



Park Ridge Schools Remote Learning Plan 2021-2022

Revised on October 12, 2021

Park Ridge School District
85 Pascack Road
Park Ridge, NJ 07656

Submitted by Robert M. Gamper, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools



Essential Question

How does the Park Ridge School District create meaningful, rigorous, and continuous home instruction for students during a declared public health emergency where we are told that school buildings must close to students, and have that instruction continue to maximize student growth in accordance with our mission?

Introduction

In accordance with the broadcast, issued on August 18, 2021, requiring districts to submit a proposed program annually, the Park Ridge School District has prepared the following plan. The goal of this plan is to provide for "continuity of instruction in the event of a public health-related district closure" and is in accordance with all executive orders in effect at the time of its composition. This plan has been Board-approved and submitted to the County for approval.

In creating this plan, the Park Ridge School District is looking to sustain an experience that "cultivates a community of lifelong learners and nurtures all students to be kind, ethical, and responsible citizens, as well as independent, productive members of an increasingly complex and interconnected world." [Park Ridge School District 'Owl Mission'] and that will meet or exceed all relevant state guidelines.

Board Approval

This plan has been submitted in its entirety for Board of Education approval.

Date of Board Meeting: October 18, 2021

Park Ridge Demographic Profile

Park Ridge is a district in northern Bergen County, serving students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade (an additional transition program serves adult students ages 18-21). Total enrollment for the district is currently 1,266 students. Thirty-eight of those students are enrolled in our preschool. As of the 2018-2019 school year, 84.4% spoke English at home as the primary language, with 9% Spanish-speaking, 1.2% Chinese-speaking and the remainder speaking another language at home. As of the 2018-2019 NJ State Report, 4.8% of our student population was economically disadvantaged (LSE), 19.7% were classified as Students with Disabilities, and 2.7% were



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English Language Learners (ELL). Current district numbers include fewer than ten (<10) students classified as Homeless, 26 students enrolled as ELL, and 222 students with IEPs.



Lesson Preparation and Distribution of Assignments

A minimum day of four hours of virtual learning will be provided by all schools, at all levels. The schedule will be based on our half-day schedule, with virtual learning taking the place of in-class learning. As we are a 1:1 district from Grades 3-12, virtual learning through online conferencing can immediately commence in those grades. For our pre-K through Grade 2, our district will rely on student use of family-owned devices.

Grade level standards will vary according to the following bands:

Pre-K-2:

Students in the lower grades will receive live, virtual instruction through Google Meet and Google Classroom or Seesaw, as well as asynchronous work through packets emailed home. Care will be taken to make sure that an age-appropriate amount of screen time is balanced with the need for instruction. Principals, teachers, and our child study team will monitor students for any who lack access to a device, and the district will prepare and distribute a loaner machine to those students. Lessons will continue to be monitored for compliance with curricular guidelines and pacing according to our vision statement above, by principals and supervisors.

3-6:

Students in the intermediate grades will receive work through virtual conferences on Google Meet or Schoology. Classrooms will have an online space in one of our Learning Management Systems: Schoology, Google Classroom, or Seesaw. Lessons will continue to be monitored for compliance with curricular guidelines and pacing according to our vision statement above, by principals and supervisors.



7-12:

Lessons and learning will be delivered through a standardized structure already in place on our LMS, Schoology. Learning activities will be mostly synchronous, with online instruction provided through the conferencing feature of Schoology or Google Meet. Supplemental material will be delivered on these platforms for student homework and projects. Weekly planning and projects are highly encouraged, but ‘chunked’ for students into daily time management suggestions. Supervisors will hold frequent meetings with staff to monitor lesson planning and support the development of ongoing, engaging instruction in light of the challenges posed by the shift to remote learning.

Accountability

Park Ridge School district has developed the following plan to develop an ongoing ‘check-in’ style that will help to ensure accountability. Our goal is to establish a system in which students will be responsible to maintain learning on a daily basis, in accordance with our schedule.

