

The Hopewell Valley Regional School District

Pandemic Crisis Preparedness Plan

Developed March 12, 2020

I. INTRODUCTION

In response to the directive from the New Jersey Department of Education, The Hopewell Valley Regional School District has developed this plan to educate its students in the event of a long-term school closure due to a pandemic outbreak.

On March 5, 2020, The New Jersey Department of Education provided districts with a Contingency Plan for Coronavirus which included steps for schools to follow in the event of a school closure. Below is a summary of the guidance provided in the NJDOE Broadcast :

- If a district receives a written directive from the DOH or local health agency to close and the district provides home and/or online instruction, the closure days will count toward the 180 minimum days required by the State. Districts must submit a plan to ECS
- If a district closes voluntarily (*without written directive from a health agency*), the closure days will not count toward the 180 minimum days even if home and/or online instruction is provided.
- If a parent selects to keep their child(ren) home, they are subject to the school's attendance policy.

The NJDOE is applying 6A: 16-10.1 regarding home instruction to meet the minimum expectations provided in the guidance. This home instruction must begin on Day 1 of the ordered closure for the day to count.

This plan will include:

1. Written directive from the DOH or local health agency ordering closure
2. Equitable access to services for all students
3. Provision of appropriate education for Special Education students
4. Appropriation of school nutrition benefits for eligible students

While the District understands it might not be able to operate fully, this plan will assist the District in continuing to provide students with an appropriate education.

II. PURPOSE

This plan provides guidance to families and staff in the Hopewell Valley Regional School District to maintain essential functions and services during a pandemic outbreak. This plan does not replace or supersede any laws or policies; it simply serves as a guideline to address additional concerns, challenges, and considerations specific to disease outbreak.

III. BACKGROUND

Over the past few weeks, our educational community has been keenly tracking information related to the outbreak of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

On Thursday, March 5, 2020, we received guidance from the New Jersey Department of Education that outlined the utilization of remote learning should a school closure be deemed necessary by the Department of Health and school officials.

On Friday, March 6, 2020, all Superintendents in Mercer County and all Mercer County Health Officials gathered to discuss emergency preparedness plans and to ensure a common understanding of the current New Jersey Department of Health and New Jersey Department of Education guidance.

Over the past weeks, district representatives have conferred to map out strategies for virtual instruction or remote learning experiences for our students, should there be a school closure. It is important to note that these are **preemptive** steps for a constantly evolving situation.

We continue to adhere to the detailed guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, the NJ Department of Health, and our local health officials. We have had extensive communications with the NJ Department of Education, as well as a conference call with Governor Murphy.

HVRSD will continue to follow guidance and direction by State and local health officials regarding the pandemic status in our area. Any health-related school closure must be made in direct consultation with and under the guidance of local or state health officials.

IV. **DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

The Hopewell Valley Regional School District supports 3,467 students in the District. Of those students, 648 (18.7%) are classified as students requiring special education services. 137 (3.9%) students are English Language Learners. The District also has 150 (4.5%) students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch.

V. **CONTINUITY PLANNING DURING A HEALTH RELATED CLOSURE**

This plan serves to ensure the continuity of educational services and that all members of the organization are informed of actions and/or modifications to this plan. During the time in which an infectious disease is emerging, importation notifications will be disseminated via the school district's instant alert system, posted on the district website, and posted on district social media accounts. Any questions regarding these messages should be directed to the district's Superintendent.

VI. **PANDEMIC RESPONSE**

A. **COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

The school district has experience with determining weather-related closures. However, determining a school closure, due to health-related reasons, requires a different process. While the function of closure follows a similar protocol, it is critical that any health-related

closure be made in direct consultation with and under the guidance of local or state health officials. This is a requirement if the school closure days will be counted toward the 180 day state requirement. The Superintendent will ensure all information regarding the district's state of organizational readiness is communicated to the school community.

