



Mastery Charter Schools of Camden: NJ Remote Instruction Plan

Overview

This Remote Instruction Plan would be implemented during a district closure lasting more than three consecutive school days due to a declared state of emergency, declared public health emergency, or a directive by the appropriate health agency or officer to institute a public health-related closure. As a requirement of P.L.2020, c.27, this law and the plan provide for the continuity of instruction in the event of a public-health related district closure, in addition to COVID.

NJ Remote Instruction Plan must answer the following questions:

1. The plan outlines how virtual or remote instruction will be provided to students who may not have access to sufficient broadband, or to any technology required for virtual or remote instruction. The program should account for measuring and addressing any ongoing digital divide that exists, whether it be network access or lack of sufficient access to devices.
2. The plan addresses the impact of virtual or remote instruction on the school lunch and school breakfast programs. The plan should contain how the LEA will provide continued safe delivery of meals to eligible students.
3. The plan contains the required length of a virtual or remote instruction day. The minimum hours of instruction for a virtual or remote day is four hours excluding lunch and recess.

Executive Summary

At Mastery it is our mission that all students learn the academic and personal skills they need to be truly prepared for postsecondary success and able to pursue their dreams. Given our mission, our most important task is to ensure we can safely educate our students, attend to the emotional well-being of our school community, and lay the foundation for a successful school year that accelerates learning. If we have learned anything in the pandemic, it has taught us the importance of designing an educational plan that will prioritize the health and welfare of our students and can weather a changing environment of oscillating school closures while continuing to provide educational excellence. The flexible instruction model laid out in the following pages is designed to address the question: How will Mastery maintain quality instruction, provide a supportive learning experience, and keep all members of the Mastery community safe during the pandemic's uncertain impact on building closures? This proposal summarizes key elements of our remote instruction plan that supports high engagement and can be employed in a full distance learning mode (DLM).

Based on national best practices, research and lessons learned from our implementation of Mastery's flexible learning model (FLM) we have developed the three key guiding principles that are driving our remote instruction plan for our students:

1. We are striving to **maximize engagement in learning** for our students

2. We are **honoring family feedback** that was received during the SY20-21 virtual instruction period
3. We are attending to the whole child through a holistic **student experience**.

Our FLM approach will not serve as a fill-in; rather, we will maintain the same high expectations parents have come to expect from Mastery. We will push hard to make sure students continue to learn and achieve at the highest levels. In our FLM, when we could maintain the same curricula and approaches, we did so in an effort to ensure our teachers and leaders continue to develop familiarity and expertise and our students have a continuity of experience. Yet, while the FLM maintains much of the Mastery model, it is also serving to move Mastery forward in a few key domains: Student Independence, 21st Century Skills, Differentiation, and Course Offerings & Advancement. These elements have always existed within our model and the current environment has provided a unique opportunity to take bold steps forward now.

Mastery's Flexible Learning Model rests on the foundation of access to technology. In order to ensure challenges related to the pandemic do not overly hinder a student's academic experience, all Mastery students will be equipped with a computer and internet access at home and in school. In order to ensure equitable access to the internet and technology for all families and students in a remote instruction model, Mastery has been committed to providing 1-to-1 computers for all students and ensuring home Internet access for all students.

In Spring 2020 when schools were initially closed due to COVID-19, each of our schools contacted all families to determine which students and families required access to computers. Assistant Principals of Operations (APOs) will continue to monitor families and students that require computers throughout SY21-22 to ensure that 100% of our students have access to a computer to support virtual learning during distance learning mode.

Key elements of our 1-to-1 computing plan include:

- Touchscreen Chromebooks for K-2 students or non-touchscreen Chromebooks for 3-12 students
- All computers come with one charger and a hard zipper sleeve. The computer should be kept inside the hard zipper sleeve at all times.
- Headphones for every K-2 student or earbuds for every 3-12 student

Mastery's Home Internet Access Program will ensure 100% of our students have an internet connection throughout the year. Eligible families will receive financial assistance to purchase home internet from our partner service providers (Comcast Internet Essentials and T-Mobile). Schools will support families in navigating the application & enrollment process, which will happen on a rolling basis.

Prior to a remote instruction day, students will have a protocol they follow to inform their teacher that they are having technology issues and are unable to join live instruction sessions. If a student has trouble accessing materials or live instruction they can email support@masterycharter.org and will be assisted by a Mastery technology support person who is able to troubleshoot issues remotely. Students will also have the telephone number for their teacher who will be able to assist with more general questions. Once that initial check-in occurs, a staff person will work remotely to solve the issue. If the problem persists and the student is unable to access instructional work via their computer and internet

connection, school staff will provide the student with printed academic assignments they can complete at home on their own. Each school will have a designated staff person who will:

- Reach out to families about their at-home learning work and tasks
- Provide support with:
 - Logging into and navigating online resources
 - Providing simple tutoring via phone
 - Answering instructional questions related to the home academic practice packet or online learning
 - Once a student reaches out to their teacher, s/he will call back and provide academic support ASAP

In addition to having on-call technology support, we will ensure that students have access to a Home Academic Practice (HAP) packet which will have printed lessons and materials that reflect the topics being covered in class. The Home Academic Practice packet provides independent and parent-supported lessons that will reinforce foundational skills designed to keep students academically engaged during remote instruction days. Students will receive a customized packet that includes grade level assignments and activities that correspond with the scope and sequence for the year.

