meetings were not possible.

## **Website Address where Plan is Posted**

<https://www.watchungschools.com/district/administrative-reports>