



## Foundation Academy Charter School

### Remote Instruction Plan

SY 2023-24

***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.*

***Our promise** is to equip our scholars to excel in learning and empower them to lead purpose-filled lives.*

# Foundation Academy Charter School Remote Instruction Plan

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# **Leadership and Planning**

## **Restart Committee**

Foundation Academies' Virtual Learning Committee includes the school's Director of Operations, Johanna Soto; Chief Executive Officer, Sheria McRae; Chief Academic Officer, Natasia Cooper, Board President; Principals; and a diverse group of stakeholders who are reflective of the school community as a whole. School staff and community 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**

Foundation Academies opened to all students to provide in-person education on August 19, 2021. In-person education will continue for the 2023-24 school year.

Foundation Academies will require masks for students, staff and visitors in accordance with state, local and national guidelines. We believe requiring masks increases the likelihood that students will be able to remain in classrooms for in-person learning and decreases the spread of illness in our community and the chance that students, staff and families will become ill. Staff and students who test positive for Covid-19 will be required to quarantine in accordance with applicable guidelines. Free rapid/at-home Covid-19 test kits are available to students and staff upon request.

For any other health emergency, natural disaster, or other situation requiring remote learning, we will act in accordance with any executive orders issued by the Governor of the State of New Jersey, directives of the New Jersey Department of Education, guidance from the local, state, and federal agencies or health departments.

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.

Social-emotional learning and student and staff mental health and wellness initiatives are woven into daily school routines and will be modified to fit the needs of remote learning if used during the current school year.

## **Policy and Funding**

Foundation Academies will use any funds allocated for use during an emergency to help offset some of the fiscal challenges related to the delivery of instruction and related services to students during the current school year.

Some of these uses could include: purchasing PPE and disinfectant supplies such as hand sanitizing stations and cleaning supplies, additional Chromebooks and hotspots for students, instructional software, pendant cameras for teachers to use during hybrid learning, or the hiring additional custodians needed for increased cleaning and sanitization schedules.

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**

All teachers must set up a Google Classroom for all of their students. This is where they can assign and grade/check assignments each day. Subject-area teachers must be prepared to teach any combination of students in the classroom and students learning remotely at any time during the school year.

In the event of an outbreak or other contagious disease in our school community, we are prepared for the need to quarantine individual students as well as cohorts on a rolling basis, and we acknowledge that an entire building or the district may need to transition to remote learning at any time. In order to provide continuity of learning to the greatest extent possible, we require only those staff and students who meet exclusion criteria to remain at home.

Staff and students already have the familiarity of using Google Meet for virtual learning and will continue to utilize it in the current school year. Assignments will be available on Google Classroom to both groups of 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.

At Foundation Academy, each student has an advisor who is the main point of contact for families. Advisors monitor their students' grades, attendance, and behavior, and communicate concerns to parents as they arise. Subject-area teachers notify parents of missing assignments and work with families to create plans for their completion. During periods of remote instruction, each teacher contacts families the same day a student misses class.

### **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.

### **Ensuring the Delivery of Special Education and Related Services to 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 include:

1. Hybrid learning 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 EdPlan 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 sheltered 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. Teachers will provide parents with translated text and email communications. The school has in-house interpreters available on an as-needed basis to ensure families have the ability to communicate with teachers and other staff.

## **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 that help reduce or eliminate barriers to showing what students know and can do.

For students who receive services through an IEP or 504 plan, 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.

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 will currently attend 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.

### **Accelerated Learning Opportunities**

Foundation Academies provides appropriate kindergarten-through-grade-12 (K-12) educational services for all learners, including accelerated learning opportunities in the form of Honors and Advanced Placement courses (at the high school level) and schedule adjustments for K-8 students that provide access to above grade-level academic instruction. Whether in-person or during periods of remote learning, students receive a developmentally appropriate SEL curriculum and engage with age/grade-level peers throughout the school day.

### **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 \(available in English and Spanish\)](#) accelcreditwhich 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.

