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Hamilton Township School District

Virtual Instruction Plan 2025-26

LEA Name: Hamilton Township School District (HTSD) County Code: 1940

Introduction

The student body at the schools served by the Hamilton Township School District comprises 35 percent White, 24 percent Black, 4 percent Asian or Asian/Pacific Islander, 25 percent Hispanic/Latino, and 12 percent students identifying as two or more races. In addition, 1.7 percent are identified as homeless.

At Hamilton Township School District schools, 22 percent of students have disabilities, 57 percent are eligible for the federal free and reduced-price meal program, and 3.7 percent are English language learners.

Google Classroom will be the primary platform for delivering the district curriculum in a virtual learning environment. This choice is based on its user-friendly interface and the ability to use Google Apps for Education, along with extensions, to tailor the district-adopted curriculum to each student's unique needs. Accelerated learning will ensure that students receive grade-level materials, tasks, and assignments, with teachers providing timely support to help them master the standards.

During the 2020-21 school year, the HTSD successfully implemented fully remote and hybrid learning environments, demonstrating our adaptability. We also operated entirely in person for the 2021-22 school year, with no closures, a testament to our unwavering commitment to student learning. However, should circumstances change, the HTSD is prepared to collaborate with relevant Authorities to transition to Virtual or remote Instruction. We understand the importance of clear communication with our staff, students, communities, sending districts, and all relevant agencies, and we are confident in our ability to do so effectively. The information below demonstrates our readiness for such an event.

Create opportunities for real-time interactions with students (e.g., office hours, virtual meetings). Instruct and maintain good digital citizenship practices for all students and staff. Teacher leaders or instructional coaches should support teachers in making necessary curricular adjustments and continuously improving the quality of instruction in remote environments. They should also provide materials, manipulatives, and at-home activity items at no cost to families (particularly for preschool), and limit online activities for preschool students.
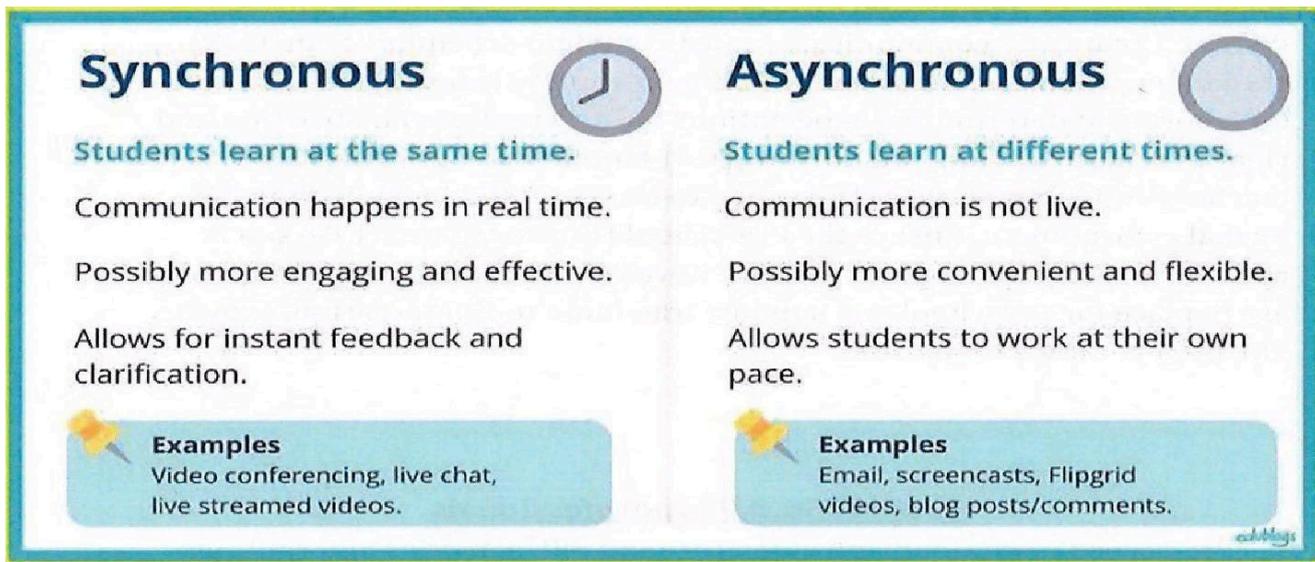
Communication

