



East Brunswick Public Schools

Emergency Virtual Instruction Plan

2025-2026 School Year



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Introduction

The New Jersey Department of Education (Department) remains at the ready to assist every local educational agency (LEA) in returning to full-time, in-person instruction for school year (SY) 2025-2026. This includes providing LEAs with guidance in the event of declared emergencies resulting in a district-wide closure. The Department appreciates the challenges that LEAs had to overcome during the 2021-2022 SY as LEAs faced a myriad of decisions affecting both the safety of their students and staff as well as the instructional experience. The Department is encouraging LEAs to reflect upon their experiences with virtual and remote instruction when planning for the 2025-2026 SY.

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 district closure so that LEAs can utilize virtual or remote instruction to satisfy the 180-day requirement pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9*. **In order to provide transparency and ensure that New Jersey students continue to receive high quality, standards-based instruction, each school district, charter school, renaissance school project and Approved Private School for Students with Disabilities (APSSDs) must annually submit its proposed program for virtual or remote instruction (Plan) to the New Jersey Commissioner of Education.**

This plan would be implemented during an LEA 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 chief school administrator or lead person must consult with the board of education or board of trustees, if practicable, prior to implementing the LEA's plan of virtual or remote instruction. A day of virtual or remote instruction, if instituted under a plan approved by the New Jersey Commissioner of Education, 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 other such matters as determined by the New Jersey Commissioner of Education.



Scheduling of Students

The East Brunswick Board of Education's Plan ensures continuity of learning while being responsive to our students' family members and caregivers.

School Day

The East Brunswick Board of Education is committed to maintaining quality instruction for students and abiding by the minimum requirements set forth in NJDOE regulations. The East Brunswick Board of Education's Plan includes resuming in-person instruction. Scheduling decisions have been informed by careful evaluation of the health and safety standards and the most up-to-date guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), as well as the input of stakeholders about the needs of all students and the realities unique to East Brunswick Public Schools.

Virtual learning will continue to be guided by P.L. 2020, c.27 and the school district's updated Emergency Closure School Preparedness Plan if schools are required to deliver instruction through a fully virtual environment during limited periods throughout the school year due to a local or Statewide public health emergency.

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3, a school day shall consist of not less than four hours, except that one continuous session of two and one-half hours may be considered a full day in kindergarten. East Brunswick Board of Education policies for attendance and instructional contact time will accommodate opportunities for both synchronous and asynchronous instruction, while ensuring the requirements for a 180-day school year are met.



Education Plan

Instructional Scheduling and Delivery Plan

Instruction in East Brunswick Public Schools will follow a blended model that incorporates both synchronous (live) and asynchronous (independent) learning. This approach ensures regular contact between educators and students, while also providing opportunities for peer interaction. Concurrent classroom strategies will be implemented, and all instructional activities will be tailored to the developmental needs of each grade band and the most effective methods for delivering content, with the goal of maximizing student learning.

Educators will work collaboratively to build a shared understanding among staff, students, and families across all grade levels and schools. This shared understanding will clarify learning expectations, instructional environments, and norms for interactions to ensure all students receive equitable access to high-quality instruction. Lessons will be designed to actively engage students, foster ownership of their learning, and promote metacognitive skills.

To support digital learning, all students in Grades K–6 will be issued a Chromebook and will use Google Classroom as their primary learning platform. This platform will serve as a central hub for announcements, assignments, videos, daily schedules, virtual meeting links, and weekly planners. Students in Grades 7–12 will receive a Lenovo laptop and will utilize the Canvas Learning Management System for similar purposes.

Recognizing guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics and best practices in early childhood education, East Brunswick educators will limit screen time for students in Pre-K through Grade 2. In these early grades, developmentally appropriate, hands-on, and interactive learning activities will be prioritized over worksheets or digital tasks.

Standard grading and assessment policies will remain in place. Assessment practices will be reviewed and will include a range of measures: locally developed pre-assessments, formative assessments, interim checks, and summative evaluations. A comprehensive accountability plan will be communicated to outline how teachers will monitor, assess, and grade student performance from Pre-K through Grade 12. Additionally, a variety of extended learning opportunities will be offered virtually to support student success. These opportunities include accelerated learning programs, Title I Extended Learning Programs, credit recovery options, and other supplemental academic support services designed to help students meet their academic goals and stay on track.

Students will have the opportunity to engage in safe, remote work-based learning experiences, such as simulations and virtual tours. East Brunswick Public Schools will provide work-based learning opportunities in accordance with administrative code requirements, incorporating realistic simulations and scenarios to help prepare students for situations they may encounter when they return to the workplace.



Multilingual Learners

East Brunswick Public Schools is committed to ensuring that Multilingual Learners (MLs), particularly newcomers and those with emerging English proficiency, have equitable access to high-quality instruction in all learning environments, including remote and hybrid settings. The district regularly evaluates MLs' instructional experiences through multiple communication channels, such as ESL teacher and parent phone calls, virtual teacher-led meetings with families, and email exchanges between teachers, students, and parents.

