

# **Chapter 27 Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Programs 2023-2024**

**High Bridge School District  
Hunterdon County, New Jersey**



40 Fairview Avenue  
High Bridge, NJ 08829

Prepared:  
July, 2023

*Note: This plan has been sent to the Hunterdon County Office of Education and all sending districts.*

This plan is respectfully submitted by the High Bridge School District in collaboration with the Superintendents of Hunterdon County Public Schools.

**LEA Name: High Bridge School District**  
**School Year: 2023-2024**

**Superintendent: Dr. Gregory A. Hobaugh**

For the 2023-2024 school year, the High Bridge School District will continue with a traditional school year with full in-person instruction for all students. The school day will be the normal schedule. All athletics, extra-curricular activities, cafeteria, and transportation operations will run as in a traditional school year.

Below is an overview of the few COVID-19 protocols that will be in place for the 2023-2024 school year should the district be required to pivot to an all-virtual instruction platform due to an emergency lasting for three or more consecutive days.

## **1. Equitable Access and Opportunity to Instruction**

The LEA ensures equitable access and opportunity for instruction for all students.

### Academic Needs

- The District uses iReady, an adaptive online benchmark assessment for reading and mathematics to identify students who are not demonstrating the expected rate of improvement. This program ensures that all students' varied and age-appropriate needs are addressed.
- The iReady program is designed to maximize student growth and learning to the greatest extent possible. Synchronous learning plans will maximize student growth and learning. Asynchronous virtual or remote learning is not available unless the District is closed for an emergency for three or more consecutive days.
  - Should virtual instruction be required, the LEA will continuously measure student growth and learning in a virtual or remote instruction environment using Google and iReady assessment tools.
- Professional development will continue to be provided in use of remote programs and students will be provided with strategies to improve student outcomes.
- Summer programs will be implemented, particularly for struggling students and populations that are traditionally considered underserved and/or at-risk.
- Extended Day programs will also be provided for students experiencing delayed learning. Instruction will be tiered, targeted, and timebound to address the identified needs of students.

### Social Emotional Needs

- Professional development will be provided in youth mental health first aid (for mental health professionals). Title IV funds are to be used to provide instruction on techniques and strategies to improve student and staff wellness.
- Mental Health Support Programs will be put in place though to support student, staff, and faculty overall well-being.

---

## *Technology*

---

### **Technology: Supporting Digital Learning**

The District expanded our 1:1 device initiative to include all students from preschool through grade eight. Students in grades PK-8 were issued Chromebooks. All High Bridge School District students are provided access to remote instruction, sufficient broadband, and the technology required for virtual or remote instruction, should it be needed.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the District upgraded its technology infrastructure. The District is compliant with the Children's Internet Protection Act, which requires robust filtering of Internet content. In the District, the firewall is provided when students are off-campus, all network traffic is filtered through a software filtering product.

For economically disadvantaged students without an adequate connection to the Internet, the Technology Department will provide technical support to maximize existing connectivity, provide guidance for upgrading to low-cost internet programs, or when necessary, provide wifi hotspots with the help of North Hunterdon School District.

The LEA will continuously measure student growth and learning in a virtual or remote instruction environment.

### **Economically Disadvantaged Students and the Ongoing Digital Divide**

Every family will be supported by a team of staff members (principal, tech department member, counselor, etc.) to verify whether Internet access is available in the home and to problem-solve the best means for providing access if needed.

---

## *Addressing Special Education Needs*

---

### **Special Populations**

The District recognizes that certain populations of students were disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

The program addresses methods to document IEP implementation including the tracking of services, student progress, as well as provision of accommodations and modifications. Case managers will follow up with families to ensure services are implemented in accordance with IEPs to the greatest extent possible using Google Meet. The program addresses procedures to conduct IEP meetings, evaluations, and other meetings to identify, evaluate and/or reevaluate students with disabilities using Google Meet.

If virtual instruction is needed in the event of a three-day or longer school closure due to an emergency:

1. **Co-Teaching, Resource room (replacement), and self-contained special education classes:** (Autism, BD, LLD, MD) are responsible for providing instruction for all students in assigned courses. In-class support teachers are to work with the content area teacher to scaffold teaching-learning as appropriate, provide differentiated instruction, and for providing feedback to assigned students. Resource Room and Self-Contained special education teachers will provide support to students every school day using virtual learning.
2. **Special Education Services:** Students who receive special education services will complete virtual learning assignments posted online through forums such as Google Classroom. Modifications and accommodations for students with disabilities will be addressed, including the need for break-out sessions through virtual learning platforms and those stipulated in the IEP (i.e. modified assessments, graphic organizers, frequent check-ins).

