

Emergency School Health-Related Closure Plan



BULLETIN: As of Governor Murphy’s May 4, 2020, declaration announcing that the closure of all New Jersey schools will remain in effect until June 30, 2020, the High Point School of Bergen County formally acknowledges the continuing adoption and implementation of the following distance learning plan (which has been in effect, with applicable updates, since March 16) until the end of school year 2019–2020. At present, plans are underway to move advancements and graduation to an online environment in an effort to acknowledge and celebrate our students’ achievements and provide them with as many normative end-of-year observations and events as possible under current circumstances.

Summary Statement

In response to the closure of all Bergen County schools announced on Friday, March 13, 2020, due to the health risks posed by COVID-19, the High Point School of Bergen County began, as of Monday, March 16, implementing our preparedness plan to transition to a homebound services model by which our students will continue to receive their academic instruction and therapeutic services, on a daily (Monday–Friday) basis, during the span of regular school hours (8:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.), by their regular school teachers, teaching assistants, and support faculty. Because all of our enrolled students already receive highly individualized instruction informed by their special education needs, profiles, and diagnoses, homebound instructional services will also be highly individualized to both minimize the interruption of their normative academic and behavioral intervention plans and improve carryover of instruction regardless of the student’s current learning environment.

Homebound instruction will be provided to eligible students utilizing online technology, facilitated by special education instructors delivering services remotely, in the students’ home environment only as allowed by Bergen County protocols.

Home Instruction: Scope & Intent

NJAC 6A:16-10 authorizes the use of “home instruction services” as follows:

“A 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, may receive Home Instruction services.”

Accordingly, the High Point School of Bergen County will provide home instruction for eligible students using our existing staff, who meet the requirements as New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) certified and highly qualified teachers and who are knowledgeable of and experienced with home instruction programs and procedures.

As per state guidelines, a classified student may have his or her Individualized Education Program (IEP) implemented through one-to-one instruction at home or in another setting when no other program option is appropriate/available, given that instruction is provided for no fewer than 10 hours per week. As such, the High Point School will ensure that each eligible student receives at least 10 hours’ remote instruction, although we feel confident that maintaining our regular academic schedule, including online teacher-directed instruction and coursework, would extend beyond this minimum.

Research has shown that homebound services create a unique and positive experience for students and teachers alike, affording teachers an opportunity to observe the home environment and family dynamics more closely than they can from within the brick-and-mortar school building. Teachers can build stronger ties with families, along with closer bonds with their students, as a result of this change of venue that amplifies one-on-one interaction. For these reasons and more, we feel we can minimize potential loss of progress, momentum, or connection as a result of the home instruction mandate that must be enforced to respond to county-, state-, and/or national-level requirements for temporary school closures.

Important Note: Ongoing Communication with Students’ Families

Staying in touch with our student families is absolutely vital to the constructive implementation of all plan details that follow, and so our comprehensive team approach has been to prioritize ongoing communication with parents/guardians and students alike. Because our school population is relatively small, this allows us to maintain **constant** contact (virtually daily) with our families, who are warmly receiving and reacting to our frequent, open invitations to call, text, or email the School Supervisor and their child’s teacher and social worker with any questions, concerns, or requests for support. In addition to the notifications and updates we send out on a weekly basis as part of our emergency closure plan, we’ve created a landing page (<https://highpointschool.com/school-closure-information-updates/>) on our website (<https://highpointschool.com>) dedicated exclusively to developing news and updates about the indefinite school closure. Parents receive automated text alerts when new updates are posted.

Component 1: Equitable Access to Instruction

The High Point School of Bergen County currently enrolls 66 students from 28 neighboring school districts, in grades 6–12, with this further breakdown in demographics:

HPS of Bergen County, 2010–2020 Student Population Demographics			
Total # of Students	66		
Disability Category:		Gender:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviorally Disabled (BD) • <i>Also:</i> Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) • <i>Also:</i> Multiple Disabilities (MD) (including but not limited to ADHD, bipolar) 	66 10 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Males • Females 	53 13
Grade Level:		Background:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6th • 7th • 8th • 9th • 10th • 11th • 12th 	* * * * 13 13 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caucasian • African American • Hispanic 	* 30 30

We have ensured that all of High Point’s “Students with Disabilities” are receiving equitable access to instruction via a combination of readily accessible resources we’ve adopted:

Primary Tools / Methodologies Used & Made Available to All Students

- Streaming video platforms
- Live chats (on an individual, group, or full-class basis)
- Web conferencing tools
- Telephone/email correspondence between staff and both parents *and* students
- Text e-blast alerts
- Virtual office hours
- Hard-copy transmission of printed assignments / work packets to supplement online content

These means of delivery encourage live participation and interaction, as well as offer the ability to capture screens, share audio and visual materials, and exchange student information and content as needed.