The HTSD will use multiple communication channels to notify families of a transition to a virtual/remote environment, including automated phone calls, emails, website messages, the REMIND app, and social media platforms. As needed, we will include messaging specifically for non-English-speaking families. Students (and their families) who do not report or respond to their virtual/remote environment will be personally contacted by school guidance staff, CST, and/or administration to confirm their health and assist with the transition. Community communication will be posted on the district website and social media.

Instructional Plan

Our teaching staff will deliver academic services synchronously, utilizing our existing Google Suite platform, which includes, but is not limited to, Google Classroom and Google Meet. At a minimum, our school day will meet or exceed the state requirement of four hours of instruction. HTSD will follow the regular bell schedule in each building to maintain instructional continuity. The William Davies Middle School's instructional hours are 7:40- 2:20, the Joseph Shaner instructional times are 8:00-2:35, and Hess Educational Complex's instructional times are from 9:05-3:35. As they have done in the past, teachers will primarily utilize synchronous learning with asynchronous learning used to allow students to demonstrate independent growth and understanding (as part of the assessment plan). HTSD teachers have access to over two dozen "Google extensions" that can be utilized from the introduction of material through direct instruction and assessment (this last part is of note since we can control "our" Chromebooks and establish secure testing environments. HTSD houses ELL programs in each of our three schools, using a high-intensity, double-period model for our ELL students, with specific attention to reading outside other curricular classes. In addition to the reading and direct instruction. Professional development for teachers, administrators, and counselors to learn strategies related to culturally responsive teaching and learning, social-emotional learning, and trauma-informed teaching for students affected by forced migration from their home country. The NJSLS will be addressed through virtual instruction,

The district IT staff will continue to support Google Meet for staff-student and parent digital contact (video conferencing). Staff will use Google Meet for students participating in virtual learning, as well as for small group instruction and/or parent contact, in addition to the Parent Square App. Google Classroom will continue to be used for posting assignments and other announcements related to specific class sessions, in addition to the Parent Square app. Staff are encouraged to continue to use all district and school-based software platforms for instruction, i.e., Bridges Math K-3, SAVVAS for Envision Math grades 4-8, SAVVAS for My View K-5, SAVVAS for My Perspective 6-8, Brain POP K-8, Learning Ally K-8, Nearpod K-8, Read 180, and System 44 for Special Education students, Screencastify, etc. Assessments have been adapted to a digital format as needed. Both summative and formative assessments will be used to assess students' progress in a virtual learning environment. Remind, a school communication platform, will be utilized for school and district communication. Through this platform, we can share information with teachers, students, and parents and create accountability for student learning. Instructional staff will utilize differentiated instructional strategies to accelerate student learning.

Synchronous — Students learn at the same time.

Communication happens in real time.

Possibly more engaging and effective.

Allows for instant feedback and clarification.

Examples Video conferencing, live chat, live streamed videos.

Asynchronous — Students learn at different times.

Communication is not live.

Possibly more convenient and flexible.

Allows students to work at their own pace.

Examples Email, screencasts, Flipgrid videos, blog posts/comments.

Instructional Staff

Plan standards-based lessons that meet the needs of students at various levels, ensuring they are adaptable to virtual learning environments. Develop predictable routines and structures for students while maintaining student engagement through a variety of instructional strategies and modalities. Provide regular feedback to students and families on expectations and progress. Set clear expectations for remote instruction. Assess student progress frequently and adjust instruction and/or methodology accordingly.

