



**Foundation Academy Charter School**

**Remote Instruction Plan**

**SY 2021-22**

***Our mission** is to ensure that all of our students secure the academic knowledge and skills to prepare them for the nation's finest colleges and to instill in them the core values of caring, respect, responsibility, and honesty.*

# Foundation Academy Charter School Restart Plan

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Leadership and Planning</b>	<b>3</b>
Restart Committee	3
Pandemic Response Teams	4
<b>Critical Issues</b>	<b>4</b>
Scheduling	4
<b>Policy and Funding</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Continuity of Learning</b>	<b>6</b>
English Language Learners	6
Music Instruction	6
Ensuring the Delivery of Special Education and Related Services to Students with Disabilities and other Students with Accommodations	7
Addressing Learning Gaps	8
Technology and Connectivity	9
Hybrid Learning Technology	10
Technology Support	10
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments	11
Professional Learning	11
<b>Other Elements</b>	<b>11</b>
Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and School Climate and Culture	11
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Wraparound Supports	12
Food Service and Distribution	14
<b>Future Considerations</b>	<b>14</b>

# **Leadership and Planning**

## **Restart Committee**

Foundation Academies' Restart Committee includes the school's Lead Person, Chief Executive Officer Graig Weiss; Board President; Principals; and a diverse group of stakeholders who are reflective of the school community as a whole. School staff members involved in planning are listed below.

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## **Pandemic Response Teams**

Each school's Pandemic Response Team will consist of the School Leadership Team, the School Nurse, teachers and parents. The teams will represent a cross-section of the school community, including its racial and gender diversity. The School Principal will be the liaison between the school and administration.

## **Critical Issues**

### **Scheduling**

Foundation Academies opened to all students to provide in-person education on August 19, 2021.

While we have put measures into place to fully staff our classrooms, the approaching cold and flu season will prove challenging, as COVID-19 mimics minor ailments, rapid testing is neither readily available nor accurate, and self-screening does not prevent asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic persons from spreading disease. There is no way for staff, students, or families to reliably tell the difference between a simple case of the sniffles due to allergies and a potentially deadly virus -- which creates the requirement that all members of the school community adhere to the CDC-recommended testing and quarantine guidelines each time they experience symptoms that could be caused by COVID-19. Because of this, we anticipate a high rate of in-person absenteeism this school year. A shortage of in-person staff makes the consistent monitoring and reinforcement of social distancing practices with students that much more difficult to maintain.

To prepare for the short-term quarantine of individuals as well as cohorts, all lessons will be able to be presented in a hybrid format, both to students in the classroom and those learning at home.

This plan for fully remote learning 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. The minimum hours of instruction for a virtual or remote day is four hours excluding lunch and recess.

## **Policy and Funding**

Foundation Academies will use its allocation from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act - Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund to help offset some of the fiscal challenges related to the delivery of instruction and related services to students during the 2021-22 school year.

Some of the planned uses include: purchasing PPE and disinfectant supplies such as hand sanitizing stations and cleaning supplies, additional Chromebooks and hotspots for students, instructional software, and pendant/headset cameras for teachers to use during hybrid learning. Additionally, Foundation Academies has hired a third social worker to provide mental health support and services to students, as well as the additional custodians needed for increased cleaning and sanitization schedules. CARES Act funding may be used to cover all or part of these salaries for the 2021-22 school year.

Where possible and cost-effective, Foundation Academies will make purchases using established state contracts or through cooperative purchasing consortiums. Foundation Academies participates in the federal E-rate program.

## **Continuity of Learning**

During the 2021-22 school year, all teachers must set up a Google Classroom for all of their students. This is where they can assign assignments and grade/check assignments in the moment/each day. Teachers must be prepared to teach any combination of students in the classroom and students learning remotely at any time during this school year. It is anticipated that individual students as well as cohorts will need to quarantine on a rolling basis, and that an entire building or the district may need to transition to remote learning at any time.

Staff and students already have the familiarity of using Google Meet for virtual learning and will continue to utilize it during the 2021-22 school year. Students utilizing remote instruction will have a full view of the front of the classroom and their teacher, while the privacy of students in the classroom will be maintained by strategic camera placement. Assignments will be available on Google Classroom to both groups of students.