Resource center teachers and self-contained special education classroom teachers are responsible for providing online instructional activities for students assigned to those courses. In some instances, such as preschool and kindergarten where devices are not available for all students, equally effective alternatives such as learning activity packets and manipulatives/classroom instructional tools will be provided. Students receiving related services (i.e. PT, OT, Speech, TOD) will have instructional activities that can be done at home in a virtual format.

Special Education teachers and related services providers will be provided with guidance from the special service administrators on the necessity of documenting student participation in learning activities and methods to monitor progress toward IEP goals and objectives. The district will utilize data on student progress toward IEP goals and objectives from the date the district closed, data from virtual learning, and will assess students promptly, upon return to on-campus instruction. This will assist in determining the need for compensatory education services.

3. **Child Study Team Case Management and Meetings.** Child Study Team members are responsible to check in on students whom they manage through consultation with educators and/or contact with families. They will fulfill responsibilities including writing reports, and continuing with IEP preparation and virtual meetings. IEP meetings will be held in a virtual or phone conference format in instances when in-person meetings are not permissible and where permissible, parents will have the option for in-person meetings upon request. Where feasible, the IEP draft is shared during the meeting using a shared screen option in Google Meet, so all participants are best able to participate in the meeting. IEPs and sign-in sheets from meetings are sent via email to the parent for review. In addition, CST members will also make contact with parents to support any extenuating, school-related situation (i.e., outside consultant services and support). To the extent possible, evaluations/re-evaluations that do not require face-to-face assessment, such as social assessments, are being scheduled with families and conducted virtually.

**The following will continue to occur virtually:**

- Child Study Team meetings will occur virtually or via phone conference.
- Evaluations/re-evaluations that do not require face-to-face assessment such as social history assessments will be scheduled with families and conducted virtually.
- Child Study Team members will complete the scheduling of meetings, report writing and scoring, and hold IEP meetings virtually.

4. ***Teacher Assistants.*** Teacher assistants will be responsible to do a “check-in” with teachers to provide support (i.e. assist in helping with preparing assignments/activities). Teacher assistants may also support the teacher by collaborating with students in online forums such as Google Classroom and creating videos of themselves reading to students.

---

## *Addressing English as a Second Language Needs*

---

### **English Language Learners**

The ESL Department services six English Language Learners. The ELL students are placed in a classroom with teachers who provide individual assistance to students. Instruction and communication are ongoing through Google Meet, phone calls, and emails. Parental communication with ELL families is conducted through the district website, Genesis Parent Portal, and email. Communication is translated for staff and ELL families through Google Translate.

This section includes the following:

- A description of the provision of ESL and bilingual education to meet the needs of ELLs.
- A description of how the district communicates with ELL families, including the translation of materials and directions.
- A description of how the district uses alternate methods of instruction, differentiation, access to technology, and strategies to troubleshoot ELL access challenges.

Certified teachers interact daily with their assigned English learners and use a variety of tools to meet the varied needs of learners.

Instruction includes key content, vocabulary, and the review of models/examples necessary to complete assignments. Breakout sessions follow for individuals and small groups of students and utilize Google Meet.

A great variety of online tools are used as part of the teaching and learning process. These tools vary based on the students' age, knowledge of technology, and academic level. The most common tools include Google Classroom. In addition, teachers use emails and phone calls to provide one-on-one instruction and feedback to parents.

Based on teacher feedback, obstacles to instruction include technical issues, lack of parent support for lesson completion, and maintaining student engagement.

The district communicates with families that have English as a second language using native speakers who serve as interpreters, letters that are written in families' native languages, and phone calls with families and native speakers.

The program includes an English as a Second Language and/or bilingual education program aligned with State and Federal requirements to meet the needs of ELLs. The program includes the use of alternate methods of instruction, access to technology, and strategies to ensure ELLs access the same standard of education as non-ELL peers. These programs 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.

---

## *Communication and Record-Keeping*

---

### **Report Cards**

Report cards will be issued as per the District's published schedule and following established District procedures.

In grades PK-2, teachers will keep parents/guardians updated on students' academic progress by sharing student work, digital communication .

In grades 3-8, teachers will input individual assignments into Genesis, which will allow families to monitor the quality completion of class assignments and tests.

### **Assessments & Missed Assignments**

The District will ensure that students have every opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they have acquired as a result of participating in the instructional program. This includes students who are absent due to illness.