To ensure that all students have equal access to these resources, the school leadership team conducted **home surveys** in early March to determine the available technology and computer devices in each student’s home. Any homes lacking adequate hardware were supplied with computer devices (e.g., Chromebooks) that enable online delivery of services; and students lacking Internet access were directed to local cable companies offering limited-time free service and basic equipment to qualifying families.

Furthermore, all students and their families have access to any kind of tech support they need from our regular IT department so that they can continue to receive instruction aligned with their age-appropriate needs and grade-level benchmarks, per their IEPs (*see Component 2 below*). Students receive the bulk of their instruction through online channels, supplemented by hard-copy materials and work packets delivered to the home by the school (accompanied by prepaid-postage return envelopes for completed assignments).

Secure Videoconferencing Platform for the Provision of Special Education Instruction & Related Services

High Point School has contracted with a company called **Prentgraf Ltd.** for the provision of a private **Zoom** account to enable a two-way, secure, encrypted connection to ensure privacy, safety, and HIPAA, FERPA, and COPPA compliance. Prentgraf provides High Point with private video rooms in which staff and students connect, live, in real time, face-to-face. This connection can be made via any Internet-connected device with audiovisual functionality—whether that’s desktop, laptop, tablet, or smartphone—which eliminates all barriers to access for all of our students. Each Zoom session can accommodate up to 100 participants, so group instruction, when that’s the preferred teaching vehicle per context, does not present an issue at all.

Prentgraf and HPS’s IT department have collaborated to make available any training and technical assistance requested by our teachers, therapists, and support personnel so that they can deliver comprehensive education plans as equitable as possible to those provided in the classroom setting.

Equitable Access to Instruction per Individual Student Needs & Levels of Functionality

Details about High Point’s differentiated instructional approaches are provided in Component 2 and Component 5, per the requested ordering and presentation of this plan from the State of New Jersey Department of Education. However, it is important to note here—and imperative to stress from the start—that because our school is dedicated exclusively to special education students, **individual IEPs drive and inform instruction** far more than grade band or an expected level of functionality based on a student’s age or performance on a standardized test.

Each of our students has such a **unique profile**, in fact, that instructional time, class assignments, independent work, and growth goals differ for each and every one. We must teach to their current level of ability so as to continue meaningfully engaging with them, holding their trust, and promoting their self-confidence, while simultaneously (and sometimes even subtly) motivating them to aspire to greater heights—often with real-world examples of how certain skills and proficiencies will facilitate access to their future goals and how what they’re learning in school readily applies to the outside world.

That said, we of course use the Core Curriculum, per grade level, as the basis of our lesson plans and the guiding force of what benchmarks our students must meet to advance to the next grade. And that’s actually very important to them—our middle schoolers very much want to become high schoolers, and our high schoolers very much look forward to high school graduation, as they see it as a doorway to more independent living and less academic-bound pursuits of their personal aims. So the challenge with BD students is how to get them there—tying their in-school learning to their out-of-school objectives so they keep meeting milestones to the greatest extent possible given their exceptionalities and maximizing their growth in ways that are appropriate and realistic for them.

To do so, we employ *very* creative means to merge instructional imperatives with personal interests. For example, for a ninth-grade student who wants to be a famous singer/songwriter when she grows up, her ELA instructional plan for a week incorporated poetry reading and writing, reframed particularly for her as reading and writing song lyrics that required particular vocabulary words, syntax structure, use of pronouns, and verb and noun identification per line. Another student, an eighth grader, was resistant to his mathematics worksheets and online word problems; eager to be a “grown-up,” his teacher recast his addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division assignments in terms of going grocery shopping online, adding up all the items, configuring the sales tax, returning some items for a new total, and so forth. He made a pie chart showing percentages of his monthly budget that go to rent, car payment, cell phone payment, etc. These are just a few examples illustrating how High Point’s staff sculpts independent learning to achieve grade-level goals as fully as possible.