B. PANDEMIC RESPONSE TEAMS

As the District receives guidance that a pandemic outbreak is imminent, the Superintendent will be responsible for organizing the following teams to plan and coordinate:

- Crisis Response Team (in the event of traumatic loss during the pandemic)
 - Superintendent of Schools
 - Assistant Superintendent
 - Director of Curriculum and Instruction
 - Supervisor of Counseling
 - District administration and staff as deemed necessary
 - Members of the Building and District Crisis Response Team
 - Counselors
 - School Nurses
 - Members of the Child Study Team
 - Traumatic Loss Coalition
 - First Responders – Police, Fire, EMT, etc.
 - Curriculum Planning Team
 - Director of Pupil Services
 - Supervisors, Directors, Assistant Principals, and Principals
 - Classroom Teachers
- Special Education Planning Team
 - Director of Curriculum and Instruction
 - Director of Pupil Services
 - Supervisors, Directors, Assistant Principals, and Principals
 - Classroom Teachers
- Communications Team
 - Superintendent of Schools
 - Assistant Superintendent
 - District Registrar
- Operations Team
 - Building and Grounds
 - Transportation
 - Food Services
 - Business Office
 - Payroll and Accounts Payable
 - Technology
- Security Team
 - Campus Safety Officers

VII. CONTINUITY PLAN

A. ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Regardless of the duration of a pandemic outbreak, the school district will work to continue to educate our students. If schools are forced to shut down due to a health-related closure, and the state recognizes the need to count virtual/remote school days, the school district will commence alternative learning days in order to provide ongoing home instruction to students.

B. EQUITABLE ACCESS STATEMENT

The Board of Education shall work to ensure the District's needs for achieving equity in educational programs that includes a cohesive set of policies, programs, and practices that ensure high expectations and positive achievement patterns, as well as equal access to education opportunities for all learners.

The Board of Education shall ensure that the District's curriculum and instruction are aligned to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. In the case of a pandemic outbreak or health-related closure, the Hopewell Valley Regional School District recognizes the importance of continuing to educate its students. While the District understands it might not be able to operate fully, this plan will assist the District in continuing to provide students with educational learning opportunities aligned to the NJSLS and that meet individual students' IEP, 504, and I&RS accommodations and modifications.

C. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

EDUCATIONAL PLAN

Given our previous experience with E-Learning days during a snow closure, HVRSD is uniquely positioned to provide students with an authentic and engaging remote learning experience. In grades K-2, the district has a multitude of learning platforms including our remote/virtual learning programming that can be expanded to ensure continuity of instruction. Teachers and students will continue to utilize the OnCourse Student Information System and other web-based tools designed to promote online communication and collaboration.

K-2 Teacher Expectations

A. Teacher responsibilities to support students:

Every staff member is responsible to support students assigned to them for the current school year. Responsibilities include:

- a. Checking and respond to parent emails
- b. Providing feedback as appropriate to students/families

- c. Collaborating with other grade levels and subject related teachers as needed for consistency for optimization in planning and lesson design
 - d. Teachers along with specialists will provide 4 hours of learning experiences daily
- B. A series of learning experiences have been created for students by grade level and/or course. These experiences will be made available to families via a direct email from their building principal at the elementary level and via OnCourse at the secondary level. Further communication regarding lessons should take place between teacher and family. Provisions will be differentiated for various technology aptitude levels for students, parents/guardians, and caregivers.

3-5 Teacher Expectations

- A. Teacher responsibilities to support students:
Every staff member is responsible to support students assigned to them for the current school year. Responsibilities include:
 - a. Checking and respond to parent emails
 - b. Providing feedback as appropriate to students/families
 - c. Collaborating with other grade levels and subject related teachers as needed for consistency for optimization in planning and lesson design
 - d. Teachers along with specialists will provide 4 hours of learning experiences daily
- B. A series of learning experiences have been created for students by grade level and/or course. These experiences will be made available to families via a direct email from their building principal at the elementary level and via OnCourse at the secondary level. Further communication regarding lessons should take place between teacher and family. Provisions will be differentiated for various technology aptitude levels for students, parents/guardians, and caregivers.

Middle and High School Teacher Expectations

This is a unique time, and the most important consideration is that staff, students, and families stay healthy. The focus should be on learning, not covering curriculum. Staff should follow these guidelines when planning learning experiences:

- a. Proceed with a common sense approach.
- b. Be available for students during the corresponding hours that their classes meet (*see “office hours” ideas below).
- c. Students will engage in four hours of instruction per day.
- d. High School classes will be taught on an “Day 1” or “Day 2” day schedule
- e. Due to the existing “A” day/“B” day schedule, Middle School classes will be taught on a “Day 1A,” and “Day 2B” schedule.
- f. High School and Middle School teachers should prepare assignments for the equivalent of 2-3 class periods per week.
- g. Materials are to be uploaded and sent out to students using OnCourse Classroom.

