



**MARIE H. KATZENBACH
SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF**

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EMERGENCY VIRTUAL REMOTE
LEARNING PLAN 25-26**



Remote Learning Plan at a Glance

Part I: Introduction.	3
Remote Instruction Plan for School Closure.	3
Communication.	3
Part II: Equitable Access to Instruction for All Students.	4
Training of Staff.	4
Curriculum and Instruction: Virtual/Remote Instruction.	4
Delivery of Instruction.	4
Overview of Schedule Design.	5
School Day Attendance.	5
Technology and Connectivity.	5
Technology and Instruction	5
Student and Family Technology Helpdesk.	5
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Needs for Students/Staff.	5
Part III: Provisions for our Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Multiply Disabled Students, and Related Services.	6
Special Education.	6
Ensuring the Delivery of Special Education and Related Services to Students with Disabilities.	6
Special Education Delivery of Virtual Instruction.	6
Related Services.	7
IEP Meetings/Information.	7
Evaluations.	7
Educational Resource Center.	8
Family Engagement / Community Programming.	8
Part IV: Provisions for School Nutrition Benefits or Services of Eligible Students.	8
Part V: Facilities.	8
Part VI: Essential Employees.	8

Part I: Introduction

In the Road Forward, the NJDOE stated, “Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must plan to provide full-day, full-time, in-person instruction and operations for the 2025-2026 school year.”

However, the district is also required to annually approve an Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Plan as designated under Chapter 27. This plan would be implemented during a Katzenbach closure lasting more than three consecutive school days due to a declared state of emergency, public health emergency, or directive by the appropriate health agency or officer to institute a public health-related closure. The Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf has developed the below plan to ensure that Katzenbach satisfies the requirements governed under Chapter 27.

Remote Instruction Plan for School Closure

The Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf has developed an educational plan for remote instruction when schools need to be closed due to the conditions and criteria outlined in the “Local Educational Agency Guidance for Chapter 27 Emergency Virtual/ Remote Instructional Programs for the 2025-2026 School Year” broadcast. This plan includes guidance in the event of a declared emergency resulting in a school-wide closure. *P.L.2020, c.27* enabled the continuity of instruction in the event of a closure lasting more than three consecutive days, so that districts could use virtual or remote instruction to satisfy the 180-day requirement pursuant to *N.J.S.A 18A:7F-9*.

Although Katzenbach realizes that there is no substitute for in-person teaching and learning in students and staff; respectively, this plan will ensure meaningful remote education for students through online instruction and project-based learning opportunities. This plan will also articulate provisions for all of our students, and other related services as well as access to the Educational Resource Center for after school tutoring.

Communication

Written communication with families would be provided through emails and Connect-Ed in English and Spanish. Communication can also be provided virtually or by phone to families in ASL, Spanish and many other languages through Katzenbach ASL Interpreters or Accurate Language Line Program.

Part II: Equitable Access to Instruction for All Students

For the 2025-2026 academic school year, virtual/remote instruction will be provided to students if an approved situation arises. Katzenbach staff will post information and assignments, as well as instruction and feedback, through Google Classroom, Zoom, and/or email. Educational activities and materials will be differentiated to meet the learning needs of the specific grade level class or student.

The following information will provide specifics as to how instruction will occur during each designated school day according to the Virtual/ Remote Instruction Plan.

Training of Staff

Katzenbach teachers, administrators, and counselors have had workshops on learning strategies related to culturally responsive teaching and learning, social emotional learning, and trauma-sensitive teaching.

Curriculum and Instruction: Virtual/Remote Instruction

School Hours: Regular School Day.

All Programs Pre-School through 12th grades. 8:25 am--3:00 pm

This includes 30 minutes of lunch for all students, 20 minutes of recess for pre-school through 5th grades; 5.6 hours of instruction K-5 and 6 hours of instruction 6-12 grades.

Delivery of Instruction

Katzenbach believes every individual has intrinsic worth, that embracing diversity enriches and empowers our community, and that people reach their full potential when encouraged to believe it is possible. Katzenbach will guide and support student growth, by empowering them to value their individual learning journeys. During these unique circumstances, this includes developing a process for our educational programs to create and implement equitable learning experiences for each student based on their needs.