In terms of actual instructional time, we devise instructional plans and course assignments to align with our regular six-hour school day (8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.), with time allotted for breaks and meals, as also allowed in school. Core subjects are given precedence over elective course material to keep students focused on mandatory areas of literacy. Though we cannot guarantee from afar that all students are actively participating for the full six-hour span each Monday–Friday, we can adequately and accurately assess progress through assignment fulfillment, attendance at regularly scheduled teacher-student videoconferences, and log-in hours on our online learning platforms; as a result of what we observe, we sometimes spend more online time with one student than another, we will practically and patiently revisit an assignment or project for as long as it takes to achieve the expected outcome, and additional staff members are brought in as needed to address newly arising barriers to learning or issues attributable to the virtual environment.

In terms of the virtual and remote nature of these instructional plans, they do not significantly differ from the same lesson plans that were already in place for the school year. We’re simply delivering them online instead of in person—using a computerized whiteboard, for instance, in lieu of the classroom blackboard, and using electronic markup tools to grade assignments instead of the traditional pen/pencil. Similarly, our in-school classrooms contain no more than 11 students per classroom, and we’re maintaining that ratio when group learning applies.

As noted earlier, further details about the actual tools, systems, processes, and assessment measures being employed to carry out our uncommonly personalized learning plans appear below in the relevant sections.

Component 2: Addressing Special Education Needs

Through our comprehensive distance learning plan, High Point is providing special education instruction and IEP fulfillment as close as possible, and to the greatest extent possible, as we do in the physical classroom setting. In other words, we're making great efforts to maintain "business as usual" when it comes to **staff-to-student connections, relationships, and interactions**, because we're supremely aware of how to effectively reach and teach our specific student populations. Accordingly, in-person **one-on-one attention** has simply been replaced with on-screen one-on-one attention, with student tracking and progress monitoring conducted along our usual channels. Our students are accustomed to both teacher-directed and self-directed academic studies, to both online and traditional textbook delivery of instruction materials, and to regularly scheduled tutorial time with their teachers and teaching assistants, and all of that is still being upheld to the best of our ability through all available means, to minimize any potential repercussions of distance learning and the possible learning gaps that can accompany them.

The vast array of online education programs that are available today have been designed to convey the same knowledge and impart the same skills as traditional curricular materials do, so it's been relatively easy and convenient for our teaching staff to adapt their regular approaches to the online teaching environment. In most cases of virtual teaching versus in-person instruction, the only notable difference is the delivery model, which, in fact, has been shown to actually enhance and enrich the learning experience for students who are more engaged with and stimulated by technology. As such, we are not expecting significant deceleration of learning due to homebound instruction; rather, we see online instruction as a way of further empowering our students to learn by doing and to continue to display meaningful and measurable positive outcomes using educational software and programs with built-in progress monitoring and automated report capabilities.

Primary Software & Online Education Programs Used

High Point School is utilizing the following online products and platforms on an as-needed basis to promote teacher-to-student remote interaction and advance online learning:

- Renaissance Star 360 (our normative and regular means of online education and progress monitoring)
- Apex Learning Virtual School (recently added to our curriculum in March, per the shift to remote learning)
- Google Classroom
- Nearpod
- NewsELA
- Khan Academy

Renaissance Star 360

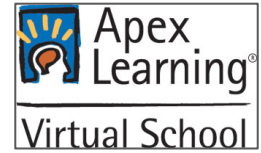
As the name implies, the Renaissance line of products and solutions covers the full range of online education: **literacy programs** (concentrated on math and reading/ELA), **customized assessments**, and **growth initiatives**. High Point has been a longtime adopter of this award-winning, research-based computerized tool used in 34,000 U.S. schools and districts, on board with its mission of

"bringing assessment-driven personalized practice and digital access together to spark amazing growth." Star Assessments have built-in cutting-edge computer-adaptive technology, are based on 30+ years of data about how children learn and grow, and provide educators with accurate, reliable data about their students' achievement and growth. Our students benefit most from **personalized and individualized interventions**, and Star Assessments are highly rated by the National Center for Intensive Intervention. We use these assessments on a continual basis to track student progress and modify learning plans en route to meeting IEP goals.



