

Paramus | Instructional Continuity

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County: Bergen District: Paramus Chief School
Administrator: Dr. Michele Robinson Phone Contact:
201– 261– 7800 x 3000 Email Contact:
mrobinson@paramuschools.org

Guidelines for the Paramus COVID-19 Home Instruction Virtual School Days

If Paramus is closed by order of the NJDOH or local Public Health Officer via a written order, we will implement the virtual school option, pending county educational office approval. This solution will make use of the strong technology-based backbone of the school district, the pre-planning by the staff, and student home-based Internet access. The Paramus Public School District will create meaningful and continuous home instruction for students during a written, declared public health emergency in the event that we are told that schools must close, and have it still “count” under State requirements for the 180-day mandate. [State guideline memo, March 5, 2020]

District Narrative: Paramus is a district serving 3,814 students. Of those students, 269 are low socioeconomic students (LSE), 134 are English Language Learners (ELL), and 753 students with disabilities.

Preparation:

All instructional staff will prepare lessons and learning activities that will be communicated to students via Shared Google Folders as well as the district’s Google Classroom Learning System for grades 3-12. Due to the flexible nature of the at-home school day, learning will be asynchronous and completed over the course of the day. While staff members may want to designate specific times to offer student feedback, there will be no set times in which classes must meet online. Each class should have an engagement section and/or a reflection/collaboration piece optimally lasting approx. 15-20 minutes per day and the amount of time spent on course-related work should be equivalent to a regular class period. Students should have the lesson available to them at or prior to the regular start of the school day each morning. Weekly planning and projects are highly encouraged, but scaffolded for students into daily time management suggestions.

Accountability:

- To ensure that students get credit for “attendance”, as students or their parents communicate with their

teacher via Google Classroom and/or email, the teacher will mark that student “present”. Parents will also be asked to call their school nurses/main offices to report if their children are too ill to participate in learning activities, which will then report them as “absent”.

- Every day, classes will run during the typical school day.
- Teachers will be available to communicate with students/parents throughout the day via email, document-based comments, screencasting. Additionally, it is reasonable to expect that if a student communicates with the teacher via email that the teacher would respond either during their regular class time or within a reasonable amount of time via email during the school day. The goal of the day is student-teacher interaction and peer-to-peer collaboration, as the vast majority of our staff so often do already.

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- All lessons will be aligned with district-approved curriculum and New Jersey Student Learning Standards. All lessons will have a student learning objective as per district instructional guidelines. All lessons will have means to check for student understanding of that objective and offer specific student feedback.

English, Social Studies, Science, Business, Math, World Language, S.T.E.M.

Lessons will be run asynchronously. The lesson will need to have peer and/or teacher interaction. To keep the approach as manageable as possible for students, we will stick to tools that students and teachers already use with proficiency. Teachers will not be permitted to simply assign a reading or a worksheet without interaction as the lesson for the day. Examples of tools that could be used lessons may include

- Collaborative writing in a **Google Doc** with teacher feedback (written comments or verbal comments using add-ons like **Kaizena**).
- An **EdPuzzle video** where students provide feedback and receive feedback.
- Using **Padlet** for a classroom brainstorm or posting.
- Using the discussion features in **Google Classroom**.
- Have the teacher demonstrate a task (i.e. experiment, solving a math problem) via **Screencastify** and then have students have a reflective dialogue with the teacher and/or peers about their results in **Google Classroom** or a **Google Doc**.
- Have the class create a class **Google Slides** explaining a concept or presenting claims and evidence (each student makes a slide) and the teacher provides feedback on the task.

- Create a **Google Form** with questions for students to assess or poll. (videos & images can be added)
- Shared class notes using **Google Docs** based on a teacher presentation.
- Online read-alouds and questioning via **Screencastify**
- Leveled reading assignments and tracking utilizing tools like **Raz Kids** and **Newsela Pro**
- Use of digital formative assessment tools like **Edulastic, Socrative, Peardeck, and Nearpod** to measure student progress
- Utilize logic-enhanced/Interactive math programs that are individualized/student-centered (**IXL, XtraMath, Study Island**)
- Use of digital subscription-based tools to supplement classroom instruction (**Brain Pop, Science Flix, Book Flix, Pebble Go, Kids Discover!, Gizmos**)
- **Online textbooks** with interactive features for elementary, middle, and high school courses

Physical Education

Classes not currently in health will shift to a health focus. Physical Education/Health teachers will take a grade level focus that is in the curriculum and focus lessons on hygiene and germ transmission prevention as well as lessons that complement the work they have already done with mindfulness, stress reduction, and mental health awareness. Students should also be encouraged to log physical activity/exercise at home if they are otherwise healthy as a supplemental activity.

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Visual and Performing Arts and 21st Century Life and Careers

The focus of these classes is on performance, creation, collaboration, and creativity. Students will have the opportunity to reinforce the skills and techniques they had been working on in class and also try something different by utilizing digital tools and resources they have available as well as collaboration via Google Hangouts, for example, to make this happen. In music, for example, students will create and post audio clips of instrumental/vocal music excerpts, scale studies, and etudes. Students will also, for example, listen to a recording, watch a video and use forum-style communication to have a “book club” discussion about them. Students can write program notes for pieces in their repertoire, use Screencastify or other tools to make recordings, assign a solo

song to the entire chorus to learn, plan a choral concert project. Give students a budget, time frame links to JwPepper and go! Book Club: Compare/contrast YouTube performances of the same work/different choirs. In fine arts, they will upload visual and digital artworks for class critiques and discussion, create 10 creative recipes from the food found in their pantry to share with their culinary class and teacher via Google Classroom. Dancers can read a poem, and create a simple choreographic piece portraying their interpretation of the poem followed by an artist's statement of their work. In theater, they will use the Discussion Board, Forum, or other function (platform-specific), in order to create unique threads for each class session or class reading and present prompts that might otherwise have given for in-class discussion. Students will respond to the prompt - and then follow up by asking each student to respond to at least one other person.