During school closures, due to an emergency where the District is closed for three days or longer, students will be afforded the opportunity to complete missed assignments and makeup missed tests/quizzes within a reasonable time frame. Teachers may also exempt or modify assignments for students when they deem it appropriate.

### **Attendance Records**

The District continues to be committed to ensuring all students participate fully in the instructional process. The program addresses 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. Student attendance procedures are defined in Board Policy and Regulation 5200.

Students' attendance will be inputted into Genesis using District-approved codes. An additional code has been added for the specific purposes of tracking remote attendance, as required by the Department of Education.

### **Family Communication**

The LEA communicates with the family when a student is not participating in online instruction and/or submitting assignments. The District will communicate regularly with families and the community through a wide variety of tools and in both English and Spanish (as necessary):

1. Communication from families
  - a. Communication from families may take the form of written correspondence, email, phone calls, etc.
  - b. If parents/guardians express concerns regarding obstacles to their child's active participation in the teaching/learning process, these shall be reported to the administration and/or school counselors who will be responsible for collaborating on possible solutions.

- c. Teachers will report student issues with District-issued technology and internet access using the Google Form provided by the Technology Department and available on the District website.
- 2. Administration
  - a. Weekly Building Newsletters
  - b. District website
  - c. Social media - Twitter, Facebook, etc.
  - d. School Messenger - automated phone calls, texts, and emails
  - e. Virtual board meetings
- 3. Teachers
  - a. District website
  - b. Social media - Twitter, Facebook, etc.
  - c. Emails and phone calls
  - d. Class newsletters and sharing of student work
- 4. Technology Department
  - a. Student technical issues will be reported to the Technology Department via teachers' use of a Google Form.
  - b. Technology Department members will address student technical issues through the following:
    - i. The District's Technology website will provide directions to assist parents/guardians in addressing common technology issues (e.g. connecting the school device to a home network, etc.)
    - ii. Contacting parent/child to discuss the problem
    - iii. Providing directions to address the diagnosed problem
    - iv. Remotely accessing the student device
    - v. Providing replacement devices during Technology Swap appointments

---

### *Meal Distribution*

---

Food services have returned to regular operation as in a traditional school year. Should the District be closed for five or more consecutive days, meals will be planned accordingly to families who are identified as free and reduced lunch students.

#### **Breakfast/Lunch During Significant School or District Closures lasting for longer than five days~**

In the event of a significant school closure, lasting five days or longer, the District will work to put in place a system of meals to assist the community.

At High Bridge School District, we care deeply for each other, and the members of our community. In these difficult times, it is the finest tradition of the HBSD family to come together in support and solidarity. Families will be able to pick up "Grab and Go" meals at the front entrance of the High Bridge Elementary School (HBES). HBES is located at 40 Fairview Avenue, High Bridge, NJ.

The High Bridge School District will collaborate with Maschio's, our food service vendor, to provide school breakfast and lunches to students who qualify. Our plan is a "Grab and Go" distribution center. We will work in conjunction with the Hunterdon County services. Maschio's meals are made at the Maschio's commissary and then distributed to the school district. Upon drop off, in High Bridge, a High

Bridge employee will accept the meals. A roster system will be used to check off any student who comes to receive their meals during the time frame given.

The meals we are providing contain all 5 components per the USDA including fruit, vegetable, grain, meat/meat alternate, and dairy. The District has designed strategies to avoid distribution in settings where people might gather in a group or crowd, such as 'grab-and-go bagged lunches and in some cases, meal delivery.

**Meal distribution:**

1. Families will be able to pick up "Grab and Go" meals at the front entrance of the High Bridge Elementary School (HBES). HBES is located at 40 Fairview Avenue, High Bridge, NJ. Breakfast, for those eligible, and lunch pick up will be available between the hours of 8:30 AM and 10:30 AM for a "Grab and Go" meal pick up on designated days.

The health and safety of our students and staff is the District's top priority. The health of our students includes a healthy nutritional meal.

The District continues to re-evaluate the food and nutrition meal distribution process and adjust to meet the needs of our families. Our distribution process aims to keep everyone safe and provide food and nutrition for our eligible families.

To pick up "Grab and Go" meals, families should go to the main entrance of the High Bridge Elementary School. The family will be required to share with the "Grab and Go" distribution staff the student lunch identification number, family name, or student name. The District realizes that it could be difficult for some families to make their way to the school. To support families that are planning together for multiple family meal pick up, families that are picking up meals for neighbors, friends, or other family members need only the identifiable information listed above.

If a family is unable to pick up meals due to a transportation challenge or other emergent situation which limits the availability to travel for meal pick up, the family is asked to contact the child's building principal or school nurse through email.

