

# VIRTUAL OR REMOTE INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

DISTRICT CODE 03-0930

JULY 2024



## **Closter Public Schools**

340 Homans Avenue

Closter, NJ 07624

201-768-3001

Vincent McHale, Superintendent

This plan has been developed in accordance with *P.L. 2020, c.27*. School will be in session for 180 days.

## Introduction & Overview

In April 2020, Governor Murphy signed A-3904 into law (P.L.2020, c.27, or “Chapter 27”), which, in part, requires each school district, charter school, renaissance school project, and Approved Private School for Students with Disabilities (APSSD), hereinafter referred to as Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), to annually submit a proposed program for emergency virtual or remote instruction (Plan) to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). In July 2022, the NJDOE readopted N.J.A.C. 6A:32, School District Operations, with amendments and new rules, which include updates to the components of the LEA’s Plan. This law provides for the continuity of instruction in the event of a public health-related district closure by permitting LEAs to utilize virtual or remote instruction to satisfy the 180-day requirement pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:32-13.1 & 13.2.

The Closter Public School District is dedicated to educational excellence. In partnership with the families, staff, and community, we are committed to meeting the educational needs of each child by providing the programs and environment necessary to:

- Enable every child to reach his/her full potential;
- Promote self-esteem, respect, responsibility, and appreciation of diversity;
- Develop knowledge, skills, and academic achievement per the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. (NJSLS);
- Prepare each child for continued education and responsible citizenship;
- Instill a lifelong passion for learning.

Closter Public School District is committed to fostering and instilling a culture that personalizes learning, prepares students for high school, college, careers, and life, and supports confident, responsible citizenship.

In keeping with Closter’s commitment to providing our students with an exceptional education, this Virtual or Remote Learning Plan has been developed to guide the instruction and resources during a school closure lasting more than three (3) consecutive days.

Our goal during any school closure will be to maintain the same full-day schedule followed during the regular in-person school day and utilize a live stream to provide instruction.

## Access to Instruction

### **Virtual Day Schedule**

Students will follow their regular school schedule on virtual days.

Hillside Elementary School	Tenakill Middle School
	Period
Log-in: 8:40 am	Log-in: 8:25 am (Homeroom)
8:40 am - 3:15 pm: Students remain with their classroom teacher, except for specials, ELL, related services, and special education. The classroom teacher provides instruction in ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies.	1: 8:37-9:24
	2: 9:26-10:13
	3: 10:15-11:02
	4: 11:04-11:50
	5: 11:52-12:38
	6: 12:40-1:27
	7: 1:29-2:16
	8: 2:18-3:05

Hillside Elementary School Lunch Periods:

- Lunch/recess for Grade K, 1 & 2: 11:40 - 12:30 (50 minutes)
- Lunch/recess for Grades 3 & 4: 12:40 - 1:30 (50 minutes)

Tenakill Lunch Periods:

- Lunch/Recess for Grades 5 & 6: 11:04 - 11:50 (46 minutes)
- Lunch/Recess for Grades 7 & 8: 11:52 - 12:38 (46 minutes)

Total instructional time (minus lunch and recess):

HES: 5 hours 45 minutes

TMS: 5 hours 38 minutes

### **Guidelines for Remote Instruction**

In the event of a school closure for three days or longer, **we will follow the same school in-person schedule using a virtual format.** Teachers can maximize student learning and growth by using a live, synchronous delivery method for instruction. This will allow students to interact with the teacher and their peers in a virtual environment. At some times throughout the day, teachers may direct students to work independently or asynchronously, allowing the teacher time to work synchronously with small groups of students to provide differentiated instruction (similar to how small groups work during in-person instruction) and to assess student growth and learning.

## Access to Technology

- All instructional staff members have laptops with which they can provide instruction.
- Students in grades 5 - 8 have a school-issued Chromebook as part of the 1:1 initiative.
- We will provide PreK through grade 4 students with a Chromebook so everyone can access remote learning. A device pick-up time will be arranged for any student needing a Chromebook.
- If a student cannot access the Internet at home, we will provide a WiFi connection. All students in grades K-8 who require a device for home use will be provided with a Chromebook.
- Verizon mobile WiFi hotspots are available for students without access to the internet at home.
- Families can access low-cost or no-cost internet through the Altice Advantage Program. Families can apply here: <https://apply.alticeadvantageinternet.com/main>
- All students will use learning platforms that they are already using to sustain instruction: Google Classroom and Schoology.
- Students can receive technical support with devices and exchange equipment by contacting our Network Administrator, Vincent Salvati, at 201-768-3001, ext. 41134, or [salvati@nvnet.org](mailto:salvati@nvnet.org). Equipment exchange will be available regardless of building closure.