Apex Learning Virtual School

To supplement (but not substitute for) staff-led instruction and curriculum, HPS is using Apex Learning Virtual School—a fully accredited online private high school that offers full- and part-time options to students who need high-quality alternative education. Through Apex, we can track online attendance and student log-in hours on the platform. Additional benefits of the platform include:



- Apex boasts an impressive successful pass rate of 90%, with participating students doing better than the national average in subsequent related courses.
- Live academic support is available, in real time, from on-call teachers and tutors via text and video chats.
- The acclaimed courses center on active, personalized learning in which students proceed at their own pace, assisted by such built-in educational tools as text to speech, simulations, and study guides.
- Students are supported by a full team of adults consisting of teachers, counselors, coaches, and tutors.
- ALVS has been fully accredited by the NWAC, an accreditation division of AdvancED, since 1999.

(See Component 5 below for additional and detailed information on how High Point’s distance learning plan is maintaining differentiated instruction to meet the individualized needs of our special education students.)

Continued Fulfillment of IEP Requirements

IEPs are the central driving force of High Point School’s instructional approaches and procedures, and for this reason, they’ve received our central focus such that (a) **our IEP process has remained unchanged** throughout the health crisis and (2) **adherence to student IEP requirements remains fully intact**.

- All regularly scheduled IEP meetings are taking place as originally planned.
- Each student’s district case manager initiates and conducts the meeting, scheduling it over Zoom, Google Meet, or teleconference call.
- Attendees (teachers, parents, therapists, social workers, district personnel, etc.) then join by their chosen preferred means, either by conference call or video conference.
- Collaboration and cooperation with our sending districts has been proceeding very nicely, with all concerned parties in full agreement that these meetings are vital to guarantee ongoing student access to all necessary materials and resources, student tracking, and progress monitoring.
- To allow for the uninterrupted continuance of these measures, case managers for each student are provided with weekly Educational Verification Log Sheets that detail such parameters as daily attendance, subject-matter performance, IEP goal achievement, IEP objective attainment, length of educational services, type of educational services (delivery format), and provision of related services.
- On the basis of HPS’s normative ongoing data collection represented in log sheets and other relevant documentation, IEPs are evaluated and reevaluated as needed.
- Internal evaluation to ensure that our students are following IEP protocols is conducted using each student’s Excel spreadsheet, which includes daily assignments, IEP goals addressed, and progress made on these goals. These quantitative grids not only document student and staff efforts, but hold school administration accountable to the highest standards. When and if progress slows or stalls, adjustments and modifications are immediately made. *(See addendum for sample one-week remote learning daily log.)*
- As covered above, Renaissance Star Assessments also facilitate the evaluation/reevaluation process by providing reliable, real-time data that allows us to deliver the right instruction, at the right time, for the right reason. Rather than overwhelming educators and students with testing, the goal of Ren Star is to streamline assessments that inform instruction by generating a complete view of a student’s progress at the grade-school level, including achievement and growth measures.

- Equipped with these tools, High Point teachers are able to compare actual instruction to actual student performance and then bring their recommendations for any warranted IEP revisions to the larger team meetings.

Continued Fulfillment of IEP-Prescribed Related Services

An important aspect of the student IEP is the provision of related services deemed appropriate for that child’s continued development, nurturance, and growth.

Social work services and **mental health/behavioral counseling services** are still being delivered by our own staff and social workers. This continuity in personal interaction with the same counselors our students have come to know and trust is playing a central role in their emotional well-being and balance in this very emotionally trying time.

Speech-language and **occupational therapy** are being delivered by **Invo Healthcare**, with whom we have provisionally contracted for the duration of the school closure for the ongoing delivery of prescribed therapies so that our students can continue to work toward their identified outcomes and milestones.

Component 3: Addressing ELL and Bilingual Needs

High Point is fortunate to have both a School Supervisor and Lead Teacher who are bilingual, completely fluent in Spanish. Our population of SY 2019–2020 students are all native English speakers, so there are no current access issues to speak of, and yet it’s always been a part of our standard program procedures to accommodate and assist ELL and ESL learners, parents, and family members thusly:

- Each non-native English-speaking student household is assigned one direct contact with a staff member who speaks their native tongue; if we do not have such a member on staff, we subcontract with a translator who can provide one-on-one communication with the family, both by voice and in writing.
- Progress reports, needs assessments, and IEP documents are provided in hard copy to all Spanish-speaking parents, in the event that computerized documentation or English-language materials would not be fully comprehended.
- Mental health services are offered in Spanish, as are any other health-related resources—like doctors, clinics, agencies—to assist Latin communities.
- HPS’s School Supervisor acts as communication liaison with residential facilities that do not provide translation services and for any issues that present to parents (like knowing their child’s rights).
- We provide assistance filling out any forms relevant to student financial aid for postsecondary education under DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) policy.
- HPS participates in workplace readiness initiatives with local Latin organizations focused on uplifting their community populations.