Based upon the fact pattern presented that may precipitate an Emergency Virtual/Remote, Katzenbach will remain focused on the following guiding principles:

- Health, safety, and wellness of students and staff is a top priority;
- Maintain continuity of learning;
- Facilitate equity and ease of access to communications and resources; and
- Flexibility to accommodate the needs of all learners.

Overview of Schedule Design

Virtual learning model for 100% of students would include scheduled synchronous learning, live interaction with teachers, and mandatory participation times. This model would be implemented as a last resort due to health and safety concerns.

School Day Attendance

All attendance will be recorded in Power School. Students must be present on the Zoom session to be marked as present. Teachers will contact the parents/guardians via email/phone call when attendance issues consistent missing assignments are a concern. If attendance/submission of assignment concerns continue, teachers will inform the school counselor and then the school principal. The student's district will also be contacted and informed.

Technology and Connectivity

Katzenbach has provided every educational staff person and every student from pre-school through 12th grade with an Apple computer which are used in school and at home. All of our students and staff have connectivity.

Technology and Instruction

Katzenbach has identified consistent technology platforms that are used in every day instruction. These platforms would continue to be used if there was a need to pivot to full virtual instruction. Training in the use of all platforms has been implemented with staff, (including new instructors, paras), students, and presentations for parents. Katzenbach currently uses the following platforms:

- Zoom
- Google Classroom
- Boom Cards
- IXL
- Google Meet

Student and Family Technology Helpdesk

Katzenbach has a staffed helpdesk for students and families to assist with state owned devices, password resets and general troubleshooting not associated with home internet connection.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Needs for Students/Staff

During virtual/remote learning staff will continue to interweave SEL skills into daily lessons. Additionally, regular counseling services as per the student Individualized Education Plan (IEP), as well as incidental counseling needs will be provided. Our psychologists and counselors have created a virtual

staff calming room online with a variety of tools and strategies to help the staff manage their feelings and emotions.

Part III- Provisions for our Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Multiply Disabled Students, and Related Services

Special Education

Every child and adolescent with a disability is entitled to a free and appropriate education including special education services based on their individualized education program (IEP). All of Katzenbach students receive special education services and have IEPs.

Ensuring the Delivery of Special Education and Related Services to Students with Disabilities

Under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and New Jersey state special education regulations, students with disabilities are entitled to special education and related services, such as accommodations and modifications to instruction, speech-language services, occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), and counseling. Since the onset of virtual instruction, the NJDOE has engaged a variety of stakeholders, including educators, related service providers and advocacy groups to gain insight, share best practices, and consider policies to support districts in providing services to students with disabilities in virtual learning environments.

Consistent with guidance from the United States Department of Education, Katzenbach must continue to meet their obligations to their students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible. The following outlines the Special Education Delivery of Virtual Instruction to the students.

Special Education Delivery of Virtual Instruction

- Similarly, to in-person instruction, the principles of ASL/English Bilingual Strategies are applied to every area of the curriculum in order to meet the communication needs of our diverse learners from pre-school through 12th grade.
- Instruction in grades PK-12 is delivered in a blended model that includes synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities.
- Daily materials include specific assignments for students, as well as time for independent practice of skills and/or strategies introduced.
- Asynchronous learning experiences are crafted to advance student learning that is aligned with grade-level specific NJSLs. Teachers are able to view student work in “real time” as well as to receive student work for review, and to provide feedback in a timely manner.
- Teachers will consistently monitor and evaluate student growth through differentiated assessments administered via the district’s Learning Management System (e.g., Google Classroom, Zoom). All assessments will be designed and delivered in alignment with each

student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), ensuring that required accommodations and modifications are implemented to the fullest extent possible within the remote learning environment.

- Teachers in grades PK-12 utilize video conferencing platforms (Zoom, Google Classroom) to provide assignments to students and to offer individual, group, and in some cases, peer feedback. Teachers are able to view student work in “real time” as well as to receive student work for review, and to provide feedback in a timely manner.
- Our teachers in grades PK-12 are flexible with due dates, provide choice assignments.
- Our instructors who work with our Multiply Disabled Deaf students understand the challenges of learning virtually and provide live instruction through Zoom using a variety of visual materials as well as using a variety of teaching platforms.
- Personal assistants for the multiply disabled students re-teach their student providing opportunities for one-to-one instruction.

