Merchantville Board of Education 130 South Centre Street Merchantville, NJ 08109	File Code : 6173.1 Adopted : 09/22/2020 Revised : Revised : Reviewed : 07/15/2024

REMOTE LEARNING

In response to State directives regarding reopening school with adequate precautions to prevent the spread of this contagious disease, the board shall provide in-person, fully virtual and hybrid learning opportunities for all students. The board of education shall support a program of in-person, fully virtual and hybrid learning that:

A. Prioritizes the health, safety, and wellness of students and staff;

B. Maintains the continuity of learning;

C. Facilitates equity and ease of access to communications and resources;

D. Flexibly accommodates the needs and varying circumstances of all learners;

E. Incorporates educators, students, parents/guardians, board members and other community members into the entire analysis and planning cycle.

The virtual learning program may consist of synchronous and asynchronous tools. Synchronous tools provide ways of accessing and providing information that require interaction with others to occur at the same time (i.e., online classrooms, interactive webinars, videoconferencing). Asynchronous tools provide ways of accessing and providing information that does not require interaction with others to occur at the same time (i.e., forums, blogs, email, website links, etc.).

The length of the school day for in-person, fully virtual and hybrid learning programs shall be in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3, stating that 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. District policy 5113 Attendance, Absences and Excuses shall apply and attendance shall be recorded in all educational programs. The attendance and instructional contact time shall accommodate opportunities for both synchronous and asynchronous instruction and ensure that the requirements for a 180-day school year are met.

Additional Anticipated Minimum Standard

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) Anticipated Minimum Standard provides that, in addition to the methods and considerations explicitly referenced in the NJDOE guidance, *The Road Back: Restart and Recovery Plan for Education*, for scheduling students for in-person, remote, or hybrid learning, families/guardians may submit, and the district shall accommodate, requests for full time remote learning. Such requests may include any service or combination of services that would otherwise be delivered on an in-person or hybrid schedule, such as instruction, behavioral and support services, special education and related services. A family/guardian may request that some services be delivered entirely remotely, while other

services follow the same schedule they otherwise would according to the district's reopening plan.

A. Unconditional Eligibility for Full-Time Remote Learning

All students shall be eligible for full-time remote learning. Eligibility shall not be conditioned on a family/guardian demonstrating a risk of illness or other selective criteria. This includes students with disabilities who attend school in-district or are placed at receiving schools (county special services school districts, educational services commissions, jointure commissions, Katzenbach School for the Deaf, regional day schools, college operated programs, and approved private schools for students with disabilities).

B. Procedures for Submitting Full-Time Remote Learning Requests

Recognizing that planning is required in order to provide continuity in the student's educational program and arranging the appropriate staff and resources, a family/guardian shall submit a request for full-time remote learning, including requests to begin the school year receiving full-time remote learning and requests to transition from in-person or hybrid services to full-time remote learning during the school year. Procedures for submitting the request are as follows:

1. The request shall be submitted to the principal at least 1 week before the start of the semester;
2. Requests shall be approved no more than1 week after the receipt of the request;
3. Questions and concerns may be directed to the principal or his or her designee;
4. The family/guardian shall submit the following information or documentation with their request. The documentation shall not exclude any students from the school's full-time remote learning option, but rather be limited to the minimum information needed to ensure proper recordkeeping and implementation of successful remote learning:

    a. Students in remote learning will be issued a Chromebook to use for school purposes. Parents must acknowledge the technology policy and Acceptable Use Agreement.
    b. Families will be responsible for providing wifi and internet access for remote instruction.
    c. Families/guardians having limited access to equipment or the internet shall inform the principal or his or her designee. The district shall make a reasonable effort to support the remote instruction by facilitating services and/or providing equipment.

5. For students with disabilities, the district shall determine if an IEP meeting or an amendment to a student's IEP is needed for full-time remote learning.
6. Families/guardians shall submit a request according to the procedures above for transitioning their student from in-person or hybrid delivery to full-time remote delivery;
7. Families/guardians are expected to cooperate in setting up the transition and may be required to participate in scheduled meetings (in-person or video or tele conferences) during the transition period;
8. School teachers, administrators and other school staff shall endeavor to provide supports and resources to assist families/guardians, particularly those of younger students, with meeting the expectations of the district's remote learning option.

Upon satisfaction of these minimum procedures, the district shall approve the student's full-time remote learning request.