**Safe Delivery of Meals (as needed in the event of all-virtual):**

1. Meals can be picked up at High Bridge Elementary School at 40 Fairview Avenue multiple times per week, to be determined based on the emergency situation.

**2. Maintaining Health and Safety**

**VACCINATION:**

Vaccination, including booster shots, remains the most critical strategy to protect students and staff and reduce interruptions in learning. Everyone who is eligible should be vaccinated and receive all recommended doses.

As a clarification from the NJ Department of Health, for children 5 through 17 years of age, a primary COVID-19 vaccine series consists of 2 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. For persons 18 and older, a primary series consists of the following:

- A 2-dose series of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or



- A single-dose COVID-19 vaccine (Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine)

CDC recommends that people remain [up to date](#) with their vaccines, which includes additional doses for individuals who are immunocompromised and [booster doses](#) at regular time points. The NJDOH states that “up to date” with vaccination means being fully vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2 **AND** having received all recommended additional doses, including booster doses when eligible. “Fully vaccinated” means being at least two weeks past the completion of a primary vaccination series. If schools are unable to determine the vaccination status of individual students or staff, those individuals should be considered not up to date.

If your child has been vaccinated for COVID-19, please consider sending in a copy of the vaccination record to the health office so that they may add it to your child's immunization file. The vaccine is not a requirement, but it is a great way to keep your student's records updated and all in one place should you need a copy for college.

### **MASKS:**

Masks remain optional in school for the 2023-2024 school year. Each student and staff member can make their own decision as to whether they want to wear a mask. We are asking everyone to respect each other's decision, whether they choose to wear a mask or not. In accordance with our district policy and Code of Conduct, bullying will not be tolerated.

Per the CDC, if your student tests positive for COVID-19 and returns to school after the required five-day isolation period, masks are recommended to be worn on days 6-10 after symptom onset or positive test result.

### **HAND WASHING AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE:**

We will continue to reinforce proper hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds to all students and employees. Touchless hand sanitizers are installed in classrooms and around the school. Teachers will also be reminded that the sharing of equipment and supplies is discouraged unless items can be cleaned between uses.

The District will provide reinforcement and the necessary resources to promote appropriate personal hygiene:

- Hand sanitizing stations will be available at entrances and exits of buildings, near lunch rooms and bathrooms. All hand sanitizer stations will be installed to meet ADA requirements, inspected regularly, and refilled when necessary with a cleanser with a minimum of 60% alcohol.
- Children ages 5 and younger will be directly supervised when using hand sanitizer.
- Signage in English and Spanish will remind and instruct students and staff on proper handwashing techniques will be provided.
- Signage in English and Spanish will remind and instruct students and staff on proper respiratory etiquette will be provided.

---

## *Facility-Related Considerations*

---

The LEA will ensure essential employees are identified and a list is provided to the county office at the time of the LEA's transition to remote or virtual instruction, should the need arise due to the school closure as a result of an emergency that lasts three or more consecutive days.

### **Custodial Support**

1. Daily cleaning of high-volume rooms: main office, health office, cafeteria, art, music, computers, library, health classroom, bathrooms, etc.
2. Periodic cleaning of high-contact surfaces (doors and knobs, handrails, bathroom fixtures, condiment dispensers, etc.)
3. Ensure bathroom sinks and soap dispensers are working.
4. During the closure, the custodial team is completing a deep clean of the school.

### **Cleaning of Buildings**

Preventative and proactive cleaning measures include

1. Daily wiping down of desks, furniture, bathrooms, and other high-volume touchpoints (door handles, railings, walls, phones, etc.) daily.
2. Disinfecting all areas multiple times per week.
3. Regularly changing air filters in our HVAC equipment.
4. Deep cleaning of the buildings each week.

### **CLEANING/DISINFECTION OF FACILITIES, AIRFLOW, AND VENTILATION:**

Enhanced cleaning protocols established in the 2020-2021 school year have continued. Common touch points such as door handles, knobs, railings, water fountains, etc. will be disinfected on a rotating basis throughout the school day. Custodial crews will continue to thoroughly clean and disinfect daily once students are dismissed.

The district recognizes the need to create additional passive air circulation and the introduction of increased outdoor air into the building to promote safety.

#### **Ventilation: Schools with Air Conditioning**

- HVAC units will be adjusted to allow airflow into the building as required by code, and windows may be opened when feasible.

#### **Ventilation: HVAC Maintenance Expectations**

- Routine spot checks of air exchanges will occur throughout the school year and will be logged.
- The district will replace filters at least two times a school year.