## Delivery of Fully-Virtual or Remote Learning

The need for virtual or remote learning may vary throughout the school year. 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 directive by the health department or officer to institute a public health-related closure. We may need to pivot to remote learning for students who are required to isolate or quarantine. We may need to pivot to fully virtual learning if there is a school-wide outbreak of contagious disease or if the Governor issues an executive order to transition to remote or virtual learning.

Teachers will provide students with a link to access their virtual classes if there is a pivot to fully virtual learning. Teachers will provide instruction daily using the 2024-2025 in-person period schedule.

Teachers will assess students' progress toward mastery of the lesson's objective through various formative and summative assessments.

## **Addressing Special Education Needs During Virtual or Remote Instruction**

Closter Public Schools will continue to meet our obligations to students with disabilities to the greatest extent practicable. During virtual or remote learning, Individualized Education Programs (IEP) and 504 Plans will continue accordingly with appropriate accommodations as documented in each student's specific plan. Case managers will communicate with families (via phone calls, email, or home visits) to ensure services are implemented in accordance with IEPs. Case managers and teachers will allow parents to pick up necessary resources (books, materials, manipulatives, etc.) to give students appropriate special education access and support.

Related services (Speech, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, etc.) will be provided to students remotely to the extent possible. If sessions are not provided when school operates virtually, all sessions will be made up when school resumes in-person. Related service providers will maintain logs of sessions to ensure students receive the services dictated by their IEP or 504 plan. Upon a return to in-person instruction, IEP teams will review student data and student progress to determine whether critical skills were lost during the period in which the school district delivered virtual or remote instruction to students and will determine the need for additional services to address the student's needs.

IEP meetings will be held either in-person or virtually, depending on the guidance of the New Jersey Department of Education and the New Jersey Department of Health during any health emergencies. We will continue to use Zoom for virtual meetings whenever requested; however, our goal is to have in-person meetings if possible. Meetings are defined as IEP meetings, evaluations, and other meetings to identify, evaluate, and/or re-evaluate students with disabilities.

## **Addressing English Language Learner Needs During Virtual or Remote Instruction**

Classroom teachers and English Language Learner (ELL) teachers will collaborate to ensure a virtual learning program aligned with State and Federal mandates to meet the needs of ELL Learners.

Teachers will ensure timely and effective communication with caregivers and parents of ELL students, including translation materials, interpretive services, literacy level-appropriate information, digital learning platforms, and other technology resources. Communication from the district and school administrators will offer translation into the three languages most frequently spoken by Closter families: Hebrew, Korean, and Spanish.

As with in-person instruction, our teachers will use various learning strategies, including differentiated instruction and linguistic scaffolding, to ensure the same standard of education as their non-ELL peers.

We also have professional development opportunities for teachers to learn about social-emotional learning, which could be used with students affected by forced migration from their home countries, if necessary.

## **Attendance Plan**

School district policies for attendance and instructional contact time will accommodate opportunities for synchronous and asynchronous instruction while ensuring the requirements for a 180-day school year. Our goal is to provide synchronous instruction whenever possible. We expect that students will participate in virtual or remote learning each day.

Students must log into the teacher's virtual classroom by the assigned time listed on page three. Teachers will take student attendance via Real-Time, and the school secretaries will coordinate remote attendance. If a student does not attend virtual or remote learning, the secretary or school nurse will contact the student's parents via telephone to determine what prevents the student from attending school virtually.

Student attendance is required, and actions will be taken if students are absent from school according to our district policy on attendance. Student

participation is vital to ensuring student academic progress. Teachers or administrators will contact parents of students who need to meet expectations for attendance or participation during virtual or remote instruction.