Additionally, whenever requested, all school paperwork is available in translated form, as are all homework assignments; and HPS students can take advantage of online programs’ built-in translation capabilities, as needed.

Component 4: Safe Delivery of Meals

HPS provides weekly meal delivery services to our families in need through local supermarkets in our students’ towns. Need is determined by a concerted outreach effort to our families, whereby we regularly and routinely contact them and remind them that help is available and forthcoming for the asking. Our delivery of required or requested goods—whether arranged through the store’s delivery service or delivered by our own staff at safe designated meeting places—extends beyond just food to various sundries and such.

We have also supplied lists of free meal plans and food pantries in our communities, both sent home and posted online on our school's dedicated COVID-related school closure information page at: <https://highpointschool.com/school-closure-information-updates/>.

Please see the attached Food & Relief Supplies: Plans & Procedures info sheet for further information.

Component 5: Length of Virtual or Remote Instruction

Of paramount importance in keeping our students on track and in tune with their individualized academic and behavioral plans is sustaining our normative forms and formats of learning, to optimize and maximize growth and advancement, regardless of the duration of homebound instruction and the challenges it can present.

Whether we're teaching in the classroom or over the computer screen, High Point School remains aligned with our foundational instructional principles and guiding educational philosophies, which are heavily informed and influenced by the work of Carol Ann Tomlinson, which centers on **responsive classrooms**, **targeted curriculums for struggling learners**, and **differentiated education in mixed-ability classrooms**.

Differentiated Instruction in a Virtual Environment

High Point students have intensive needs that call for intensive interventions based more on individual learning barriers and ability levels than on grade levels. As such, we implement custom-tailored differentiated instruction along three primary modalities that fully translate to a virtual environment:

1. **Student IEPs:** Each student's IEP is highly specific to the student. It therefore forms the entire framework of instruction and wraparound services prescribed for that student's continual progress and growth and it's therefore the first and foremost source of our lesson planning and outreach via distance learning. Basically, the student IEP is the GPS system by which we navigate from point A to point B—assessing their current performance level and setting goals that proceed upward from that level.
2. **Teacher Assessment:** This baseline assessment—conducted regularly and adapted as needed just as often—is done mainly by the teacher, via a combination of observation, interaction, and analysis. Every single one of our special ed students has a different profile and so each receives a different learning plan, constructed by the home-room teacher who knows their capabilities and deficits best. The special education teacher determines what instruction should be teacher-supported and what can be done independently. We then test and monitor the efficacy of customized lesson plans with:
3. **Renaissance Star Assessments:** This evidenced-based online compilation of subject-matter-focused assessments and interventional instruction programs differentiates each student's reading and math levels. Because the tests are computer-adaptive, they adjust to each answer the student provides. On the basis of the footprints left behind by this data collection, teachers craft assignments in accordance with grade-level benchmarks and IEP objectives and student workloads are both aligned with their current performance and directed at manageable, incremental progress beyond current performance.

Note: Since March 2020, differentiated instruction is also provided through **Apex Learning**, student engagement with which HPS tracks as regularly as Renaissance participation. Based on performance activity and levels in Apex, students are allocated assignments in multiple subject areas to advance their present skills acquisition and mastery.

Scheduling Differentiated Instruction in a Virtual Environment

All of the previously noted modalities are delivered on a daily basis, during the course of our regular school hours: 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Monday–Friday. Students may, of course, opt to complete their independent work at other times—we have limited control over their hourly actions when they’re working from home, replete with all the distractions and interruptions and even other family responsibilities they may share there—but what we’re looking at most closely is that they do indeed complete the work expected of them, that it’s turned in on time regardless of how they’re self-motivating in this mandatory distance-learning environment.