NOTE: Please note Tier 3 students with IEPs, English Learners (ELP 1 and 2), and Low Incidence students will receive modified packets that align with their functional level.

School Day Parameters

When schools are closed and/or students are learning remotely our **Distance Learning Mode (DLM)** will be utilized. In our DLM there is both a *Teacher Delivered* component and an *Online Independent* component, with **Schoology** - our network Learning Management System - providing the platform to support students with accessing content and assignments. During DLM, the teacher delivered component is provided via a combination of synchronous, asynchronous, and Zoom support sessions to maximize student growth learning to the greatest possible extent. Key components of this model include:

- The program will include both live teacher-led instruction and self-guided activities. Schools will also provide individual and small group supports – by phone and/or online.
- Teachers will be supported to provide additional activities that bring joy, build school community and create a sense of belonging for every student – we want every student and family to feel supported in this very challenging time.
- Requires at least 1 hour / day of family support

Prior to the start of the school year, leadership teams have created a virtual instruction plan that includes a tentative schedule, zoom information and work that aligns to our yearlong academic scope and sequence pacing guides. In the beginning of the school year, teachers have explained to students the purpose, structure and expectations of virtual instruction days in case of a school closure. At the start of each report period, teachers will provide students with a general outline of a schedule in case of emergencies (both hard and soft copies will be provided). This general schedule would include class name, time and zoom information. These resources will be reviewed and updated each report period.

During remote instruction, students will be expected to log in to Zoom for live instruction and Schoology, our learning management platform, to complete independent assignments and practice. Additionally, all students will have a list of educational partner sites (Reading Lexia, Zearn, etc.) that will grant them access to pre-recorded lessons and supplemental learning activities for independent practice.

Below are details on the amount of expected instructional time on remote instruction days for each grade cohort:

- **K-2 Schedules:** Math- 50 minutes of live instruction, 35 minutes of independent practice; ELA: 50 minutes of live instruction per subject, 35 minutes' independent practice using educational programs; 20 minutes of Social Emotional learning; 50 minutes of additional responsive time with teachers
- **3-8 Schedules:** Math- 60 minutes of live instruction, 35 minutes of independent practice; ELA 60 minutes of live instruction, 45 minutes of independent practice; 20 minutes of Social Emotional learning; 40 minutes of additional responsive time with teachers
- **High School:** Math- 60-90 minutes of live instruction (minutes based on specific course), 45 minutes of independent practice; ELA- 50 minutes of live instruction, 50 minutes of independent practice; Science- 45 minutes of live instruction; 20 minutes of Social Emotional learning; 45 minutes of additional responsive time with teachers.

Note: These will be the main requirements of a remote instruction day, but schools will have the option to build out and offer additional classes and supports based on staff capacity.

Measuring Student Growth & Learning

During DLM, teachers will collect daily exit tickets from all students in order to gather formative assessment data on student learning and will use this instructional data to drive decisions on re-teaching and upcoming lessons to ensure students master standards. In addition, we will capture student learning on online learning platforms that students use during DLM (e.g. Reading Lexia, Zearn, iReady, IXL, etc.)- teachers will review data regularly to monitor student progress and inform planning for upcoming lessons.

Students with IEPs

To the greatest extent possible given the constraints of remote and virtual instruction, we will continue to provide interventions and services to students with individualized education plans (IEPs) that we offer during in-person instruction. Our Assistant Principals of Specialized Services and Case Managers will support our teachers in providing modifications and accommodations to assignments and virtual instruction in alignment with each student's IEP. During remote instruction, we will continue document IEP implementation through quarterly progress monitoring of progress towards each student's IEP goals and continuing to hold IEP meetings with families and school stakeholders virtually to identify, evaluate and/or re-evaluate students with disabilities. During remote instruction, Case Managers will notify

families about how services are being implemented to the greatest extent possible during virtual instruction in accordance with IEPs.

English Language Learners

To the greatest extent possible given the constraints of remote and virtual instruction, we will continue to provide supports and services to English Language Learners (ELLs) that we offer during in-person instruction. We will continue to provide bilingual education programming including Spanish Language Arts instruction, an additional period of ESL instruction and other content in English with Sheltered English support for our Molina Lower and Molina Upper students in grades K-6 who are Spanish-dominant ELLs with an English Language Proficiency Level (ELP) less than or equal to 3.0. For K-12 ELLs not in the Bilingual program, they will receive core content in the general education classroom and two periods of ESL instruction. Newcomers will receive replacement ELA with an ESL teacher for one of the two ESL periods. ELL instruction includes differentiation and sheltered instruction to ensure ELLs have access to a high standard of education comparable to their non-ELL peers.