- h. Provide feedback via OnCourse Classroom as well any other technology tools available.
- i. Assess so that students receive feedback, which will also help to preclude large assessments upon return.
- j. Provide flexible due dates. Work can be accepted upon students return to school.
- k. If a student is not submitting work, teachers should check in with the student /parent via email.

Guidelines for Students and Families: Middle and High School Level

This is a unique time, and our main goal is that staff, students, and families stay healthy. With this being said, students and families should follow these guidelines:

- Students are expected to be present (virtually) during their assigned class period when possible. The chart below will be utilized to determine the class sequence. Upon the enactment of a school closure due to health-related reasons, an official schedule will be placed on the district website and emailed to students and parents.
- Students will be able to complete work on their own schedule but will have real time access to teacher feedback.
- Students should follow teachers’ instructions in OnCourse Classroom.
- Students will receive feedback via OnCourse Classroom from their teachers.
- Students are reminded to hit **“Submit”** when completing assignments via OnCourse Classroom to turn in completed assignments.
- Students should submit questions to their teachers during designated class time via OnCourse or email.

High School Remote Learning “Office Hours”

9 AM - 1 PM

Days 3/5/7/9: Periods 1-4	Days 4/6/8/10: Periods 5-8
Period 1: 9-10AM Period 2: 10-11AM Period 3: 11-12PM Period 4: 12-1PM	Period 5: 9-10AM Period 6: 10-11AM Period 7: 11-12PM Period 8: 12-1PM

Middle School E-Learning “Office Hours”

9 AM - 1 PM

Day 3 / 7 A Day: Periods 1-4	Day 4 / 8 A Day: Periods 5-7 & Flex	Day 5 / 9 B Day: Periods 1-4	Day 6 / 10 B Day: Periods 5-7 & Flex
Period 1: 9-10AM Period 2: 10-11AM Period 3: 11AM-12PM Period 4: 12-1PM	Period 5: 9-10AM Period 6: 10-11AM Period 7: 11AM-12PM Flex Open Hours: 12-1PM	Period 1: 9-10AM Period 2: 10-11AM Period 3: 11AM-12PM Period 4: 12-1PM	Period 5: 9-10AM Period 6: 10-11AM Period 7: 11AM-12PM Flex Open Hours: 12-1PM

***Office hours - teachers will be available to students in the form of:**

- Google hangout/meet
- Checking email
- Responding to students and giving feedback

D. SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN

It is imperative the District provide an appropriate education for Special Education students during a period of pandemic outbreak. We will make every effort to meet the requirements for teacher-student contact time for students with disabilities via distance learning. Student progress will be monitored and feedback provided online by special education teachers when appropriate, with the opportunity to communicate directly during scheduled times. Upon returning to school, the IEP team will determine if additional services are required. IEP meetings will be held as appropriate to determine if compulsory education services are needed to address an individual student’s progress toward learning goals and objectives.

All ICR, RC, LLD classes, Grades K – 12

Students will continue as usual per general classroom instruction by the teacher(s). Special Education teachers will modify and adapt as appropriate to student IEPs. They may contact the student and/or parent or guardian with specific directions and support

Preschool Programming

Programming to be continued using virtual/distance learning platforms. IEP goals will be addressed to the best of their ability.

LLD/BD/MD/Autism Programming, K - 5

Programming to be continued via Google Meet and other district approved virtual/remote learning platforms. IEP goals will be addressed to the best of their ability. The Special Education Teachers will provide individualized programming for each child and will communicate directly with each family.

BD/MD/Autism Programming, Grade 6 – Post Graduation

Instruction will take place via OnCourse Classroom, Google Hangout, Google Meet, and other district approved virtual/remote learning platforms. IEP goals will be addressed to the best of their ability. The Special Education Teachers will provide individualized programming for each child and will communicate directly with each family.

OT/PT/Speech

15-20 minutes/service/week/student. Therapists will review all options for group or individual services. They will develop a list of activities that can be addressed by virtual/remote learning in a home environment. A list of items that are easily accessible and may be used in the event of sudden closure will be distributed to parents to utilize at home for instruction. Articulation packets may be provided for at home practice. Therapists will share activities and reference therapy folders that were sent home with each child to review specific skills. Virtual office hours will be set up to address parent concerns and questions, as necessary.