There are no hard-and-fast rules that we’ve instituted—primarily because we cannot enforce them like we can in the physical presence of our students within the school building—but in general, we aim to ensure equal coverage of subject-matter assignments, teacher-led instruction, support services, and progress monitoring per this flexible scheduling framework:

- **8:30–10:30:** Students are expected to complete their requisite daily and weekly assignments (giving them time to “catch up” from yesterday, if needed)—so this is the independent work span, often dedicated to their hard-copy work packet assignments, so that they’re ready for viewing and discussing when they meet with their instructors later.
- **10:30–12:30:** Online check-ins commence and scheduled telecommunication/online meetings are normatively held midday, with our teachers, teaching assistants, school leaders, and specialty personnel, alternately and as needed, making phone calls, holding Zoom chats, and attending Google Meets to follow up on individual workloads, to identify problem areas that need resolution, to deliver personalized instruction—in both one-on-one, small-group, and full-class (<11 students) constructions—and to assertively encourage and prompt the students to immediately proceed to their afternoon sessions.
- **12:30–2:30:** Based on staff recommendations for next steps, students are expected to turn to their online learning programs now, which include virtual sessions for their IEP-prescribed related services, if applicable. Renaissance and Apex participation is the goal of this time span, so that we can better assess absorption of the day’s learning, make adjustments to future weekly lesson plans, and continue propelling the students’ ability and empowerment to self-motivate and self-regulate.

Overall Approach to Differentiated Instruction in a Virtual Environment

From a more substantive perspective over just a time-allotment approach, we can summarize our differentiated distance-learning plan thusly:

Daily instructional time consists of direct curriculum-based instruction provided by the lead teacher in each classroom in a virtual group meeting and/or by individual telecommunication. During instruction with teacher/teaching assistant, each lesson is supported by student goals and objectives delineated in each student’s IEP. High Point utilizes a guided-practice approach, currently via teleinterventions conducted on digital platforms including Google Meets and Zoom.

Our guided-practice model combines independent practice with remote-learning instruction tools, including the Renaissance and Apex learning systems detailed earlier. Participation on each of these programs is assigned daily to each student and is tailored to the student’s IEP-placed reading and math levels.

To supplement our online learning component—and for students who still perform better with traditional means of books-and-paper learning—instructional packets are provided to each student every two weeks. Packages are tracked to ensure receipt, and postage-paid return envelopes are included in each one.

Because attention span and disinterest are real areas of concern with our particular student population, we're finding that a blend of tried-and-true teaching materials and technology-based/technology-enhanced learning is proving most fruitful. Thus, students who prefer online work are still required to attend to their work packets and vice versa. We're incorporating diverse and stimulating content wherever and however we can (e.g., History Channel programs, virtual museum tours, YouTube instructional videos) in an attempt to keep things as well-rounded as we do in our in-school classrooms.

Through this amalgamation of daily telecommunication, online projects, virtual meetings, computerized program log-in records, completed assignments, and direct input from students to their instructional team, we work each day to maintain for our students **comfortability** with this "new normal," **consistency** in their schoolwork and in the ceaseless support of their caretakers, and **confidence** in their abilities and adaptability.

Component 6: Attendance

High Point School of Bergen County's teaching staff and administration is closely monitoring student daily attendance by the following parameters: (1) phone calls home, to check in with and ensure daily student engagement, follow up on assignments, answer questions, and provide assistance; (2) video chats over Zoom with teachers to support student needs; (3) log-in time on Apex Learning; (4) timed participation on the Renaissance platform.

Still, we're trying to re-create real-world learning as closely as possible. So if a student does not log on to their online instructional sessions for the time assigned, just like if they don't show up at school, then they are marked as absent. Just like in the physical classroom as well, students have both IEP goals and work goals that must be achieved. Without hitting those targets, the students don't advance, just as they wouldn't in our school building. We're maintaining our approach of positive reinforcement techniques to incentivize and motivate our students to maintain their regular in-school schedule so that they continue to strive toward desired goals, like graduation and moving-ups.

