



## Chapter 27 Emergency Virtual/Remote Instruction Plan SY 2024-25

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 to the Commissioner of Education.

At Rock Brook School the *Chapter 27 Emergency Virtual/Remote Instruction Plan*, is known as our **Digital Distance Learning Plan (DDLDP)**. The DDLDP would be implemented during a school closure lasting more than three consecutive school days due to a declared state of emergency, a declared public health emergency, or a directive by an appropriate health agency or officer to institute a public health-related closure. A day of virtual or remote instruction, implemented under our DDLDP, would be the equivalent of a full-day of on-site instruction.

As an APSSD we have a close and collaborative working relationship with our sending districts and have regular communication with case managers, district supervisors and directors of student services. Thus, the need to implement our DDLP during a temporary school closure would be immediately communicated with all district contacts.

### **RBS DDLP Summary**

#### *\*Technology Platform - All Learners:*

- All students have a dedicated, internet capable device. (Chromebooks for students and ThinkPads for staff)
- Assignments will be provided via the *Google Classroom* centralized platform.
- In addition to academics, students will also receive direct instruction on virtual classroom norms, procedures, etiquette and good digital citizenship practices.
- Families will receive detailed information and reminders on navigating Google Meets and Google Classroom assignments at the beginning of any needed school closure.
- Google Meets will be used to schedule, implement and monitor student attendance and participation during remote instruction.
- Attendance will be taken when students/families log-in to Google Classroom each day.

*\*Instruction - All Learners:*

- All instruction and therapeutic services will be delivered to the fullest extent possible in accordance with student IEPs.
- Related services (PT/OT/Speech/Counseling) and school specials (physical education, art, and music) will be provided remotely.
- Classroom Teaching Assistants and 1:1 Instructional Paraprofessionals will continue to provide services for students.
- Online social and emotional supports will be provided to parents/families, as needed, by our school counselor, school behavior team and BCBA.
- Specific supports for families and students related to executive functioning skills and navigating remote learning will be provided as needed.

*\*Special Notes Related to Technology Device Access and Connectivity*

A device and connectivity survey was completed as part of our original school closure plan (March 2020) and updated annually. All students have access to high-speed internet connectivity and our school inventory of devices far exceeds student enrollment. During a school closure, devices and internet connectivity would be monitored through student participation in live Google Meet sessions and devices would be replaced as needed to ensure no loss of instructional time.

**Equitable Access and Opportunity**

Long before the original state mandated COVID-19 school closures in 2020, Rock Brook School had already made a commitment to a staff and student “Tech for All” initiative. A significant purchase prior to the start of the 2019-2020 school year resulted in a device for every student and staff member in the school. We continue to maintain sufficient reserves of technology and know that all staff and students have high-speed connectivity. Thus, we have no concern about having to revert to virtual instruction via our DDLP at any time.

As occurs during normal operating procedures, teachers will balance student screen time through developmentally appropriate use of mini-lessons, small group strategy sessions, and student-teacher conferences. Google Classroom and Google Meets will be used as our primary platform to facilitate synchronous and asynchronous instruction. If a student does not participate in online instruction or fails to submit an assignment, staff will contact the parent directly to determine whether or not there is a student illness or if there is a device or connectivity issue that needs to be resolved.

During a school closure all staff will work their full contract day and the student day will be no less than the state mandate of four instructional hours. For consistency, every effort will be made to provide related service therapies in the same time slots as provided during on-site instruction. If needed, staff will make arrangements for the provision of paper-based learning tools to support individual students who demonstrate a need for support and modifications that cannot be addressed through available technology resources.

Student learning and progress toward meeting IEP goals will be tracked by teachers through benchmark assessments, district assessments, and standardized testing as mandated. Teachers will also use age-appropriate assessments to measure student success in all subject areas, varying from formative to summative assessments. All related services, speech, OT, PT, will be provided as per IEP mandates with an equivalent number of remote sessions/minutes as would be the case with an on-site provision of services.

In order to ensure that our Chapter 27 Emergency Virtual/Remote Plan meets all prescribed requirements, the following information is provided in an FAQ format that addresses every question provided in the *LEA Checklist for Virtual or Remote Instruction Programs* used to develop our Chapter 27 Plan.

## **RBS Response to LEA Checklist for Virtual or Remote Instruction Programs**

### Equitable Access and Opportunity to Instruction

#### **1. Is the LEA ensuring equitable access and opportunity to instruction for all students?**

Yes, we support all students with a variety of teaching modalities to address all individual needs as indicated in their IEP plans. Equitable access to learning is provided by a student-centered flexible curriculum designed to address IEP goals. Instruction is delivered using sequential, simultaneous, multi-sensory approaches.

#### **2. Does the program ensure that all students' age-appropriate needs are addressed?**

Yes. Progress is continuously measured through daily student logs, observations, and by assessing classroom work performance. Progress is also measured through context and compliance monitoring.

#### **3. Is the program designed to maximize student learning to the greatest extent possible?**

Yes. All students regardless of age and disability receive direct instruction that is highly individualized. As a result, the teaching is designed to maximize growth in meeting the goals included in each child's IEP. Synchronous and asynchronous learning plan options will maximize student growth and learning.

#### **4. Does the program describe how the LEA will continuously measure student growth and learning in a virtual or remote instruction environment?**

Yes. As noted, progress is continuously measured through daily student logs, observations, and by assessing classroom work performance.

#### **5. Does the program describe how the LEA will measure and address digital divide issues, including a lack of internet access, network access and/or sufficient access to devices?**

Yes. As noted, every student and staff member has a dedicated device and more than sufficient reserves are available in case of device failure or increased enrollment. Use and connectivity will be monitored daily by teachers and therapists. Student participation will take place through Google Meet sessions and support for remote learning will be provided to parents and students if needed. Any student or family requiring connectivity will be provided with internet access or a hotspot.