Administration

Provide time for staff collaboration and planning. Prioritize vulnerable student groups for face-to-face virtual instruction. Identify teachers and teacher leaders who may support staff in continuously improving instruction in a virtual environment. Work with staff and faculty to ensure that teaching, learning, and student services are effectively and efficiently developed, planned, and delivered virtually. Hone collaboration, cooperation, and relationship-building skills using alternative methods to remain connected to virtual instruction. Define high-quality instruction and provide examples that account for context and available resources. Regularly assess the needs of teachers, students, and parents. Ensure students and parents receive the support they need to access virtual instruction. Communicate expectations for delivering high-quality instruction, assessing, and monitoring student progress in the virtual environment in accordance with NJDOE's Professional Standards for Teachers and NJ Professional Standards for Leaders (NJ.A.C. 6A:9). Create feedback loops with parents and families about students' academic and social-emotional health and well-being, through use of remote learning conferences and/or surveys to parents about their child's experience and learning while out of school. Share a comprehensive account of academic interventions and social-emotional and mental health support services available through the district. Create and communicate realistic student schedules to increase engagement and accountability for remote learning models. Collaborate in determining expectations for differentiated instruction and rigor in remote learning models. Support families connecting with teachers and other necessary services to navigate the virtual environment successfully. Ensure the preschool director or Contact Person is involved in planning to ensure development activities and supports are in place for the preschool and to support a smooth transition to kindergarten. Provide SEL opportunities for all staff.

Support Staff/ Paraprofessionals

Pre-recorded read-alouds and videos around SEL activities and routines (Grades Pre-K through 2). Caption pre-recorded instructional videos from general education teachers. Provide real-time support during virtual sessions. Research websites, videos, and links for accessible activities teachers can incorporate into lessons. Support families and students in accessing and participating in remote learning. Paraprofessionals can be added to online classes as co-teachers. Lead small group instruction in a virtual environment under the direction of a teacher. Facilitate the virtual component of synchronous online

interactions. Family Workers will need to support parents via virtual platforms (preschool).

Substitutes

Develop contingency staffing plans for sudden long-term absences and/or vacancies. Develop roles and responsibilities for substitute teachers in virtual settings. Designate substitutes to a single school building or grade level to minimize excessive movement between schools. Identify areas where additional staff may be needed, such as school nurses, counselors, and psychologists.

Attendance

Attendance is vital to student success and will be monitored throughout any remote or virtual instructional period. Students will be required to log in to their class's Google Meet and/or Google Classroom, and attendance will be logged by teaching staff as is currently completed while "in-person". The district has a process to track student attendance (both consecutive and cumulative) and will continue to use it. Students (and their families) will be contacted via email and phone for individual absences, and their attendance will be tracked by guidance, administration, and our Student Resource Attendance Officers. When telephone and/or digital communication do not result in proper student attendance, the SRAOs will visit homes to assess student well-being, ensure appropriate technology is available, and provide information on other services (county, state, financial, health, etc.).

Support Services Plan

Special Education and Related Services shall be delivered to the best of our ability in compliance with Board Policy 2460: Any virtual or remote instruction program implemented for general education students shall provide the same educational opportunities for students with disabilities. Special education and related services, including speech-language services, counseling services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and behavioral services, may be delivered to students with disabilities through electronic communication or a virtual or online platform, and as required by the student's Individualized Educational Program, to the greatest extent practicable. CST will utilize Google Meet to hold conferences and meetings related to student services with staff, students, and families. Google Meet offers an attendance feature that serves as a backup to the CST members' notes and IEP programs, providing documentation for compliance and memorialization. CST members will continue to use IEP Direct and their current methods to track and log meetings, check-ins, and services. All teaching staff review IEPs for students on their class rosters before the start of the school year, and we will continue this requirement to maintain "business as usual" for HTSD. CST will conduct reviews with teaching staff twice per trimester (or upon request from students and/or parents) to ensure that modifications and services are being implemented appropriately. During remote learning, the Hamilton Township School District will ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, each student with a disability receives the special education and related services identified in the student's IEP.