## **English Language Learners**

To the greatest extent possible, our English Language Learners will be rostered to attend school in-person on the same days within their grade band to ensure they receive appropriate in-person services.

## **Music Instruction**

In a hybrid learning environment where students may be present in both the classroom as well as online, our music teachers will implement the following in order to maximize continuity of learning:

- Teachers will teach classroom students in the same manner as prior to COVID-19, with the exception of utilizing some independent practice time and student-led portions of class to engage with the students who are online.
- Teachers will facilitate asynchronous learning for online students during portions of the lesson that require more attention from the teacher to the classroom students.

While it is necessary that we make adjustments of how we teach in order to fit the hybrid/online format, we will not sacrifice what we are teaching. Our curriculum map and learning goals remain the same.

## **Ensuring the Delivery of Special Education and Related Services to Students with Disabilities and other Students with Accommodations**

Foundation Academies will continue to meet our obligations to students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible. Some of our specific strategies and considerations for students with disabilities for our return-to-school plan include:

1. Creating schedules that ensure students who receive special services are able to receive those services while physically at school.
2. Using small group instruction and paraprofessionals in accordance with students' IEPs whether they attend school in-person or remotely.

During days when students receive online instruction, the procedures followed during the period of remote learning will continue to be implemented:

- **Related Services and students eligible to receive Speech and Language Services:** Google Classroom lessons will be assigned by related services staff to target IEP goals and objectives. Compensatory services will be provided as needed.
- **Students with Disabilities:** Students with Disabilities will continue to receive push in and pull-out instruction with their assigned Special Education teacher through Google Classroom. Additionally, Special Education teachers will be available daily through office hours to provide support for students in their general education setting. Students can email, text, call, or request additional support. Modifications to lessons and materials will be provided in accordance with IEPs. Services will be tracked using Easy IEP and the school calendar. Case managers will follow up with families through quarterly IEP progress reports and telephone calls. Documentation will be sent via email. All communication with parents will be documented in the communication log. During periods of remote instruction, students whose IEPs require the services of a paraprofessional may meet with their assigned paraprofessional in person at the school building if their case manager and parent/guardian determine that is necessary/beneficial.
- **Virtual IEP meetings, evaluation, and other meetings to identify, evaluate, and/or reevaluate students with disabilities:** Virtual IEP Meetings and other meetings will be conducted via Google Meet or telephone calls according to parent preference.

- **Counseling:** Support will be provided via phone conference or virtually through Google Meet as required by individual IEPs.
- **Section 504:** School Counselors, social workers, nurses and the Section 504 coordinator will monitor and provide additional support per individual plans.
- **ADA Compliance:** Staff and students utilize accessibility features built into the G Suite for Education and Chromebooks. Our school website is ADA compliant.
- **ELL/ESL:** English Language Learners will continue to receive daily ESL pull-out instruction with their assigned ESL teacher through Google Classroom. At high school, this will be equivalent to a double period of English replacement instruction. In grades K-8, ESL teachers will provide one period of ESL pull-out instruction and push-in to at least one period of instruction daily to support them in the general education environment. Additionally, ESL teachers will be available daily through office hours to provide support for students in their general education setting. Students can email, text, call, or request additional support during their daily ESL pull-out period. ESL teachers will provide parents with translated text and email communications.

## **Addressing Learning Gaps**

To address learning gaps, Foundation Academies cites research shared by the Council of Great City Schools in their June 2020 Report entitled *Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School Closures*.<sup>1</sup>

“For example, the research shows that for students with disabilities, the level of inclusion is a strong predictor of academic growth—the greater the level of inclusion (particularly 80% or more of the day), the greater the rate of academic growth.<sup>3</sup> Removing students from core instruction in an attempt to remediate or catch them up is not only counter-productive, it significantly contributes to the widening of the opportunity gap and often results in students being tracked or grouped into lower grade-level and core content classes.”

“One way to make grade-level content accessible for all students is through the use of the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Universal Design for Learning principles are based on the understanding that students differ in the ways they are motivated to learn, and that students with language and/or cultural difference, sensory disabilities (e.g., blindness or deafness), and learning disabilities all require a different way of approaching content.”