ELL/Bilingual Needs

Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf primarily serves students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. While these students are not classified as English Language Learners (ELL) due to their deafness, they are recognized as bilingual, as they acquire both English and American Sign Language (ASL). All staff members are proficient in communicating with students in both ASL and English. To ensure equitable access to learning for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, our district will deliver remote instruction through differentiated lessons, tailored to varying ASL proficiency levels. Instruction will be provided bilingually—in ASL and English—to support both visual and auditory processing, particularly for students using cochlear implants or hearing aids. Every IEP or 504 Plan will include a detailed communication plan, as required by New Jersey statutes. Remote implementation of instruction and related services will be consistent with NJDOE guidance to uphold the rights and educational access of each student.

Our LEA's bilingual education program for deaf multilingual learners is designed and implemented in full compliance with all applicable State and Federal requirements. The program ensures equitable access to high-quality instruction, language development, and academic achievement, while addressing the unique linguistic and communication needs of deaf students who are multilingual learners.

To ensure accessibility for families, all communications from the Academic Center and the Superintendent's Office are translated into Spanish and distributed as needed. In addition, educational staff continuously engage in professional learning focused on culturally responsive teaching and on strengthening communication and collaboration with families, ensuring that school and home partnerships effectively support student success.

Related Services

In the event of pivoting to remote/virtual learning, Katzenbach would continue to implement speech and language, and counseling services. After school tutoring assistance with homework as designated in the students' IEPs would occur through Zoom. The sending districts for Katzenbach students provide occupational and physical therapy services.

IEP Meetings/Information

Scheduled IEP meetings would continue on Zoom. Staff would continue to implement the students IEPs virtually documenting data, student progress, tracking services and providing accommodations as in the IEP.

Teachers and MKSD support staff (e.g., school counselors, school social worker, school psychologist, behavior consultant) will work collaboratively to track student progress and to keep parents/guardians and LEA case managers informed of progress or needs. Various methods of communication are available and will be utilized in order to ensure parents/guardians can access this information (e.g., telephone, videophone, email, video conferencing). This information will additionally be shared with district/LEA case managers.

IEP Meetings, Reevaluation Planning Meetings, and Eligibility Meetings will be held virtually using a platform accessible to all stakeholders (e.g., Zoom, MS Teams, Google Meet). These meetings will be held in collaboration with the district case manager, in accordance with *NJAC 6A:14-7.5(a)*, and adhere to requirements set forth within *NJAC 6A:14*.

Evaluations

MKSD staff will collaborate with LEA case managers, students, and parents/guardians to determine the most appropriate course of action (e.g., completing evaluations/re-evaluations in-person following safety protocols, completing evaluations remotely, using alternative assessment techniques, completing evaluations/re-evaluations immediately upon the reopening of school).

Educational Resource Center

Students who attend the Educational Resource Center after school would continue to receive these services from the educational tutors remotely on Zoom.

Family Engagement / Community Programming

Family and community engagement is critical to supporting students during periods of remote learning. To foster family and community engagement, Katzenbach will host special events such as Family Fun Day, ASL/Bilingual Celebration, and a Multicultural Celebration. These events will be held remotely via Zoom.

Part IV- Provisions for School Nutrition Benefits or Services of Eligible Students

School Nutrition – Food Services: Ensure Continuity of Meal Programs

Food service operations are managed and provided by Katzenbach's Food Service Department.

During a closure, all Katzenbach students would receive a meal distribution on a weekly basis. Since many of our families do not have transportation, all meals will be distributed weekly by our bus driver to their homes. The transportation coordinator informs the parents of the day and time for their food delivery.

Part V-Facilities Operation

Katzenbach operations will remain fully functional with respect to all areas of building maintenance.

Part VI-Essential Employees

Katzenbach will ensure essential employees are identified and a list will be provided to the Mercer County office at the time of our transition to remote/virtual instruction.

Submitted by Joan Krasnisky

Interim Superintendent

Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf

June 26, 2025