### **Cleaning and Healthy Facilities**

The district will ensure the safety and health of all students and staff by implementing the following practices:

- Custodial Staff will conduct daily cleaning and sanitizing of classrooms, restrooms, cafeterias, kitchens, and hallways.
- Custodial staff and/or Health and Hygiene Team members will ensure that restrooms and high-touch areas are cleaned/sanitized on a rotational basis during the school day.
- Custodial staff and Health and Hygiene Team Members will conduct periodic and/or necessitated deep cleaning using enhanced protocols.
- Custodial staff and Health and Hygiene Team Members will ensure that an adequate supply of hand soap, disinfecting wipes, and hand sanitizing gel are available in each classroom, near main entrances, and other high-use areas.

The District remains committed to providing additional daytime health/hygiene teams for essential operations and cleaning of high-touch areas.

**HEALTH SCREENING:**

Parents/caregivers are strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs of illness every day. Students who are sick (see symptom list below) should not attend school.

The same protocol applies to employees. Employees should monitor their symptoms and not report to work if they are not feeling well. If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, he/she needs to inform the school nurse and immediate supervisor.

Parents should not send students to school when sick. For school settings, CDC and NJDOH recommend that students with the following symptoms be promptly isolated from others and excluded from school:

- At least **two** of the following symptoms: fever (measure or subjective), chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion, or runny nose; **OR**
- At least **one** of the following symptoms: new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, new taste disorder.

For students with chronic illness, only new symptoms, or symptoms worse than baseline should be used to fulfill symptom-based exclusion criteria.

For COVID-19 testing locations, please visit the Hunterdon County Department of Health’s website: <https://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/Coronavirus/testingsite.html#other>

**POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 AND ISOLATION PERIOD:**

Any confirmed cases of COVID-19 should be reported directly to the school health office.

Isolation is still in effect for ill individuals or those who test positive for COVID-19 as follows:

1. Persons who test positive for COVID-19.
  - Stay home and isolate yourself from other people for at least 5 full days (day 0 is the first day of symptoms).
    - If symptoms resolve (fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication and other symptoms improve), isolation can end after 5 full days (i.e., on day 6).

- If symptoms persist (fever or if other symptoms have not improved), continue to isolate until fever-free for 24 hours without medication and other symptoms have improved.
2. Persons who test positive for COVID-19 but have no symptoms:
    - Stay home and isolate yourself from other people for at least 5 full days (day 0 is the day of the positive viral test).

Virtual learning is no longer provided for positive students in isolation. Students should contact teachers to keep up with schoolwork while they are out of school.

**Contact Tracing, Quarantining of Close Contacts, and Test to Stay Are No Longer Recommended:**

Per the updated guidance from the CDC released in August 2022, contact tracing of individual cases is no longer recommended for school settings. Our nurses will be monitoring for outbreaks or clusters, which will be reported to the NJ Department of Health.

Quarantining of students who are in close contact to a positive case is no longer recommended in school settings. Please monitor your child for COVID-like symptoms and get them tested if symptoms begin. If they test positive for COVID-19, they will be excluded from school for at least five days from symptom onset or positive case as outlined above.

**APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES WITH RESPECT TO THE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES**

The IEP team will review the physician's orders and other formal and informal data to determine whether any additional accommodations are required with respect to the health and safety policies to support the safe return and/or continuity of services and in-person attendance of students with disabilities. When it is determined that additional accommodations and support are needed, the student's IEP would be revised accordingly.

Teachers and staff will continue providing increased support for maintaining appropriate hygiene in regard to hand washing, sanitizing, and maintaining social distancing.

## **2. Ensuring Continuity of Services**

All students have returned to a full school day in the 2022-23 school year. All athletics, extra-curricular programs, and other programs such as food services will return to regular operation as in a traditional school year. If we are required to provide remote instruction due to an emergency all sports and extracurricular activities will be suspended. If remote instruction is extended for longer than three weeks

staff will attempt to facilitate virtual meetings for extracurricular activities (if appropriate) to the greatest extent possible.

The district will continue to provide any accelerated learning, Title I or any other extended learning opportunities to identified students via virtual instruction.

The district will continue to assess students' progress in key subject areas and identify where remediation is needed. Supplemental information will be provided to parents and students related to learning strategies to help students succeed. Please reach out to your child's counselor if you need any assistance or support.

The district's counseling departments will continue to focus on student mental health and continue to share resources with families to assist them in this area. District on-site childcare will be suspended during remote instruction, community programming and resources will be shared to the school families.

High Bridge School District is a non-transporting district.