1. Council of the Great City Schools. (2020, June). *Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School Closures June 2020*, 5-6. Retrieved at: [https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/313/CGCS\\_Unfinished%20Learning.pdf](https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/313/CGCS_Unfinished%20Learning.pdf)
3. Thomas Hehir & Associates (2014, August) *Review of Special Education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: A Synthesis Report*, Boston, Massachusetts, retrieved at: <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/cms/lib/MA01906464/Centricity/Domain/249/Hehir%20SynthesisReport.pdf>

Foundation Academies will make ample use of multiple modes of communication (speaking, listening, reading, writing) and multiple representations (ways of presenting instruction, such as pictures, diagrams, tables, graphs, visual displays), allowing students to make connections within and between concepts and facilitate the transfer of learning.

Moreover, we will provide students with different ways to engage in and process learning (such as working in small groups), and to express their learning (making presentations, sharing written explanations, making a collage) through the use of programs like "Seesaw" to help reduce or eliminate barriers to showing what students know and can do.

Child Study team members will work to assess the specific impact of missed services on each individual student socially, emotionally, and academically. They will then make the necessary recommendations for additional/compensatory services needed.

Evaluators are currently working to complete overdue and incomplete evaluations to determine eligibility for special education services.

The College and Career Advisors in collaboration with the School Counselor, Child Study Team, and all other related stakeholders are working diligently to provide all students adversely affected by COVID-19 with the necessary support and resources to continue with their postsecondary plans.

Foundation Academies will continue to provide clear communication to parents/guardians of the procedures for student referrals and evaluations to determine the eligibility for special education and related services or a 504 Plan as required by federal and state law.

Students with ESY in their IEPs were recommended for and are currently attending Summer Academy through remote learning. The class sizes of Summer Academy, for students with IEPs, are intentionally low (no more than 10) with 2 teachers in the classroom.

## **Technology and Connectivity**

Foundation Academies recognizes that not all of our families have equal access to technology such as computers or high speed internet. To address this, new

Chromebooks have been purchased for all students. We are at a better than 1:1 ratio of devices to students. If extended remote learning becomes needed, hotspots will be provided to students as requested by families.

To assist our families with online learning, we created a [parent tech guide \(available in English and Spanish\)](#) which provides step-by-step instruction for accessing Google Classroom and viewing and turning in assignments.

## **Hybrid Learning Technology**

For the hybrid learning model, we will continue to utilize the G Suite for Education tools we have available to us such as: Gmail, Google Classroom and Google Meet.

To ensure the experience for students learning remotely when quarantined is as close to the in-person experience as possible, we are outfitting each classroom with a Google Hangouts Meet kit. Each kit includes a 4K camera, Speakerbox, and Chromebox computers for teachers to launch Google Meet video calls that remote learners can join. Most students and parents are experienced with the platform as it was used during the periods of remote learning in the previous two school years.

## **Technology Support**

**Parents and Students:** Parents and students who have technical difficulties will once again have access to a support hotline and an online form to request assistance. Parents can also reference the [parent tech guide \(available in English and Spanish\)](#) which provides step-by-step instruction for accessing Google Classroom and viewing and turning in assignments.

Devices will be replaced as needed, and families will be supplied with additional Chromebooks/Hotspots upon request.

**Staff:** All Foundation Academies' employees are provided with a laptop, as well as a smart phone with an unlimited data plan. For employees without high speed internet, Foundation Academies will provide a T-Mobile hotspot to staff members in need. Foundation Academies uses a ticket system to efficiently respond to technical issues, and has a large knowledgebase of instructional videos to help staff troubleshoot common problems.

## **Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments**

All staff will receive comprehensive development, through our teacher orientation, on how to utilize the Google Suite of tools to teach/execute lessons, assess student mastery of NJSL standards through the use of programs such as Edulastic and iReady, and coaching on how to accelerate student learning while at the same time addressing unfinished learning.

Teachers will be taught how to revise their scope and sequences to be focused on the major standards and skills of the grade band and provide mini-lessons of the prerequisite skills needed to master grade level standards. In addition, teachers will receive professional development on how to effectively teach district-approved curriculum remotely.