CST/SLP/BCBA IEP Service

The expectation is that CST teams will continue to develop IEPs, write reports, and plan for next year. Teams can conference through Google Hangouts, phone conferencing, OnCourse Classroom or Google Meet. Virtual office hours will be set up to address parent concerns, respond to questions, and reschedule IEP meetings as necessary.

Annual Reviews

Will be rescheduled or conducted virtually/remotely through phone conferencing. Timelines shall be considered and extended as necessary.

Re-Evaluations

Will be rescheduled. Timelines shall be considered and extended as necessary.

Initial Evaluation Meetings

Will be rescheduled. Timelines shall be considered and extended as necessary.

Counseling

The expectation is that the secondary school counselors will continue with student scheduling, individual meetings and groups via Google Meet or Hangout. Additionally, students and parents can reach out to counselors via email and counselors will respond via email or a phone call. Elementary school counselors have materials prepared for students to work on and will continue to hold groups and individual sessions via Google Meet or Hangout.

Nurses

Nurses will be available to respond to parent and student emails during their contracted work day.

E. TECHNOLOGY

During a period of pandemic outbreak, technology will be required to ensure the continuity of instruction. The district will use OnCourse Classroom, Google Drive, Google Meet/Hangout, Blackboard, District Website and any additional platform available to ensure the delivery of instruction for students.

Distance Learning Toolkit and Planning Support That May Be Utilized During A Health Related Closure

How can students participate virtually?			
How can students self assess?	How can students check-in?	How can students and teachers collaborate?	How can students demonstrate learning?
OnCourse Classroom Tes Teach (Playlist) Newsela Brainpop , Brainpop Jr. Edpuzzle (6-12) Screencastify Learn 360 HyperDocs Template IXL Learning A-Z (K-5) Go-Math (K-5) Tumble book (K-5) Mystery Science (K-5)	Email OnCourse Classroom Messaging Google Form	Google Docs/Slides Padlet Google Meet	Google Docs/Slides Screencastify Pear Deck Seesaw WeVideo Kahoot

Accessing Content

- Assignments can be pushed out in OnCourse Classroom.
- You can guide students through materials or lessons by recording yourself and your screen with Screencastify or WeVideo.

Demonstrate Learning

The follow are examples of how students can digitally demonstrate their learning:

- Students can submit a Google Doc, Slide, etc.
- Students can create a Google Site and insert evidence of learning.
- Students can record a Screencast to explain.

Access to Technology

The District currently uses and communicates with members of the school community through various methods of technology, including OnCourse. Since these systems are utilized daily without the District's knowledge of inaccessibility, the District assumes nearly 100% of the school community can access the applicable resources. If there are any issues that indicate otherwise, we will provide options (e.g. mobile hotspot) to our students and families to ensure equity.

F. POLICY/CONTRACTUAL

During a period of pandemic outbreak, virtual learning days will be allowed to count toward the 180 day requirements and would be considered a contractual work day. Instructional responsibilities must be maintained in a virtual environment. Should you be unable to fulfill responsibilities due to an illness (self or other) you are asked to post an assignment (as you would for a substitute) in OnCourse Classroom. A sick day should be utilized if unable to conduct instructional responsibilities.

Staff members are asked to consider the following:

- Staff members should bring home their district-issued device, with charging cable, today and each day going forward in case the need for virtual learning days occur.
- Ensure you have access to any passwords you may need to access OnCourse, your email, the employee portal, Google Drive, etc.

G. FACILITIES

The Building and Grounds Department will work to ensure that appropriate cleaning protocols are utilized at all times. Transmission of coronavirus in general occurs much more commonly through respiratory droplets than through fomites. Current evidence suggests that novel coronavirus may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials. Cleaning of visibly dirty surfaces followed by disinfection is a best practice measure for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses in community settings. Protocols are in alignment with the guidance provided by the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

H. SCHOOL NUTRITION

Ensure Continuity of meal programs.

The school district is working with our food service provider, Pomptonian, to consider ways to distribute food to students (Appendix A). If there is community spread of COVID-19, we will work to design strategies to avoid distribution in settings where people might gather in a group or crowd. We will consider options such as “grab-and-go” bagged lunches or meal delivery. The district will continue to monitor and evaluate distribution strategies and potential supply chain concerns.

I. ATHLETICS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Unless otherwise directed by the Department of Education/Department of Health, in the event of a health related closure, all athletic events and extracurricular activities (including field trips) will be canceled.