When absenteeism is suspected or apparent, we take a two-pronged approach:

1. We reach out to the **student** directly, as quickly as possible. A staff member close to the student—usually their lead teacher or social worker—makes one-on-one contact with the student to redirect their efforts and get them back on track. We probe them with open-ended questions to try to get to the root of the matter, we counsel and guide as warranted, and we schedule a remote intervention meeting if deemed helpful with their counselor or favorite instructor. Together, we devise a follow-up plan and elicit the student's cooperation in the plan, making sure they're aware of the ramifications if performance deficits continue.
2. We reach out to the **parents/guardians** directly, as soon as it's deemed advisable. That is, if our initial attempts to motivate the student directly don't produce desired results, we contact the parent by their preferred means (which we have on record: phone call, text, or email) to involve them in addressing and resolving the issue. We provide guidance on overcoming challenges with their kids and on how to assist the home-schooling process; we hold virtual family meetings so that the student knows both school and home are united in refocusing their efforts and that there will be consequences in each setting if absenteeism continues; and if there's a significant issue impeding the child's progress that could be assisted by a third party—like a social services agency to address mental health crises in the home or access to household necessities—then we make arrangements to help the family through their immediate needs.

Component 7: Facilities

Because our school staff and administrators have been coming and going from the school building throughout the duration of the health-related crisis, our regular facility maintenance schedule has been in place without interruption. Accordingly, on a daily basis, our maintenance engineer cleans and sanitizes the facility, including constant and highly conscientious spraying and wiping of all surfaces with approved and recommended products. Additionally, once monthly, we're doing a deep cleaning of the entire building, following rigid standards and procedures applicable to flooring, walls, appliances, furniture, bathrooms, storage areas, etc. There are no plans to either cease or curtail any building operations or amenities—utilities, water, trash removal, security protocols, internet access, and so forth—in anticipation of and in preparation for school reopening.

For measures taken since the onset of the health-related crisis, see the attached Health & Hygiene: Policies & Procedures info sheet, in effect since March 11, 2020.

Component 8: ESY (Extended School Year) Programming

As of the date of this writing, unless precluded by state mandate, High Point is committed to conducting our normative summer program, which runs from **July 6 to August 5, 2020, from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** The school day proceeds much like an RSY school day—with core subjects attended to at the start of the day (~8:30–10:30), to make sure the basics are covered first and foremost—but with the abbreviated time span, subject-matter courses are shorter and each day will include more creative and ESL-oriented projects, to keep summer learning feeling like “summer” for kids who have had a truly unconventional school year.

Although we are hoping for in-person, on-the-premises teaching in our school building, we are prepared to host the program virtually, if state-wide school closures are still in effect over the summer.

If so, ESY programming will proceed as RSY programming has been—with some program aspects mirroring classroom learning to the fullest extent possible and some aspects adapted as needed for distance learning:

- **Preparation:** There will be no ramp-up time needed to implement a remote ESY program, since our staff is already acclimated to the online environment; we will simply carry it over from June to July–August.
- **Staffing & Resources:** Per usual, our regular full-time staff will be staffing the ESY program, and we will retain Zoom, Invo Healthcare, and all of our other contracted online services and providers to continue to meet our students' needs and fulfill their IEP goals.
- **21st Century Learning & Incorporation of STEM:** HPS has always taken a holistic, comprehensive approach to special education in exceptional agreement with 21st century learning principles. But because summer education allows some freedom from standardized-testing preparation and space beyond a focus on math and reading literacy, we can incorporate more 21st century learning approaches into the summer curriculum, including project-driven instruction, more diverse content materials, heightened collaborative learning that aims to empower our students as active participants in their own education, and units designed to cultivate critical thinking. More than anything, we'll be concentrating on generalization of skills, for carryover application into real-world settings.

Summer programming also allows more room for STEM-oriented learning—the “technology” element of the curriculum automatically fortified in the distance-learning environment. Our summer learning curriculum will likely not just depend on computerized means of delivery and connection, but we're planning to utilize an array of online software and technology-enabled instructional modes that feature scientific and mathematical concepts and elements: computerized whiteboards, educational video

games, fun experiments that can be done at home with common household materials, scavenger hunts in backyards and neighborhoods, nature walks where students will collect specimens and bring them back to the virtual space for inspection and discussion. As a rule, HPS's summer learning projects are designed to appeal to our students particular interests and talents.