## **Professional Learning**

Foundation Academies is focusing its new staff orientation on the delivery of high-quality remote and in-person instruction. Teachers will be trained on the use of Google Classroom and other platforms and equipment used by our schools while also introducing our new staff to Foundation's culture and procedures. New staff orientation will include an introduction to the techniques found in Doug Lemov's book, *Teach Like a Champion*, which they will learn to incorporate into both their in-person and virtual classrooms.

Staff orientation also includes annual training on meeting the academic needs of ELLs, students with IEPs, and students with 504 plans while ensuring their inclusion in both the physical and remote classrooms; a trauma-informed approach to teaching remotely; using data to inform the I&RS process; and addressing our students' social and emotional needs as a result of the pandemic.

## **Other Elements**

### **Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and School Climate and Culture**

Foundation Academies recognizes the potential trauma that staff and students have faced during the COVID-19 school closures. Our school is focused on building resilience in both staff and students and is training all staff on trauma-informed practices. A third social worker has been hired to provide mental health support to students.

Foundation Academies is actively anti-racist. Our students of color receive the high-quality education that all children deserve. Through providing role models of color, lessons on equality, and by ensuring that our black and brown students and staff feel seen and heard, we are committed to doing our part to dismantle a system of oppression.

Before our school year begins, while our students readjust to in-person learning, and throughout the upcoming school year we will:

1. Conduct transition meetings and construct a plan for specific students using information from transition meetings prior to the start of school
2. Plan to have Community Circle/Town Hall/Advisory
3. Have a solidified curriculum for Circle/Town Hall/Advisory that address the social and emotional needs of students (including topics such as race)
4. Hold transition events that students missed at the end of last school year at the beginning of this school year, to establish closure
5. Focus on helping students build community with each other, to prevent isolation
6. Support teachers in having clear, consistent, and intentional expectations and classroom routines (virtually and in the building)
7. Utilize restorative justice
8. During student orientation, discuss the school closure plan with students in the event that we must close again
9. Regularly communicate our food service programming so that students and families know where they will have access to food
10. Find out which students have parents who are essential workers and provide resources to those students and their families

### **Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Wraparound Supports**

Foundation Academies incorporates Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to identify individual students who need extra support. Through screenings for all incoming students; robust relationships in our advisory groups; family math and literacy nights; programs for the parents of ELLs and students with disabilities; and our consistent use of data to track student progress; we seek out small areas of misunderstanding and use tailored interventions to ensure student progress. Similarly, utilizing age appropriate behavior trackers at all levels allows us to use students' mistakes as tools to create

strong relationships and reinforce our core values of caring, respect, responsibility, and honesty.

Foundation Academies utilizes supports including:

- Tier 1 level interventions such as social emotional learning curriculum within advisories, school-wide culture programming, partnerships with community-based programming to ensure appropriate and accessible referrals ranging from financial needs, mental health, and/or social intervention, parent workshop series (in-person and virtual), and providing needs assessments for students, staff, and parents when strategically planning.
- Tier 2 level interventions that address the whole child through our mentoring programs, both within and outside of the organization, family psychoeducational sessions based on presenting needs, streamlining our I&RS system to track data both qualitatively and quantitatively, remediation programming through Summer Academy, and the development of student-based intervention plans including home/personal goals as well as academic.
- Tier 3 level interventions can include data driven recommendation for alternative scheduling/school day, community-based intervention held in and outside of school, in school and out of school mental health plans, standards based grading, and additional access to resources throughout the day.

### **Food Service and Distribution**

Foundation Academies contracts with [Maschio's Food Services, Inc.](#) to provide food services for our students. If the school is required to close its in-person facilities meals will be provided for students' remote learning days through grab and go meal pickups at one or both school locations. The meal pickup schedule will be communicated to families through the school website, social media, text messaging, and telephone calls.

## **Future Considerations**

COVID-19 has had significant impacts on our students, families, and on our community as a whole. We are proud of our teachers and staff for continuing to go above and beyond to shift and reinvent educational best practices while also ensuring the high-quality, whole-child education that all students deserve. We are also deeply thankful for the flexibility and strong support shown by our parents and guardians as we advocate in the best interests of our children through this unprecedented global health crisis.

To truly reimagine education in this ever-changing landscape, we encourage the State of New Jersey to consider future statutory and regulatory changes, policy, and funding shifts to ensure flexibility, nimbleness, and above all, equitable practices and access to educational resources for all New Jersey students.