At the elementary level, student engagement is monitored through platforms including Flipgrid, Google Docs, Google Classroom, Padlet, Raz Kids, Newsela, and ReadWorks.org. At the secondary level, teachers assess student participation and progress using Canvas assignments and Microsoft Teams interactions. Teachers also evaluate student learning based on responses to formative feedback, daily communication through email and chat features in instructional platforms, and participation in Zoom or Teams discussions.

To support equitable access to instruction, the district implements differentiated instruction, sheltered instruction strategies, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to meet the academic and linguistic needs of MLs. These approaches ensure that MLs can meaningfully engage with grade-level content alongside their non-ML peers. Each ML receives a district-provided device, and access to internet connectivity is prioritized to eliminate barriers to online learning.

East Brunswick Public Schools also maintains strong, inclusive communication with families of Multilingual Learners (MLs) through translated materials, interpretation services for both in-person and virtual settings, and family-facing communication that is appropriate for various literacy levels. These efforts enable families to stay informed, engaged, and actively involved in their child's education.

In recognition of the challenges faced by students impacted by forced migration, such as refugees and asylees, the district provides ongoing professional development for teachers, administrators, and counselors. Training topics include culturally responsive teaching, social-emotional learning (SEL), and trauma-informed practices. These learning opportunities equip staff with strategies to support the academic success and well-being of students with diverse and often complex backgrounds.



Attendance Policies and Family Communication Procedures

East Brunswick Public Schools outlines specific attendance policies to determine whether a student is marked present or absent. Attendance is based on a student's participation in instructional activities, which may include in-person attendance, engagement in online instruction, and timely submission of assignments. A student's attendance record is a key factor in decisions regarding promotion, retention, graduation eligibility, disciplinary actions, and overall evaluation of academic performance.

In cases where a student is not participating in online instruction or is failing to submit required assignments, the school district initiates communication with the student's family. This communication may include phone calls, emails, and/or written notices to inform families of the student's lack of engagement and to provide support in addressing any barriers to participation. The goal is to ensure consistent student attendance and active involvement in the learning process.

Special Education

Every child and adolescent with a disability is entitled to a free and appropriate education including special education services based on their individualized education program (IEP). Students receiving special education services may be more negatively affected by distance-learning and may be disproportionately impacted by interruptions in regular education. It may not be feasible, depending on the needs of the individual child and adolescent, to adhere both to distancing guidelines and the criteria outlined in a specific IEP. Attempts to meet physical distancing guidelines and the needs of the individual child may require creative solutions, often on a case-by-case basis.

Ensuring the delivery of Special Education and Related Services to Students with Disabilities Under the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and New Jersey state special education regulations, students with disabilities are entitled to special education and related services, such as accommodations and modifications to instruction, speech-language services, occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), and counseling. Since the onset of virtual instruction, the NJDOE has engaged a variety of stakeholders, including educators, related service providers and advocacy groups to gain insight, share best practices, and consider policies to support districts in providing services to students with disabilities in virtual or hybrid learning environments. Consistent with guidance from the United States Department of Education, the District must continue to meet their obligations to students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible. The NJDOE will continue to update school districts and receiving schools with additional guidance from the USDE on implementation of IDEA. Specific strategies and considerations for students with disabilities must be critical points of discussion for every return-to-school scenario.



We have reviewed the NJDOE recommendations that school districts should consider when addressing the education of students with disabilities:

- We have procedures to address the return to school of medically fragile students and students with physical or health impairments who may require accommodations and modifications as part of a 504 Plan. We will communicate frequently with the families of students with significant medical risk factors to determine if additional precautions or unique measures are necessary prior to a student's return to school.
- Our IEP teams will review student data/student progress to determine whether critical skills were lost during the period in which virtual instruction was being provided to students and determine the need for additional services to address learning loss.
- Our IEP teams will consider the impact of missed services on student progress towards meeting IEP goals and objectives and determine if additional or compensatory services are needed to address regression and recoupment of skills within a reasonable length of time.
- Our IEP teams will develop procedures to complete overdue and/or incomplete evaluations to determine eligibility for special education services.
- We will use school guidance department staff and child study team personnel to identify students whose postsecondary plans may have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and provide support, resources, and assistance, which may include facilitating connection to community organizations, scholarship programs, county, state, and federal opportunities to access support.
- We will communicate to parents/guardians the procedures for student referrals and evaluations to determine the eligibility for special education and related services or a 504 Plan as required by federal and state law.



Student Transportation

The protocols described below shall apply to student transportation services provided by East Brunswick Public School District buses as well as by contracted student transportation service companies. It is imperative that parents review these protocols with their children to ensure a clear understanding of responsibilities. Students who fail to follow protocols will lose bus privileges for the remainder of the school year.

Student Health Monitoring

- a. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their child is healthy to attend school. Parents should monitor their child's temperature prior to boarding the school bus.
 - i. If the child's temperature is not normal, the child must be kept at home. At no time shall a child who is unwell or showing signs of illness be sent to school.



Cleaning Practices

The district's existing facilities cleaning practices will be expanded to encompass the protocols described below. These protocols are supplemental to existing practices, and all practices not specifically delineated herein shall continue to be implemented.