J. CONTINUITY OF COMMUNICATION

During a period of pandemic outbreak, the District will heed guidance from and be in constant communication with the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Health, the Department of Education, appropriate members from the State and Local Governments, and Township Health Departments. Information will be communicated to the school community directly from the District. Should the pandemic outbreak occur and schools remain open, school nurses will continue to reinforce proper hand hygiene. As always, any important information will be available on the district’s website.

K. CONCLUSION

Throughout a health-related closure, the safety and wellness of our staff, students, and families is our highest priority. Maintaining the ability to educate students in the event of an infectious disease outbreak requires additional considerations beyond traditional continuity planning. The plan we have developed will serve as a guide. The power of the guide is in the planning process. We will continue to reassess the plan as necessary.

SIGNATURE OF SUPERINTENDENT

DATE SUBMITTED TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT

APPENDIX

A. WRITTEN GUIDANCE FROM DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH OR LOCAL HEALTH AGENCY RECOMMENDING SCHOOL CLOSURE

B. FOOD SERVICE

To the Parent/Guardian(s) of _____ ,

The N.J. Department of Education, as well as the Hopewell Valley Regional School District, recognizes that the lunch your child receives during the school day is one of the many important nutritional components of your child's diet. In the event of a school closure due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19), the District will continue to make box lunches accessible for your child.

These lunches will be available for pick-up in the Central High School Community Room between the hours of 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM Monday through Friday. Central High School is located at 259 Pennington-Titusville Road, Pennington, NJ 08534. If you are unable to pick-up the meals, they will be delivered to locations close to your home.

Please use the link below to complete a survey to indicate your availability to pick up these lunches at the time(s) and location indicated above.

<https://>

Thank you and please feel free to contact my office with any additional questions or concerns.

Regards,

Robert Colavita
School Business Administrator

C. HOME INSTRUCTION POLICY

6A:16-10.1 Home or out-of-school instruction due to a temporary or chronic health condition

(a) The district board of education shall provide instructional services to an enrolled student, whether a general education student in kindergarten through grade 12 or special education student age three to 21, when the student is confined to the home or another out-of-school setting due to a temporary or chronic health condition or a need for treatment that precludes participation in their usual education setting, whether general education or special education.

1. To request home instruction due to a temporary or chronic health condition, the parent shall submit to the school district a request that includes a written determination from the student's physician documenting the projected need for confinement at the student's residence or other treatment setting for more than 10 consecutive school days or 20 cumulative school days during the school year.
 - i. The school district shall forward the written determination to the school physician, who shall verify the need for home instruction. The school physician may contact the student's physician to secure additional information concerning the student's diagnosis or need for treatment, and shall either verify the need for home instruction or shall provide to the district board of education reasons for denial.
2. The school district shall notify the parent concerning the school physician's verification or reasons for denial within five school days after receipt of the written determination by the student's physician.
3. The school district shall provide instructional services within five school days after receipt of the school physician's verification or, if verification is made prior to the student's confinement, during the first week of the student's confinement to the home or out-of-school setting.

(b) The school district shall be responsible for the costs of providing instruction in the home or out-of-school setting either directly, through online services, including any needed equipment, or through contract with another district board of education, educational services commission, jointure commission, or approved clinic or agency for the following categories of students:

1. A student who resides within the area served by the district board of education and is enrolled in a public school program; or

2. A student who is enrolled in a nonpublic school that is located within the area served by the district board of education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:46A-1 et seq.

(c) Home or out-of-school instruction shall meet the following minimum standards:

1. The school district shall establish a written plan for delivery of instruction to continue the student's academic progress and to maintain a record of delivery of instructional services and student progress.

2. The teacher providing instruction shall be a certified teacher.

3. The teacher shall provide instruction for the number of days and length of time sufficient to continue the student's academic progress and dependent upon the student's ability to participate.

4. For a student with disabilities, the home instruction shall be consistent with the student's individualized education plan (IEP) to the extent appropriate and shall meet the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. When the provision of home instruction will exceed 30 consecutive school days in a school year, the IEP team shall convene a meeting to review and, if appropriate, revise the student's IEP.

5. For a student without disability, the home instruction shall meet the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, and the requirements of the district board of education for promotion to the next grade level. When the provision of home instruction will exceed 60 calendar days, the school physician shall refer the student to the child study team for evaluation, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14.