C. Scope and Expectations of Full-Time Remote Learning

A student participating in the board's full-time remote learning option shall be afforded the same quality and scope of instruction and other educational services as any other student otherwise participating in district programs (e.g. students participating in a hybrid model). This includes but is not limited to:

1. Access to standards-based instruction of the same quality and rigor as that afforded all other students of the district;
2. The district shall make its best effort to ensure that every student participating in remote learning has access to the requisite educational technology;
3. Special education services and related services shall be provided to the greatest extent possible.

D. Procedures to Transition from Full-Time Remote Learning to the In-Person Educational Program

A student shall be eligible to transition to the in-person educational program. This will allow families/guardians to make the arrangements needed to effectively serve students' home learning needs and will support educators in ensuring continuity of instruction. The family/guardian shall submit a request to transition from full-time remote learning to the in-person educational program according to the following procedures:

1. The request shall be submitted to the principal at least two weeks before the start of the trimester. The principal may consider requests submitted during the semester on a case by case basis;
2. Requests shall be approved 1 week after the receipt of the request;
3. Questions and concerns may be directed to the principal or his or her designee;
4. The family/guardian shall submit the following information or documentation with their request. The documentation shall not exclude any students from the school's in-person educational program, but rather be limited to the minimum information needed to ensure proper recordkeeping and implementation of a successful transition to the in-person education program:

    a. Summary of synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities successfully completed;
    b. Summary of synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities still working through;
    c. The student may submit to the COVID screening process upon reentry to the school;

5. Students transitioning to the in-person educational program may be required to submit to an academic assessment prior to being placed in a class. Remediations shall be provided for students that need them;
6. Families/guardians are expected to cooperate in setting up the transition and may be required to participate in scheduled meetings (in-person or video or teleconferences) during the transition period.

E. Procedures for Communicating District Policy with Families

Teaching staff members and administrators shall provide clear and frequent communication with families/guardians, in their home language, and shall ensure that communication opportunities are as readily accessible as possible. Communication shall include but shall not be limited to, information regarding:

1. Summaries of, and opportunities to review, the district's full-time remote learning policy and attendance policy;
2. Procedures for submitting full-time remote learning requests;
3. Scope and expectations of full-time remote learning;

4. Procedures for transition from full-time remote learning to in-person services and vice-versa;
5. The district's procedures for ongoing communication with families and for addressing families' questions or concerns:
6. Teaching staff members who are teaching remote classes shall have office hours to address questions and concerns. Teachers shall notify the families/guardians of their students regarding the time of the office hours and the method of contact (email, text, video or teleconference).

F. Reporting

To evaluate full-time remote learning, and to continue providing meaningful guidance for districts, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) may require districts to report to the NJDOE data regarding participation in full-time remote learning. Data will include the number of students participating in full-time remote learning by each of the following subgroups: economically disadvantaged; major racial and ethnic groups; students with disabilities; and English learners. The chief school administrator shall ensure that such reports are completed efficiently.

Adopted:

Key Words

Virtual Education, Virtual Learning, Remote Education, Remote Learning, Synchronous, Asynchronous, Transition Request

Legal References:

N.J.S.A. 18A:6-3	Courses in constitution of United States
N.J.S.A. 18A:33-1	District to furnish suitable facilities; adoption of courses of study
N.J.S.A. 18A:35-1 et seq.	Curriculum and courses
N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.6 through -4.8	Parents Right to Conscience Act of 1979
N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1	Curriculum and instruction
N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1	Graduation requirements
N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-3.1 et. seq.	State Board of Examiners and certification
See particularly: N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-5, -6, -8, -9, -10, -11, -12, -14	
N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7	Individualized education program
N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.1	General requirements
N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-9.5	Commissioner to ensure achievement of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards
N.J.A.C. 6A:30-1.1et seq.	Evaluation of the Performance of School Districts
N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8 et seq.	Student attendance and accounting

New Jersey Department of Education: *Clarifying Expectations Regarding Full Time Remote Learning Options for Families in 2020-2021* (Supplementary to *The Road Back: Restart and Recovery Plan for Education)*; July 24, 2020. See: https://nj.gov/education/reopening/updates/docs/7.24.20%20RtR%20Fulltime%20Remote%2

Possible Cross References:

*2224	Nondiscrimination/affirmative action
*6121	Nondiscrimination/affirmative action
*6122	Articulation
*6140	Curriculum adoption
*6142.1	Family life education
*6142.2	English as a second language; bilingual/bicultural
*6142.4	Physical education and health
*6142.6	Basic skills
*6142.9	Arts
*6142.12	Career education
*6146	Graduation requirements
*6147	Standards of proficiency
*6164.2	Guidance services
*6171.1	Remedial instruction
*6171.2	Gifted and talented
*6171.4	Special education
*9130	Committees

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.