We will provide Spanish language translation for all major family communications during remote instruction to ensure that Spanish-speaking families have access to information they need to support their students and fully engage in virtual instruction. Each of our campuses will provide interpreter support in case Spanish-speaking families need to connect with a school official for a conference or to request additional support for their child.

All Mastery teachers receive training culturally responsive teaching (grounded in Zaretta Hammond's *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*), socio-emotional learning (community-building best practices infused in to our daily morning meeting structure) and trauma-informed teaching that are infused in their daily instructional practices. These strategies will help support any ELLs adversely affected by forced migration from their home country.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken on a daily basis during virtual instruction. Students will be marked as present or absent based on who attends Zoom-based live synchronous instruction lessons each day. When a student is not participating in online instruction and/or submitting assignments, families will receive an email, phone call and/or text message with encouragement and guidance on how to support their child in fully engaging in virtual instruction.

Attendance will be one of several factors considered for promotion and retention decisions. When a student is not experiencing academic success, several factors will be considered prior to recommending retention for the student. Our goal is not to retain students in elementary grades, and retention is strongly discouraged unless the school team and families believe it is the best decision for the student. Schools will follow the process prescribed below to make retention recommendations for students:

1. Any student who fails two or more of their core classes (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies) will be flagged for retention review.

2. The school team will use Light's Retention Scale to examine the additional factors that may influence the retention recommendation (intellectual skills, number of schools attended, age, English-language status, participation of families in school-related activities, preschool experience, student's motivation, attendance, emotional disorders, and conduct patterns.)
3. The school uses the final score derived from Light's Retention Scale to determine if retention would be helpful or harmful to the student.
4. The school presents the results from Light's Retention Scale to the parent(s) of the student and requests feedback.
5. The principal makes the final retention decision.

Retention decisions for students with IEPs must be made by the student's IEP team in accordance with the student's IEP goals. Retention recommendations for English Language Learners must be made in accordance with ELL guidance on grading and in consultation with the ELL instructional staff.

Food Distribution

As stated previously our commitment to the Camden community is not limited to just school instruction and academic achievement but to ensuring we are supporting the whole child during these unprecedented times. During the height of the pandemic, the Camden School Nutrition group (including Camden, Mastery and Uncommon Schools) served over 2.7 million meals to our families, and we are dedicated to continuing to ensure our families have access to nutritious meals.

During remote instruction, students and families will have access to breakfast, lunch and monthly community meal distributions. Upon notice of the student's quarantine status, our school leadership team will notify the network's Food service partner with a list of students who need delivery or pick-up service. After receiving that list, families will confirm whether they are opting in or out for meal pick-up. School Operations teams will then communicate food distribution times, logistics, menus and promotions to students and families via Parent Square and Schoology. From there, a school or parent designee will be allowed to pick up and drop off meals for remote/quarantined students. They will receive breakfast and lunch meals for 5 days at a time, in accordance with the State of New Jersey guidelines. During remote instruction, meals will be distributed outside at designated locations utilizing safe social distance measures.

In addition to meal pick-ups for students in remote instruction, we hold monthly community meal distributions. APOs will provide frequent communication to increase participation, and teachers will reinforce the messaging about meal distribution days and times to families to ensure everyone has the information. All service locations will be highly visible to car and foot traffic in order to increase participation.

Facilities Plan

During an extended closure, our Assistant Principals of Operations, Building Engineers and maintenance staff will continue to have regular access to the building and will be responsible for keeping our buildings well-maintained so that we can swiftly return to in-person instruction as soon as possible once remote instruction is no longer required.

Other Considerations

- Students will be provided accelerated learning opportunities through extension activities and supplemental assignments to continue to challenge students who have demonstrated mastery of grade-level content
- Social workers will continue to provide services remotely to students to support their social and emotional health
- Staff will have access to mental health and wellness supports and services through Mastery's HR team and benefits
- Schools will evaluate the feasibility of whether or not they can continue to provide virtual remote Title I extended learning programs, 21st Century Community Learning Centers Programs, extra-curriculum programs, community programs and/or other extended student learning opportunities based on constraints of staffing capacity and student and family interest
- High school students will continue to have access to credit recovery programming over the summer and throughout the school year during remote/virtual instruction by completing asynchronous coursework through a personalized online learning platform and receiving ongoing instructional support by a Mastery teacher

Essential Employees List

In the event of a shift to remote or virtual instruction, Mastery will ensure essential employees are identified and will provide a list of essential employees to the county office at the time of the LEA's transition to remote or virtual instruction.

Closing

In conclusion, our highest priorities are to support our students' emotional and physical safety and ensure students learn, whether they are in the building or taking part in remote instruction. In this remote instruction plan, we are able to hold a high academic bar, leverage technology to continue to provide equitable access to instruction for all students and ensure students and families continue to receive strong support from our staff.