(d) During all periods of instruction delivered in a student's home, the student's parent or other adult who has been designated by the parent shall be present.

D. MEDICAL EXCLUSION OF PUPILS

New Jersey Statutes Annotated

Title 18A - EDUCATION

Section 18A:40-7 - Exclusion of pupils who are ill

Universal Citation: NJ Rev Stat § 18A:40-7 (2013)

18A:40-7. Exclusion of pupils who are ill

When there is evidence of departure from normal health of any pupil, the principal of the school shall upon the recommendation of the school physician or school nurse exclude such pupil from the school building, and in the absence from the building of the school physician or school nurse, the classroom teacher may exclude the pupil from the classroom and the principal may exclude the pupil from the school building.

L.1967, c.271.

E. NJDOE GUIDANCE ISSUED MARCH 5, 2020

Guidance Regarding Requirements for Public Health-Related School Closure

On March 2, 2020, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) published guidance for childcare facilities and K-12 schools regarding the impact that the current outbreak of 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) might have on their communities. That guidance is available on the NJDOH's COVID-19 Information for Schools and Businesses webpage and was disseminated by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) via special Broadcast on March 3, 2020. The guidance emphasizes that the most important thing for schools to do now is plan and prepare. Among other planning procedures, the guidance advises that “schools may be asked to close preemptively or reactively, therefore schools should be making plans for what to do if there are recommendations for closing schools or cancelling events.”¹

To better assist boards of education and board of trustees of a charter or renaissance school (hereinafter referred to as board(s) of education) with these other preparation activities recommended by the NJDOH, the NJDOE is providing the following guidance regarding requirements for public health-related school closure.

Requirements to Implement a Public Health-Related School Closure

NJDOH guidance identifies school closure as a potential strategy to limit transmission within a community. In the event a board of education is provided a written directive by either the NJDOH or the health officer of the jurisdiction to institute a public health-related closure, the board of education may utilize home instruction to provide instructional services to enrolled students. The provision of home instruction services should be guided by N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10.1 and may include direct services, online instruction, services provided through contract with another district board of education, or any other means developed by the district to meet the needs of its students. Any day in which students impacted by a public health-related closure have access to home instruction services provided consistent with the guidance in this memo will count as a day in which the board of education has provided public school facilities toward its compliance with the 180-day requirement in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9.

¹ For additional information, please consult NJDOH's full guidance document. See, particularly, the following excerpt:

Will schools be asked to close if there is a COVID-19 outbreak in the community?

- Non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) are strategies that can be used when other measures like treatment or vaccines are not available to combat an emerging illness with pandemic potential.
- School closures and school dismissals are two recommended strategies to limit transmission within the community.
- During school dismissals, childcare programs and schools may stay open for staff (if not ill) while students stay home. This allows teachers to develop and deliver lessons remotely and for other staff to continue to provide services.

- Schools may be asked to close preemptively or reactively, therefore schools should be making plans for what to do if there are recommendations for closing schools or cancelling events.
- Childcare and school administrators should work closely with local health officials when making decisions on dismissals or closures.

To be clear, this flexibility to count a day on which public school facilities are closed toward the board of education's statutory 180-day requirement applies strictly to public health-related school closures and not to any other type of closure or other days on which public school facilities are not made available. Closures made absent a written directive from either the NJDOH or the health officer of the jurisdiction will not count.

All boards of education should develop a school health-related closure preparedness plan to provide home instruction in the event of such a closure. The planned services should include equitable access to instruction for all students. Each preparedness plan should also address the provision of appropriate special education and related services for students with disabilities and the provision of school nutrition benefits or services for eligible students. The preparedness plans should be submitted to the Executive County Superintendent. The NJDOE also encourages boards of education to adopt enhanced school cleanliness and disinfection protocols, including disinfection of frequently touched surfaces and objects.

Stigma Related to COVID-19

According to the CDC, "stigma and discrimination can occur when people associate an infectious disease, such as COVID-19, with a population or nationality, even though not everyone in that population or from that region is specially at risk for the disease." In this climate, fear and anxiety surrounding COVID-19 can lead to stigma toward Chinese, other Asian Americans, and the Jewish Community. The NJDOE encourages all educators and members of the public to recommit to raising awareness of the deep educational and personal harm brought by stigma, bullying and harassment in our schools, and to spreading factual public health information without fear or stigmatization.