- To ensure that students get credit for “attendance”, students in grades PK-2 will demonstrate attendance through conference log-ons, work completion, and/or check-ins with teachers throughout the school day. Grades 3-6 will demonstrate attendance through logging into their daily meetings with the teacher, and/or teacher check-ins, as the daily schedule permits. Students in grades 7-12 will log in to Schoology and mark their presence through a discussion board within the first few minutes of the scheduled class. If the student does not log in to Schoology during school hours the student shall be marked “absent”. All teachers will continue using our SIS, PowerSchool, to log daily and classroom attendance.
- School days will be set by building principals in accordance with standards and guidelines issued by local, County, and State officials to comprise an official school day. All schools will operate on a four-hour schedule.
- Teachers will be available to communicate with students/parents throughout the day via video conference(grades 7-12) as well as email (grades PK-12) during times when they would normally have class, in accordance with the schedule above. 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.
- 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. Teachers will frequently check for student understanding of that objective and offer specific student feedback.

District Follow-Up Procedures

Park Ridge School District remains committed to a vision of education that includes every child, including during this time period of health-related closure. As the completion of all assigned work is necessary for both attendance and personal student growth, Park Ridge remains committed to the principle that all students must remain responsible to complete assignments in a timely fashion. In accordance with that mission, follow-up for students not participating in instruction involves the following teams and procedures:

- First contact should be initiated by the teacher, often with the inclusion of Guidance and/or Special Services, in order to determine if failure to participate is due to technology. If a student is not communicating through email or our LMS, this contact will be with the parents through the phone numbers on record.
- If a student’s inability to participate is related to technology, Tech Support will reach out within the day to help resolve this issue, and teachers will be notified to correct attendance and help to remediate instruction. If a student is found to be in a position where lack of access to Wifi or a device is at issue, the district will follow our plan for providing digital equity outlined below.
- Students identified in need of extra support during this time period have a system of support already in place, including paraprofessional support, individualized conferences with teachers outside of the ‘normal’ school day, and virtual meetings with Guidance and Special Services. Paraprofessionals have been granted access to our LMS and, where required, to school-issued devices, in order to assist their efforts to conference with students in need.
- An established relationship and plan are already in effect for coordination with local police and mental health officials to assist in welfare checks for any students who continue to demonstrate a high level of concern.
- Any students in need of credit recovery or electives may fulfill those needs through our already established program with Educere.



Curricular Instruction

At all grade levels, the school day and ongoing instruction according to New Jersey Learning Standards will run through virtual instruction. Where appropriate, lessons will integrate peer and/or teacher interaction as well as independent student work outside of ‘school hours.’ To keep the approach as manageable as possible for students and staff, we will stick to tools that students and teachers are already proficient in.

Examples of tools that could be used for the lesson may include:

- Collaborative writing in a Google Doc with teacher feedback.
- Online access to Pearson curricular materials through teacher, student, and parent accounts already in use.
- An EdPuzzle video where students provide feedback and receive feedback.
- A class or small group FlipGrid video discussion.
- Using Padlet for a classroom brainstorm or posting.
- Using PearDeck for interactive presentations, with peer-peer and peer-teacher interaction.
- Using the discussion features in Schoology.
- Using the “Big Blue Button” video conference feature in Schoology.
- Utilizing Google Meet for an all-class meeting or Socratic discussion
- Have students engaged in formative assessment using interactive tools such as Quizlet, Kahoot, or Quizizz.
- Have the teacher demonstrate a task (i.e. experiment, solving a math problem) via video, Schoology conferencing, or YouTube and then have students have a reflective dialogue with the teacher and/or peers about their results in Schoology or a Google Doc .
- Have the class create a shared Google Slides presentation 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.