## **Facilities Plan**

During virtual or remote instruction, our maintenance and custodial staff will be essential personnel and will report to the school each day (unless otherwise prohibited by direction from the New Jersey Department of Education or the New Jersey Department of Health). The maintenance and custodial staff will maintain all building systems for safety and continuity to avoid system failures. They will conduct building walkthroughs, maintain facilities, disinfect, and make any needed repairs while the school buildings are not occupied by staff and students.

## **Food Service and Distribution**

Closter has a very small number of free or reduced-price lunch students and does not have a contracted food service vendor. To ensure that free/reduced-price lunch students can continue to receive the necessary nutritional sustenance, we will provide the necessary meals through a local vendor in accordance with state and federal mandates.

## **Essential Employees**

If we are required to transition to virtual or remote learning, all employees will be considered essential. Based on the circumstances, the Superintendent will determine whether district and school administrators, network administrator, faculty, certificated staff, school nurses, secretaries, maintenance, and custodial staff will report to work in person (if permitted by the NJDOE and NJDOH guidelines) or work from home.

## Other Considerations

As indicated on the NJDOE LEA Checklist for Virtual or Remote Instruction Programs for the 2024-2025 school year, the following considerations are explained below:

- a. Accelerated learning opportunities—Each school has an enrichment program (Hillside Enrichment Program and Tenakill Enrichment Program). These programs will be delivered during virtual or remote instruction. Our rigorous STEM programs will also be delivered as part of the students' virtual or remote instruction.
- b. Social and emotional health of staff and students—We provide SEL programs through the ICARE program at Hillside School and the Advisory Program at Tenakill Middle School. Our school wellness teams have designed programs for teachers and students, which are delivered on Wellness Wednesdays. These programs would continue during virtual or remote learning.
- c. Title I Extended Learning Programs—Currently, we have a small number of qualifying Title I students. We do offer Academic Assistance Programs after school and would consider offering them during virtual or remote learning time while trying not to have excessive screen time for students.
- d. 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs - Our district is not a rural or inner-city community, and we are not eligible for this program. However, we have embedded 21st-century skills into our curriculum.
- e. Credit recovery - Our program is not credit-bound as a PreK through Grade 8 district.
- f. Other extended student learning opportunities - Our PTO offers enrichment courses for students after school, and we would coordinate with them to offer these courses virtually.
- g. Transportation—We provide transportation services through Region III and in accordance with N.J.S.A. If transportation is required during virtual or remote learning, we will provide it.
- h. Extra-curricular programs—We offer athletic and extracurricular clubs to students, primarily in middle school. These programs will be offered depending on the guidelines set forth by the NJDOE and NJDOH during any health emergency that would necessitate emergency virtual or remote learning.
- i. Childcare - We offer before-school and after-school care programs through a third-party vendor. We wouldn't need these programs if



schools operated virtually or remotely. However, if the NJDOE and NJDOH guidelines permitted students to be in the school building, we would coordinate with our service provider to provide childcare for parents.

- j. Community programming—We work with the Closter Nature Center to provide programs to students when in-person instruction is taking place. During virtual or remote instruction, we would coordinate with the Closter Nature Center to determine if any programs could be offered virtually or, if possible, in person.

## Contact Information

Remote Instruction Inquiries:	Vincent McHale, Superintendent 201-768-3001, ext. 41116 <a href="mailto:mchalev@nvnet.org">mchalev@nvnet.org</a>
Health Inquiries:	Kristen Haenelt, HES School Nurse 201-768-3001, ext. 41121 <a href="mailto:haeneltk@nvnet.org">haeneltk@nvnet.org</a>  Virginia McHale, TMS School Nurse 201-768-3001, ext. 42222 <a href="mailto:TMSNurse@nvnet.org">TMSNurse@nvnet.org</a>
Special Education Inquiries	Lori Cohen, Director 201-768-3001, ext. 41120 <a href="mailto:cohenl@nvnet.org">cohenl@nvnet.org</a>
School Level Inquiries	Dianne Smith, HES Principal 201-768-3001, ext. 41117 <a href="mailto:dmsmith@nvnet.org">dmsmith@nvnet.org</a>  Kristen Zanin, HES Asst. Principal 201-768-3001, ext. 41131 <a href="mailto:zanink@nvnet.org">zanink@nvnet.org</a>  Christine Cipollini, TMS Principal

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