Special Services Accommodations

- Collaborative teachers will co-plan the lessons with their teaching partners via email and Google Meet.
- Collaborative teachers will proactively reach out to students with IEPs in their class to provide additional support and appropriate modifications and accommodations.
- Instructional assistants will also be in touch with their assigned students to provide support.
- Resource program teachers will plan with their grade level colleagues and make appropriate modifications for their students to be shared directly with students and parents.
- Special program teachers (LLD, ABA) will work with CST members, BCBA's, and related service providers, and Ms. Margaret Damiano (Supervisor of Special Services), and the case managers to plan appropriate, supported, and scaffolded activities for their students.
- Specialized materials, communication devices, and assistive technology supports will remain in place for students. Online platforms, like RethinkEd, IXL, and Learning Ally, will be utilized.
- Related services will be provided throughout the school closure via paper-based packets, online platforms, and consultation with parents, teachers, and students. Conference calls during regularly scheduled therapy times for all related services will happen on a daily basis. For students who present with significant disabilities, limited options for 1:1 clinic-based services will be available. If a child does not receive services after an extended period of time, the IEP team will convene and make an individualized determination whether and to what extent compensatory services may be needed, consistent with applicable requirements, including to make up for any skills that may have been lost through a mutually agreeable time frame and format with the parent.

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Child Study Team Members and School Counselors

Ms. Margaret Damiano (Supervisor of Special Services) and Ms. Tiffany Goodson (Supervisor of School Counseling) will share expectations with their respective departments for ways to be productive and engage with students during this day. Counselors and CST members' responsibilities will continue, holding the required meetings for IEP evaluation planning, eligibility, amendments, and annual reviews, and course selection virtually. Staff members will document work-flow and establish available office hours for students and/or parents to communicate with them. Additionally, counselors and CST members will be responsible for staying in touch with students whom we know might find this type of learning a challenge.

Out of District/Homebound Student Coordination

- Several communications regarding special education programming have been sent home to parents unique to the type of program in which they are enrolled. Case managers will continue phone conferences with parents and utilize secured online platforms to converse. In some circumstances, contracted providers will continue to provide service to students with special needs. Providers have also developed a plan to provide remote instruction, counseling services, and consultation via phone conference. Providers have access to a conference call translation services for meetings, counseling sessions, and parent consultations.
- Nursing services will be available throughout the closure period to respond to parent questions and concerns, as well as address any medical issues that arise for our students who are medically fragile. Attendance and health will be monitored for these students. Supportive services and consultation with the school nurse will be provided. Where appropriate, contracted nursing services for medically fragile homebound students will remain in place given the proper health assurances.
- For students with disabilities who receive programs and services in out of district placements, we have been in continual contact with the various schools for disabilities and programs that serve our students in order to be updated on their school closings or necessary changes to the services provided. The Supervisor of Special Services has confirmed access to remote learning opportunities as well as the provision of related services for students enrolled in out of district placements.
- The Paramus Board of Education utilizes Region and Jointure transportation services for students enrolled in Out of District placements, rather than BOE buses so transportation is always readily available in the event of a closure. Paramus students enrolled in alternate placements will continue to attend their program as long as the school is not under a mandate for closure. The Director of Transportation notifies the appropriate vendor should we become aware of a school closure.

Building Principals & Supervisors

Administrators will remain in communication with their teachers throughout the day and regularly monitor instructional activities. They are available to troubleshoot technical and instructional issues and offer advice and

suggestions. In addition, regular virtual meetings will be set up amongst the administrative team to ensure that there are open lines of communication to ensure the consistent delivery of instruction and to efficiently address common areas of concern.

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Students Without Wifi or Device Access

Prior to any school closures, a survey was sent out to all students and staff to identify anyone with device or service access issues. Staff or students without wifi access have been identified and provided with help to get individual access by the district as part of our 1:1 program. Most of our resources and programs are also accessible via smartphone. Elementary students and staff without computers will be provided with Chromebooks. Additionally, students will be provided with hard-copy resources and plans upon request.

Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch

We have been in communication with our food service vendor, Pomptonian. In the event of a school closing under the state criteria, Pomptonian will provide Grab-and-Go meals per day at Paramus High School for the students eligible for nutrition benefits. Meals will begin on the first date of closure and will continue throughout the entire closure period.

Bias and Stigma associated with COVID-19

Understanding that COVID-19 could bring unwanted bias or stigma upon certain ethnic and religious groups, our district will be hyper-aware of student behavior and utilize prevention, response, and educational strategies to prevent or combat bias and stigma associated with the virus.

Conclusion

In sum, the Paramus Public School District virtual days will work because although shutting a school down for a public health emergency may be new to us, the tools and strategies that we will be employing are not. We have been a 1:1 district for over 3 years and teachers currently use Google Docs and Google Classroom extensively in their instruction. Our staff has acquired and employs skills that make us a leading district in terms of our innovation and readiness to employ this meaningful instruction. We are more than happy to share our plans and

recommendations with other districts and leaders as warranted.