The Methods to Document IEP Implementation Including the Tracking of Services, Student Progress as well as Provision of Accommodations and Modifications:

- **IEPs are accessible digitally through Frontline IEP in order for staff to continuously review, monitor goals and mark progress.**
- **Teachers and related service providers have continued to collect data on student progress throughout the closure and note that progress so that they can mark IEP progress.**
- In-class Resource teachers will co-plan the lessons with their general education partners making appropriate accommodations and modifications.
- In-class Resource teachers will proactively reach out to students with IEPs in their class as they may have challenges related to this type of learning activity.
- Pull Out Replacement Resource teachers will plan lessons aligned with district-approved curriculum and New Jersey Learning Standards which also address individual student’s IEP goals and objectives.
- Pull Out Replacement Resource teachers will proactively reach out to students with IEPs in their class as they may have challenges related to this type of learning activity.
- Supplemental Resource teachers will plan lessons aligned with district-approved curriculum and New Jersey Learning Standards which also address individual student’s IEP goals and objectives.
- Supplemental Resource teachers will proactively reach out to students with IEPs in their class as they may have challenges related to this type of learning activity.
- Special program teachers (i.e. Preschool Disabilities, LLD, 18-21 Year Old Transition) will plan appropriate, supported, and scaffolded activities for those students according to New district-approved curriculum and New Jersey Learning Standards which also address individual student’s IEP goals and objectives.
- **All teachers take student attendance in order to track class attendance and related service providers keep logs in order to track related service sessions.**
- **If IEP students are struggling to complete work virtually the teachers have been available for additional 1-1 support and if that is not enough a paraprofessional is assigned to work with the student daily. This has helped students tremendously with work completion during this time.**
- **Case managers are in constant contact with teachers and families in order to discuss student progress during virtual learning. Additional accommodations**



and modifications have been made on an individual basis based upon student needs during virtual learning which in many cases are different from their needs within the school building.

Physical Education and Health:

Physical Education teachers in the elementary school will continue instruction, modified to be appropriate for grade-level and the virtual environment. For grades 7-12, Physical Education classes not currently in health will shift to a health focus while in a virtual day mode. Physical Education/Health teachers will take a grade-level focus that is in the curriculum (PK-12) and focus lessons on exercise regimens and physical activities in which they can engage. Other lessons will complement the work they have already done with mindfulness, stress reduction, yoga, 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

Related Arts & Music, STEAM:

The focus of these classes should be individual performance, creation and engagement. Students will use the power of digital tools and collaboration to demonstrate their work in these areas. Students can create and post performance videos of music, a visual arts work, or programming/Scratch, and share with their teacher for feedback. Additionally, teachers will provide supplemental instruction through online tools already in use in the class. For example, our elementary STEAM teacher will provide students with links to learning websites through our LMS, Schoology.

Guidance and CST Members:

Mr. Steven Fiedeldey (Director of Special Services), in conjunction with building principals, will share expectations with their respective departments for ways to be productive and engage with students during this day. Counselors and CST members will document work-flow with their supervisors and establish available office hours for students and/or parents to communicate with them. Counselors and CST members will be responsible for staying in touch with students whom we know might find this type of learning a challenge. Additionally, counselors, where feasible, will virtually conduct course selection meetings, junior conferences, etc.

Supervisors/Building Administrators:



Our administration will remain in communication with their teachers throughout the day and monitor instructional activities. They are available to troubleshoot issues and offer advice and suggestions, as well as maintain compliance with all curricular and district goals.

Professional Development:

Our Director of Curriculum will be available during this time to provide support for teachers to develop their proficiency in the use of curricular tools. Examples of P.D. during this time include custom walkthrough videos, personalized one-on-one support, and on-demand classes dedicated to specific topics or tools. In Grades K-6, building principals will facilitate discussions highlighting ‘best practices’ and faculty sharing of techniques and experiences. In Grades 7-12, similar discussions will be led by department supervisors.

Equitable Access and Students Lacking Wifi Access

Students without wifi access will be identified by building principals. Park Ridge School District has partnered with Optimum and Altice, in the past, to provide Wifi access to students in need for the duration of the extended closing in order to engage with the work. The Business Administration is prepared to renew this partnership, and students will be able to access Wifi directly through their laptops.

The District has provided 13” Macbook Air laptops on a 1:1 basis throughout the district, in grades 3-12, and has retained spare laptops to cover all students in lower grades who might need a district laptop. In the event that a student is identified as lacking access to a device, one will be immediately provided to that student, at no cost to the family.

Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch

Park Ridge School district has been in communication with our food service vendor, Pomptonian, and developed a plan to serve families eligible for free and reduced lunch. In the event of a school closing under the state criteria, Pomptonian will provide a ‘Grab-and-Go’ meal available for pick-up at a centralized location on campus. The location chosen for this distribution is the lower parking lot, near the gym entrance, of Park Ridge High School. If necessary, a delivery system could be implemented. The Chief School Administrator, in conjunction with the district Business Administrator, will coordinate communication with families eligible under this program.



Full details of the program, such as the number of families served, will be provided once it is operational.

Technical Issues/Repair during School Closure

Technical support for students and staff will be available at all times through our service email address, techsupport@parkridge.k12.nj.us. This e-mail address will be continuously monitored by technical staff working remotely/virtually from home. Response from the Technology department will generally occur within the same school day as notification of a problem. Our Owl Care Insurance program for grades 4-12 remains in effect, with the exception that laptops will not be repaired, but replaced. Replacements will generally be issued the morning after notification of a repair issue, with a representative of the Tech department coordinating the exchange at the Board Office. At all times, the goal of Park Ridge is to remove any technological hurdles that a student or family might face, as quickly as possible, in order to return that student to the ability to participate fully in our remote learning plan.

Facilities Maintenance during School Closure

Our facilities will continue to be maintained by staff working on a rotating schedule. The work that is ongoing at this point is HVAC cleaning, filter replacement, and general unit maintenance. All building furniture will be cleaned and disinfected.

Maintenance staff working in buildings have been instructed and informed on how to accomplish their work while following social-distancing guidelines. The staff will continue to do grounds repair and maintenance. While on-site, all staff will wear masks and gloves during work. They have also been told to take breaks and lunch independently.

Furthermore, staff members and students will be notified to bring home any items they have in their lockers that they will need during a short or long-term closure. The principals will provide further access to the staff to gather belongings and materials on schedules determined to minimize the number of people in the building at any point in time.

Bias and Stigma associated with pandemic



Understanding that any illness could bring unwanted bias or stigma upon certain groups, due to perceived notions or present biases, our district will be continually vigilant of student behavior and utilize prevention, response, and educational strategies to prevent or combat bias and stigma associated with any outbreak.

Addressing ELL and Bilingual Needs

English as a Second Language teachers will continue to instruct their students according to the grade level curriculum and the W.I.D.A. standards endorsed by the New Jersey Department of Education, to the most appropriate extent possible while students are away from their schools and programs.

Alternate Methods of Instruction: Teachers use a mixture of audio, video, PowerPoint, and online interactive programs to help students gain a better grasp of the concepts being taught.

Differentiation: Various strategies can be used including: example answers for questions, sample writing responses for writing activities, templates, and writing guides to help students organize their thoughts when writing. The questions, templates, and examples can be color-coordinated to correspond to various parts of each question/writing activity. For some assignments, students can be given choice as to how they demonstrate their understanding (i.e. live presentation during the class conference, record a video using PhotoBooth and send to the teacher privately or write about their project and email it to the teacher).

Strategies to Troubleshoot ELL Access Challenges: ELL teachers will be in touch with students, students’ parents, as well as their teacher(s), to troubleshoot any issues the student may be having with learning at home. Paraprofessionals will be assigned to work with any students, including ELL students, who are struggling to complete work or access online classes/lessons. They may also assist with pretty much anything in the virtual learning model with which students require assistance. Lastly, a listing of all staff available to translate in the district has been made available to staff so that they can call on someone almost instantly to assist with translation to a family who does not speak English. Correspondence from the district is sent to families in their native language and this allows families an opportunity to read and respond to what is being sent to them. Different modalities are used to communicate with families who may not have email such as text. In



certain instances, staff may have to teach parents how to use virtual meeting platforms so they can assist their children at home.