Unless significant changes are recommended to a student's IEP or a parent requests a meeting, new IEP meetings will not be held, and the IEPs developed at each student's annual review meeting for the 2021-2022 school year will remain in effect. If an IEP meeting is required, it will be held virtually. Amendments to IEPs may be made with written parental consent when changes are needed, such as adding accommodations and/or modifications for the virtual delivery of instruction and/or services. Related services will be provided virtually to the best of our ability. Case managers will communicate regularly with parents and staff to ensure IEPs are implemented to the fullest extent possible.

Supporting Multilingual/ELL Educational Needs

HTSD offers multilingual programs in each of its three schools. These programs feature high-intensity, double-period programming for our multilingual students, with a focus on reading outside of other curricular classes. Additionally, the district provides professional development for teachers, administrators, and counselors to learn strategies for culturally responsive teaching and learning, socioeconomic learning, and trauma-informed teaching for students affected by forced migration from their home countries.

Technology

The HTSD is a "1:1" district, providing Acer laptops & Chromebooks to all students. Our teaching staff has access to at least two of the following: Dell laptops, Microsoft Surface, or Dell desktops. The district can deploy devices to students' homes for virtual instruction or long-term remote learning. HTSD can also provide mobile hotspots to our at-risk students if internet access is challenging in a remote learning environment. The teaching staff can bring their laptops home, and provisions will be made available to non-teaching staff who require a device to complete their tasks in a remote environment.

Meal Service Plan

The USDA continually updates its fully remote guidelines, and currently, the HTSD will follow the same schedule we utilized during our fully remote periods throughout the 2020-21 school year. Meals will be available at Davies Middle School on Wednesdays for 5-7 days of meals via distribution (pickup). Those meals include breakfasts and lunches (7 days of meals, from Thursday through Tuesday). We will also solicit delivery requests from our families and provide same-day delivery at no cost. Guidance, CST, and administration will contact every family to determine whether any food service is required.

Facilities :

The HTSD successfully maintained our three facilities during the 2020 fully remote closure and our fully remote and hybrid learning environments for the 2020-21 school year. HTSD adjusted our staffing and scheduling to ensure full compliance with all county and state guidelines. Again, we will follow all directives should we be placed in a virtual or remote environment.

As indicated on the NJDOE LEA Checklist for Virtual or Remote Instruction Programs for the 2024-25 school year, the following considerations are explained below:

a. Accelerated learning opportunities
We will continue our rigorous Gifted & Talented program. HTSD will continue to utilize Success Maker, which

places students at their level for ELA in grades K-8 and for mathematics in grades 6-8.

b. Social and emotional health of staff and students

We use our student SEL programs, including Second Step, Nurtured Heart, and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, to provide staff with opportunities to address their social-emotional needs. These include spirit days, book clubs, and common planning time during the school day. Specific needs can be submitted to the Administration.

c. Title I Extended Learning Programs
Currently, we have a small number of qualifying Title I students. We can offer extended learning programs, in accordance with the extra-help time all teaching staff members contractually require—21st Century Community Learning Center Programs. We embed 21st-century skills into our curriculum.

d. Credit recovery - Our program is not credit-bound; therefore, this is not applicable.

e. Other extended student learning opportunities/extracurricular activities
Our teaching staff must have 60 minutes per week of extra help for students to provide extended learning opportunities. We offer a variety of extracurricular activities (before and after school) and plan to continue them in a virtual or remote learning environment.

f. Transportation
We provide transportation services through Shepard, a third-party vendor, for running

extracurricular programs. We have five district buses if needed.

g. Childcare

We collaborate with our Community Education program to provide before and after-school childcare via Kids' Corner.

h. Community Programming

We work closely with community organizations, including the Community Ed program.

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