



**School Health-Related Closure Preparedness Plan**  
*Educational Partnership for Instructing Children*  
*The EPIC School*

Submitted to County Office (Bergen) 07/31/2024

In April 2020, Governor Murphy signed A-3904 into law (P.L.2020, c.27, or “Chapter 27”), which, in part, requires each school district, charter school, renaissance school project, and Approved Private School for Students with Disabilities (APSSD), hereinafter referred to as Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), to annually submit a proposed program for emergency virtual or remote instruction (Plan) to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). In July 2022, the NJDOE readopted N.J.A.C. 6A:32, School District Operations, with amendments and new rules which includes updates to the components of the LEA’s Plan. This law provides for the continuity of instruction in the event of a public health-related district closure, by permitting LEAs to utilize virtual or remote instruction to satisfy the 180-day requirement pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:32-13.1 & 13.2

The EPIC School (Educational Partnership for Inclusive Communities) is a NJ Department of Education approved private, nonprofit school for learners with autism spectrum disorder. The following is as, a plan to supervise and, to the extent possible, coordinate educational programming to our students and their families as has been developed by EPIC. The particulars are outlined below.

**STEPS TAKEN PRE-CLOSURE IF EMERGENCY CLOSURE IS ANTICIPATED**

- EPIC’s School Nurse has been designated our primary contact person for information related to all health-related matters, including Covid19. She will be in regular contact with families via email and phone to discuss the internal precautions we are taking regarding an anticipated closure and move to remote instruction.

- Dr. Peter Gerhardt, EPIC's Executive Director, will send an email to all our families informing them of the need to move to a remote instruction format.
- All non-essential meetings will be cancelled. IEP meetings will be rescheduled and held via Zoom or other platform in coordination with parents and district case managers.
- An emergency in-service day will be scheduled, if possible, to allow staff the time necessary to develop a binder of individualized instructional programs and materials to be sent home for each student. This non-instructional day will be make up later in the school year.
- EPIC'S Curriculum Coordinator and SLE/Transition Coordinator will call each family to explain the process moving forward and to answer, proactively, any questions they might have. At the time of these phone calls, EPIC'S Curriculum Coordinator and SLE/Transition Coordinator will assess the technology needs of the family and whether computers or Internet-access are needed. As Epic is a small program of less than 35 students, the school has a supply of Chromebooks available for student at-home use, if needed. EPIC'S Curriculum Coordinator and SLE/Transition will work with Internet access issues on a case-by-case conversation and in coordination with the student's home district.
- The SLE/Transition Coordinator will call each business currently providing an SLE job-sampling site to brief them on the current situation and our plans for return.
- Students' sending school districts will be notified by email of the impending closure.
- A list of essential employees will be submitted to the County Office at the time the district transitions to virtual or remote instruction and will include District Name, School Name, Employee Name, Position Title and Contact Information.
- EPIC School supports equitable access to all of its students by providing an individualized program and support to each of its students to support the goals of each student's Individualized Educational Plan.
- Students' home districts will be contracted to discuss the distribution of meals according to the sending district's local plan. Information will be provided to parents regarding the local contact in their home district.
- Work-based Learning Coordinator will contact student employers to secure alternative home-based activities, wherever possible to support the work-based learning student placements. Materials will be mailed,

emailed or made available for pick up at school or dropped off at student homes when possible.

### **POST-CLOSURE PROTOCOL**

- EPIC's Plan is designed to maximize student growth and learning to the greatest extent possible, containing both synchronous and asynchronous virtual learning platforms.
- EPIC Parents will have been provided with student binders containing a minimum of 4 hours of instructional material per day (programs, material, datasheets, etc.), excluding lunch and recess, individualized to their son or daughter. These materials will be updated or replenished on a weekly basis.
- EPIC Staff, supervised by a NJ Certified Special Education Teacher, will coordinate with parents the provision of a minimum of 1, 40-minute Skype/Zoom supervision session on a daily basis. The content of these sessions will be recorded.
- Attendance will be recorded each day by the classroom teacher, based on the input from parents, instructional paraprofessionals and BCBA's. Attendance will be reported to the school administrative assistant each week, with 5 day absentee letters emailed to both student's home and sending district.
- EPIC Parents, or their designee, will provide a minimum of 4 hours of direct instruction at home (re: *N.J.A.C 6A:16-10.1*), and will collect basic data on child performance to document instructional time. In addition, Parents will be provided with a simplified ADL data sheet on which they will be asked to record performance on a variety of such tasks. EPIC BCBA's and Teachers will use data to guide instruction, and the updating of student programs and to assess student growth and learning using the ACE program.
- Designated EPIC staff may include the student's Special Education Teacher or a sub-certified Instructor Level II. The student's BCBA will provide supervision with regard to any existing behavior intervention plans.
- Teacher Meetings will be held on a weekly basis via Zoom to troubleshoot any unexpected challenges. Clinical Meetings (Administration, BCBA's & School Nurse) will also be held on a weekly basis via Zoom. These two meetings may be held jointly.

- EPIC has purchased 20 Ultimate Teacher Accounts on Boom Learning (<https://wow.boomlearning.com/>) to enhance the provision of direct, on-line instruction with EPIC Students (a single account can be used with more than one student).
- Work in coordination with students' home district to support Title 1
- Work in coordination with students' home district to support and coordinate transportation, when appropriate.
- Work in coordination with students' home district to address credit recovery, when appropriate.
- Work in coordination with students' home district to support 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Programs, when appropriate.
- Work in coordination with students' home district to address child care initiatives, when appropriate.
- Families will be referred to their home district for information about extra-curricular programs.
- Families will be referred to their home district for community programming information.
- To support the education of English Language Learners, BCBA's will guide the staff in using discrete trials to track data and create individualized programming to support literacy development, reading instruction and language skills. ELLs will also be supported in the content areas of Math, Science and Social Studies. If needed, translators will be provided to communicate with families when English is not the primary language.
- Bi-weekly Parent Zoom Meetings will be scheduled between parents and staff in 3 classroom cohorts (elementary, middle, high) to troubleshoot individual challenges and promote a sense of community among our parents.
- Building and grounds will continue to be cleaned, sanitized and maintained (interior and exterior) by our third-party vendors.
- The physical health and emotional well-being is essential to the success of EPIC and its students. To help address that concern:
  - Semi-monthly "Listen and Learn" Zoom session will be scheduled for staff. Sessions will be moderated by a senior EPIC staff (minimum 5-years with EPIC) and provide the opportunity for all staff to express concerns or offer suggestions on a voluntary and

confidential basis. The moderator can, at their discretion, bring any issue or concern to the attention of EPIC Administration.

- As necessary, the services of a licensed positive psychologist will be contracted to provide staff counseling and support.

### **Board of Trustees Resolution**

This plan has been reviewed by members of the EPIC School Board of Trustees and a motion to accept the plan, as written, was approved on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Respectfully Submitted;

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Principal

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