Class Groups: ELL teachers will continue to meet with their classes virtually. The classes they are seeing virtually would be the same groupings of students based upon grade level that they saw prior to the school closure. During the class meetings, the teachers will follow lesson plans according to grade level and WIDA standards. There is typically an opportunity for reading, vocabulary instruction, and time for the students to speak to one another in order to practice their oral language skills. In addition to this certain students who are struggling can receive the support of a 1-1 paraprofessional during this time.

Special Services Additional Considerations

Understanding that school closure could present equity issues, especially for students with IEPs and 504s, the district will make sure that Special Education students are receiving work along with their peers in general education. The work will contain the necessary accommodations and modifications as dictated by the student’s IEP or 504 plan. The Park Ridge School District understands that any closure is a temporary situation, and we will offer special education services to the most appropriate extent possible while students are away from their schools and programs.

During any emergency school closure, the Child Study Team will continue to hold annual review meetings, eligibility meetings, reevaluation meetings, and initial planning meetings. These meetings will be held through video-conference using Schoology or Google Meet, or through teleconference with the permission of the parent/guardian. If the parent declines to have a meeting via video-conference or teleconference the CST will work to reschedule the meeting as soon as possible when school reopens. A statement will be included in the annual review/reevaluation/eligibility/initial planning document indicating the medium which was used to hold the meeting and that this was due to the emergency school closure. At the beginning of the meeting, the CST will email any necessary paperwork to all participants so they can follow along. In addition, the case manager will record participation on the attendance sheet for the meeting. Any document requiring signature will be emailed to the parent at the conclusion of the meeting. An email from the parent indicating that they consent to the document in question will be printed for the student’s file.



Immediately prior to the school closure contact will be made with the parent/guardian of every student with an IEP - whether they attend Park Ridge Public Schools or an out-of-district school. The communication will outline the plan for classwork, related services, any outside therapies, transportation, communication with CST and Related Service providers and CST meetings. The communication will be provided in the family's native language if necessary.

At this time the district does not have any students who are considered medically fragile. If a student were to become medically fragile during the time of the school closure, the district would consider the needs of the student and make the appropriate accommodations.

Related services (OT, PT, speech) will be provided for students in PK-12 according to the laws and regulations in effect during the closure. A current executive order, set to expire at the end of 2021, allows for these services to be delivered through a teleconference. If a similar order exists, OT/PT and speech will be delivered through our conferencing system (Google Meet, Schoology). Before switching to this model, Special Services will contact parents to survey them to find out if they would like to receive services through teleconferencing. Counseling will be offered as a video conference/teleconference to all parents/guardians of students who receive counseling as part of their IEP or 504 plan. Many of these students receive counseling due to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and have experienced school refusal/avoidance. It is the concern of the district that, without providing the student with the interaction with the therapist either through video conference/teleconference, the student will suffer significant regression.

Upon the re-opening of school, the CST will assess the students for skill acquisition and recoupment in order to determine the need for compensatory services.

The Office of Special Services will communicate with all out-of-district schools, in the event that Park Ridge students will be unable to attend their out-of-district placement. Transportation for Park Ridge students attending out-of-district schools is arranged in conjunction with Region II for Special Education. Region II notifies the transportation companies of school closures.



ESY/Title 1 ELP:

Under a health emergency, the Park Ridge Public School District would plan to deliver all in-district ESY instruction and related services virtually. All out-of-district ESY programs will be delivered in accordance with the program set forth by the out-of-district schools.

All parents will be contacted to indicate whether or not their child(ren) will participate in the virtual ESY.

Our ESY program includes the following categories of instruction:

Self Contained:

- PSD
- LLD K-3, LLD 4-6, LLD MS, LLD HS
- 18-21-Year-Old Transition Program Owl House

Resource:

- Elementary, Middle and High School Literacy and Mathematics
- Elementary, Middle School, and High School Multi-Sensory Reading

Related Services:

- OT, PT, Speech, Counseling, Social Skills

Every day all students whether self contained or resource will receive from 30minutes to 1 hour of either individual Math and Literacy instruction (Owl House - Daily Living Skills) combined based upon their needs and ability to attend virtually. A student can receive multi-sensory reading in addition to self-contained and/or resource Literacy/Math and this would be an additional session three times per week for 40 minutes.