- I. Building Zones and Custodial Responsibilities
 - a. Each custodian will be dedicated to specific zones of the building to which they are assigned. It is the custodian's responsibility to ensure that they adhere to all facilities' cleaning practices.
 - b. The cleaning and disinfecting protocols shall consist of the following in the order listed:
 - i. Wipe all seats, desktops and high touch surfaces with a cleaner disinfectant.
 - ii. HEPA vacuum carpeted floor surfaces.
 - iii. Sanitize interior building spaces with an electrostatic sprayer dispersing hospital-grade disinfectant twice per week.
 - c. Individuals use items such as telephones, keyboards, two-way radios, and computer monitors will be wiped/disinfected by the individual user.

- III. Hand Sanitizer, Paper Towel, and Soap Dispensers
 - a. Custodians shall check and refill as necessary with hand sanitizer, paper towel, and soap dispensers while performing protocols.

- IV. Food Service Operations
 - a. Food service staff will continue to follow regular protocols.
 - i. Food contact surfaces (i.e., prep tables, pots, pans) will be washed, rinsed, and sanitized prior to use, between task changes, and before closing each day's operations.
 - ii. All other high touch surfaces such as door handles for refrigerators, freezers, ovens, steamers, storage rooms, carts, phones, and bathrooms will be cleaned and sanitized upon opening the kitchen and before closing down each day's operations. In the event a staff member touches any of these items without the use of gloves, the item will be cleaned and sanitized each time.
 - iii. Food service lines (if being used) will be sanitized upon opening the kitchen, between every meal period, and before closing down each day's operations.



Meals

The district will continue to recognize food safety as a top priority. The standard will continue to be that all Child Nutrition workers will wash their hands during the following scenarios: upon entering the kitchen, between glove changes and any time they touch their face or hair. It will also be mandatory that gloves are to be replaced between task changes. All Child Nutrition workers will have a mask on at all times.

Staff training and follow-up will be paramount. The district will be having multiple staff meetings before the start of school. Monthly food safety audits and follow-up meetings will be held throughout the course of the school year.

The school district will continue to use wrapped utensils (forks, spoons, knives, and sporks).

The district will distribute several days or a full week's worth of meals (breakfast and lunch) to students. The distribution will take place at key schools based on location, parking lot capacity, and kitchen size. Meals will be packaged and consist of food that can be eaten cold and/or warmed up. All meals distributed as part of the weekly food distribution plan or individually will be pre-packaged.



Field Trips and Extra-Curricular Activities

Field Trips

- No field trips will be scheduled during virtual instruction.

Clubs, Activities and Enrichment Programs

- All students registered for a club or activity will be able to participate in that club or activity virtually.
- For optional Parent-Paid Enrichment Programs, the program will either run virtually or refunds will be provided.

NJSIAA Guidelines

- The district will follow all NJSIAA guidelines as presented to the district.



Academic, Social, and Behavioral Supports

The East Brunswick Board of Education's Plan includes a comprehensive RtI model for identifying individual students who need extra academic, behavioral or emotional support. This model is a systematic approach to prevention, intervention, and enrichment in grades Pre-K through 12 which includes tiered criteria, tiered interventions, and I & RS meetings. This process is facilitated by principals, teachers, reading specialists, math specialists, student assistance specialists, counselors, and other building administrators.

Wraparound Supports

The wrap around support services available to students are tiered to meet their needs. Every child has access to a Student Assistance Specialist (one at each elementary and one per grade 5-12). In addition, starting in grade 5, every student has a school counselor as well. These mental health professionals work to provide:

- Individual counseling
- Group counseling
- Academic support
- Tiered interventions for academic, behavioral or emotional needs
- Social and Emotional and Climate activities within the school

In addition to these services, there is also another layer of support facilitated through an additional SAS who has a smaller caseload, specifically focused on students with more extensive mental health issues. They are able to provide more intensive supports during the school day.



Community Programs

In the event that the district should be faced with remote virtual learning for an extended period of time, the Community Programs Department would be ready to offer the following:

1. 1.5 hour per day parent-paid remote preschool virtual program. It would include ensuring the students are engaged with small group breakouts for social/emotional assessment, as well as circle time (weather, days of the week, phonics) and following our units on letters, sounds, signs, etc.
2. Virtual parent-paid enrichment programs for grades K-12 ranging from 1 hour to full day programming inclusive of science, cooking, languages, chess, art, etc.
3. If it were deemed not to be a health risk, a Remote Learning Center can be offered to assist in the virtual instruction for families that would need in-person care for their children.



East Brunswick Public Schools Virtual Instruction Committee

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Danielle DiNinno, Director of Elementary Education
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Anthony Gugliotta, Supervisor (PSA President)
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Kristin Gristina, Principal, Bowne-Munro Elementary School
Dr. Michael Gaskell, Principal, Central Elementary
Tatianna McBride, Principal Chittick Elementary
Nyree Delgado, Principal, Frost Elementary
Peter DiBernardi, Principal, Lawrence Brook Elementary
Cheryl Jones, Principal, Memorial Elementary
Joseph Csatari, Principal, Warnsdorfer Elementary
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