### Addressing Special Education Needs

#### **1. Does the program address the provision of virtual or remote instruction to implement Individual Education Programs (IEPs) for students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible, including accessible materials and platforms?**

Yes. Rock Brook ensures that all students receive direct instruction as it relates to classroom norms, procedures and etiquette, as well as appropriate digital citizenship practices. DDLP assignments will be provided using the Google Classroom centralized platform.

#### **2. Does the program address methods to document IEP implementation including the tracking of services, student progress, as well as provision of accommodations and modifications?**

Yes. The students IEP will serve to make sure the teachers and therapists are able to address individualized goals and objectives. In addition, staff will again use the IEP document to provide the needed accommodations and modifications.

**3. Does the program describe how case managers will follow up with families to ensure services are implemented in accordance with IEPs to the greatest extent possible?**

Yes. Contacts and/or exchanges with parents and families will take place regularly via email, phone call and virtual meetings. Workspace which includes Meet, Chat and Docs. Families already have, and will continue to receive, detailed information regarding the use of our various DDLP collaboration tools.

**4. Does the program address procedures to conduct IEP meetings, evaluations and other meetings to identify, evaluate and/or reevaluate students with disabilities?**

Yes. Communications with Child Study Teams and with case managers will take place primarily by email. IEP conferences, re-eval conferences as well as other meetings will take place via Google Meet. All participants including parents, district representatives, Rock Brook staff and students, if appropriate, will share information through Google Meet.

Addressing English language learners (ELL) Plan Needs

**1. Does the program include an English as a Second Language and/or bilingual education program aligned with State and Federal requirements to meet the needs of ELLs?**

Yes. Rock Brook currently has two ELL students. Our program is designed to improve English reading, writing, speaking and oral compensation. Students receive a minimum of 60 minutes daily of ESL instruction taught by a special education teacher and supported by a speech language pathologist.

**2. Does the program describe how the LEA communicates with families of ELLs including providing translation materials, interpretative services, and literacy level appropriate information?**

Yes. Communication with parents, both written and verbal, is provided by two of our bilingual staff. One is our Supervisor of Instruction and Curriculum and the other is a teacher assistant. Especially noteworthy is that our bilingual staff already serve as translators during annual reviews and various other parent meetings.

**3. Does the program include the use of alternate methods of instruction (that is, differentiation, sheltered instruction, Universal Design for Learning), access to technology and strategies to ensure ELLs access the same standard of education as non-ELL peers?**

Yes. Training of teachers who provide ELL instruction is done by our Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction. Strategies and techniques to meet language development across all curriculum areas are presented to all staff who work with ELL children. It is important that English language students do not learn the fundamentals of English in isolation but rather apply their developing skills whenever possible. Remote Google Classroom sessions, that include our bilingual staff, allow for this important integration. Also, we place an emphasis on the use of multiple modalities during the teaching and learning process. Almost all lessons involve the dimensions of writing, speaking, drawing, and listening. Scaffolding discussions using QSSSA - questioning, signal stem, share and assess – also helps to reinforce learning with English Language Learners.

**4. Does the program include training for teachers, administrators, and counselors to learn strategies related to culturally responsive teaching and learning, socio-emotional learning, and trauma-informed teaching for students affected by forced migration from their home country (e.g. refugee, asylee)?**

Yes. Same as above.

#### Attendance Plan Question

**1. Does the program address the LEA’s attendance policies, including how the LEA will determine whether a student is present or absent, how a student’s attendance will factor into promotion, retention, graduation, discipline, and any other decisions that will reflect the student’s performance?**

Yes. Attendance will be taken when the students/families log into Google Classroom each day. Attendance is recorded digitally and both parents and sending school district case managers are informed of absences. Discipline and behavioral issues will be addressed by our school counselor and services/support will be provided to students and parents. Decisions regarding retention, promotion and graduation are made by the IEP team and all factors will be given due consideration when determining a change in program. Communication between and amongst parties will take place using Google Meet or other collaborative tools.

**2. Does the program describe how the LEA communicates with the family when a student is not participating in online instruction and/or submitting assignments?**

Yes. If a student does not participate in online instruction or fails to submit an assignment, staff will contact the parent directly to determine whether or not there is a student illness or if there is a device or connectivity issue that needs to be resolved.

#### Safe Delivery of Meals Plan Question

**1. Does the program contain how the LEA will provide continued safe delivery of meals to eligible students?**

N/A. Due to the highly specialized needs of our students and the extensive list of pupil food allergies, Rock Brook School does not participate in any form of a commercially provided school lunch program. All students bring their own lunch from home, so a temporary school closure would have no impact. Additionally, no student at the school qualifies for free or reduced lunch.

#### Facilities Plan Question

**1. Does the program contain an outline of how buildings will be maintained throughout an extended period of closure?**

Currently Rock Brook School employs cleaning staff during the day when staff and students are in the building. Cleaning staff is also employed following school dismissal. If the building is closed for an extended period of time, evening cleaning will continue to take place in its present form. If the school has been directly affected by the closure, a deep cleaning, sanitization, and disinfection will take place prior to the re-opening of the building. Additionally, our HVAC system includes HEPA filtration. The system will be set on a “continuous run” cycle for air circulation during times of closure.

#### **Board Approval:**

The RBS Chapter 27 Emergency Virtual/Remote Instruction Plan was approved by the Rock Brook School Board of Trustees on **July 25, 2024**. The plan is posted on the school website and is viewable at any time by clicking on the following link: [www.rock-brook.org](http://www.rock-brook.org)