Related services are 40 minute sessions and the frequency can be 1-4 times weekly dependent upon student need.

At the conclusion of the ESY all parents/guardians are provided with progress marks for their child.

Credit Loss:

As noted above, students in need of credit recovery during this period may take advantage of our established program with Educere that utilizes an online platform.



Assessment of Learning Loss:

The Park Ridge School District is aware that continued remote learning and virtual instruction is not an identical replacement for the vitality and richness of in-person instruction. The district will plan for a two-phase assessment of learning during the closure. First, the teachers and administrators will begin a process of data-collection to allow us to analyze any critical curricular or learning gaps resulting from this time period. Secondly, the administration will tailor our practices to use our return to in-person learning to address any identified areas of concern.

Team meetings in grades PK through 6 will identify potential curricular areas in which remote learning may need supplemental in-person follow-up to determine student competency. In grades 7-12, supervisors will run departmental meetings to determine similar areas of concern. In all areas of concern, teachers will be instructed to collect evidence of current student learning for analysis. As scheduling permits, all information collected will be summarized and shared with receiving teaching staff.

All students fulfilling requirements of their classes during our virtual classes will be promoted to the next grade level in September. Once schools have returned to session in-person, Park Ridge will, in accordance with all measures and safeguards that may be in place, run assessments to determine the extent of learning loss and evaluate student readiness for grade level instruction. Where possible, these assessments will be analyzed for comparison with the ‘normal summer slide,’ particularly in reading and math, K-6. The Park Ridge administration is considering the possibility of short-term scheduling changes and short-term placement adjustments for students as possible means of beginning the process of transition back to in-person learning.

Park Ridge remains committed to the highest standards of learning for its students, grades PK-12. As such, planning for learning loss will remain a continual process for the course of the school year. As data is collected, and as the district receives further guidance from the Governor and Department of Education on social distancing and schooling, this plan will undergo further revision. All parts of this plan are contingent on compliance with laws that are in effect at that time.



Conclusion

In summary, the Park Ridge School District is confident in its ability to maintain high standards of learning for its students, even with the new challenges during our recent, unprecedented health emergency. We have been a 1:1 district for seven years and transitioned quickly to remote learning during the 2019 COVID outbreak. Our staff has acquired and employs skills that makes us a progressive district in terms of our innovation and readiness to employ this meaningful instruction.



Appendix: Non-Teaching Essential Staff During Virtual/Distance Learning

In accordance with the detailed plan outlined above, the following non-teaching staff will be deemed ‘essential’ to the operation of the district and required to fulfill the identified duties within the district:

- One Superintendent of Schools (Chief School Administrator) to oversee and coordinate all district-wide operations.
- One district Business Administrator to oversee and maintain all business office operations.
- One Director of Special Services to maintain lines of communication with special education families and oversee compliance with federal special education law.
- One Director of Curriculum and Instruction to oversee compliance with established district curricular guidelines and serve as intermediary with the County curriculum office, and testing coordinator.
- Three building principals to maintain communication with the staff of each building, oversee clear standards for instruction and attendance policies, and collaborate in the district response as events unfold.
- Four members of IT staff to maintain and support network and database (SIS) access, and distributed laptops and other hardware, and one district supervisor of educational technology to coordinate and maintain online instruction.
- Seven members of the district office staff, including one Assistant Business Administrator, one Accounts Payable and one Payroll member, one assistant for Special Services, one shared assistant for Curriculum and Special Services, one assistant to the Business Administrator, and one assistant to the Superintendent.
- Six members of building office staff, including one assistant to the Principal of the high school, one assistant to the Vice Principal of the high school, one assistant to Guidance staff, and three front office assistants (one for each school).
- Eleven custodial and five maintenance staff to sanitize and clean buildings, and maintain physical integrity of all district buildings, one assistant to the custodial staff, and one district director of maintenance to oversee and coordinate maintenance efforts.
- One member of the custodial/maintenance staff to coordinate the pickup and the distribution of ‘grab and go’ lunches, as per our plan above.