- **Credit Recovery:** Apex Learning Virtual School will be particularly advantageous this summer, since one of the hallmarks of the program is credit recovery. Through this valuable means, any and all of our students who wish to make up any missed time and lagged coursework can do so, at their own pace and at the level of effort they invest. This is especially applicable to our high school juniors and seniors looking to get back on or stay on track for high school graduation. Teachers and counselors will certainly guide and encourage HPS students to actively engage in this effort, but self-motivated students can benefit immensely from the credit recovery opportunities provided.
- **Summer Learning Loss:** Summer learning loss is *always* a concern—both in general education and special education—and this year, all of America (all of the world, actually) is obviously particularly concerned about widening any and all gaps created by mandated school closures throughout the spring 2020 semester. Several measures are being put in place to minimize learning loss by maximizing the instruments we have at our disposal:

First off, we're encouraged by the high demand from our sending districts for substantial enrollment in our ESY program with the dual goal of (1) avoiding regression and (2) maintaining performance levels. It goes without saying that a far shorter break in regular instruction and far greater access to our students than we traditionally have over the summer will work to lessen learning loss.

Our entire education staff constantly assess our students, of course, but at present, we're magnifying our focus on spotting regressions attributable to remote learning—to the simple fact that we've lost in-person face-to-face social interaction and the social skills inherent in actual contact between individuals. Most years, "slippage" is limited to the times when we're not in the physical presence of our learners, but because that span has been extended this year, we're devising new means to meet our students through this new mode of communication. Some SEL examples that we're working into our summer program: virtual group picnics for lunch, where we all eat the same delivered food at the same time; word games and questionnaires that students will engage in online together; and virtual field trips that take us to zoos, museums, aquariums, and landmarks worldwide (e.g., <https://padlet.com/davidaderhold/VirtualExperiences>).

On the academic side, all students need a certain amount of time to "recall" and "recoup" previously learned abilities, and special education students often need more time to do this. We're committed to granting that time through Ren Star—leveraging the program to not just assess if our students are maintaining or progressing, but to determine if they are regressing. If any regression is noted, serious interventions are undertaken to remediate the issue by the student's education team.

Additionally, Apex is particularly well suited to mitigating regression because of its virtually limitless opportunities for students to revisit material not yet mastered, to make up missed assignments, to improve performance on completed assignments, and its 24/7 access .

All this said, the best remedy for regression is to prevent it from happening in the first place—to catch our students before they fall. In an effort to accomplish this to the greatest extent possible, our teachers are supplementing their own virtual visits to our students' homes by recruiting parents to engage in age-appropriate recommended activities with their kids during this shelter-at-home span, such as: reading together, assigning book reports on a summer reading list, having students calculate grocery bills, do measurements for cooking recipes, circle vocabulary words in printed materials, journal or blog, start a scrapbook, conduct mock job interviews, and write short stories and poems.

In any and all ways possible, the entire High Point Family is making the best of the situation—taking advantage of Zoom, offering on-call counseling sessions, assisting students with the online platforms they’re accessing from home, making phone calls and house calls—to sustain and stimulate regular day-to-day learning and instruction in this time of unprecedented distance and irregularity.

Component 10: Posted on Website

This plan is posted on our school website at <https://highpointschool.com/school-closure-information-updates/>, under the **HPS School Closure Plan** heading. If and as updates are made to this plan, we will likewise update the posted version for public access.

Component 11: List of Essential Employees

See addendum to this plan.

Component 12: Sharing Plan

The High Point School of Bergen County has followed all district, county, and state requests for completing this plan and its accompanying checklist, revising it multiple times per the oversight of our guiding county office, posting it on our website, and emailing it to the designated parties in the memo dated May 6, 2020, from the Bergen County Education Office. It is fully and openly available both online and through direct email transmission to all our sending districts, including a point-of-contact individual for any follow-up questions or clarification.

We have reviewed all APSSD COVID-19 guidance posted at <https://www.nj.gov/education/covid19/boardops/apssd.shtml> and believe, in all good faith, that we have fulfilled all guidelines (e.g., staying in communication with our sending districts, maintaining our normative business operations) to the greatest extent available to us and/or are prepared to fulfill any guideline that has not yet become applicable (e.g., PTO for any staff member who may become ill with the virus). To keep abreast of all ongoing developments, we tune in to all gubernatorial broadcasts, read all press releases, and receive notifications from our educational colleagues and larger network. When new requirements are broadcast, we attend to them posthaste to the very best of our ability and will continue to do so without delay or qualification.

Contact Information

For further information about the High Point School Emergency Health-Related Closure Plan’s protocols and measures, please contact:

Cindy Pulido
Supervisor, HIGH POINT SCHOOL OF BERGEN COUNTY
Phone: 973-574-0344
Email: cpulido@highpointschool.com
highpointschool.com