Whether in-person or remote, all grade levels use the iReady diagnostic 3 times annually to monitor student progress toward individual goals in reading and math. After each administration, staff utilize an in-service day to evaluate data and adjust instruction

to better meet the needs of their students. Subject area teachers are able to adapt formerly paper-based assessments for online use, and use the results of student work to determine when and how standards must be retaught.

## **Professional Learning**

During new staff orientation, we focus on the delivery of high-quality instruction, both remote and in-person. Teachers are 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 includes an introduction to the techniques found in Doug Lemov's book, *Teach Like a Champion*, which they 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. This includes training for teachers, administrators, and counselors to learn strategies related to culturally responsive teaching and learning, socio-emotional learning, and trauma-informed teaching for students affected by forced migration from their home country (e.g.refugee, asylee).

## **Other Elements**

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

Foundation Academies recognizes the potential trauma that staff and students face during school closures. Our school is focused on building resilience in both staff and students and trains all staff on trauma-informed practices.

Before our school year began and throughout the upcoming school year we will:

1. Plan to have Community Circle/Town Hall/Advisory
2. Train all staff on our SEL curriculum, Leader in Me
3. Focus on helping students build community with each other
4. Support teachers in having clear, consistent, and intentional expectations and classroom routines (virtually and in the building)
5. Utilize restorative justice
6. During student orientation, discuss the school closure plan with students in the event that we must close again

7. Regularly communicate our food service programming so that students and families know where they will have access to food
8. 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.

Foundation Academies has a four-person “Student Success Team”. This team of two social workers, one school counselor and one Board Certified Behavior Analyst will partner with teachers and families to serve scholars in the general education population who demonstrate a need for socio-emotional and behavioral support and will equip scholars with strategies needed to lead productive lives.

### **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 for meals will be provided for students’ remote learning days through grab and go meal pick ups 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.

### **Attendance**

Our goal as a school is to ensure that we prepare students for college and lives of strong character. Students' regular attendance in school, whether virtual or in-person, is vitally important to their success and ultimately whether or not we achieve our mission.

We work to ensure our practices are aligned, equitable, and provide students with the maximum amount of high quality instruction. We have added layers of accountability involving both academic and operational staff to our attendance procedures, with the goal of improving our daily attendance rate to 95%, and reducing chronic absenteeism to below 9%. All teachers take attendance during the Homeroom/Advisory period. School administrators check attendance status after this period and follow up with teachers immediately for any class with the attendance status “Not taken”. Families are notified by telephone on any morning their child is marked absent or tardy from school.

As stated in our board-approved attendance policy:

The frequent absence of students from classroom learning experiences disrupts the continuity of the instructional process and limits the ability of students to complete the prescribed curriculum requirements successfully. The following rules shall apply for student absences:

- A. A student shall be considered absent from class for tardiness in excess of one half of the total class period.
- B. A student shall be considered absent from school for participation in less than 4 instructional hours during the school day.

A student must be in attendance for 176 or more school days in order to be considered to have successfully completed the instructional program requirements of the grade/course to which he/she is assigned.

A waiver of these attendance requirements may be granted for good cause by the school principal upon recommendation of a review committee, appointed by him/her, and consisting of representative staff, including student service personnel and classroom teachers.

In recommending the granting of a waiver of this attendance requirement, the review committee shall consider the nature and causes of all absences rather than only those in excess of the 12 days. Documentation of the nature and causes of these absences shall be the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian. The absence of documented parent/guardian notes, doctor's notes, and other records that verify that an absence was excused according to board policy, shall be considered unexcused. Unexcused absences shall count toward truancy and may be subject to loss of grade or course credit toward promotion or graduation and disciplinary actions according to the code of student conduct. Notes from parents/guardians shall be considered but the district may require additional documentation such as doctor's notes or other official records to verify the note.

### **Quarantines:**

1. Students who are quarantined (as part of a class/grade/school quarantine, as a sibling quarantine, or as an individual quarantine, regardless of where the exposure happened) are required to attend virtual instruction and were provided with a link to join their class.
2. Nurses notify instructional staff of these students.
3. Quarantined students who attend virtual instruction are marked present-remote by teachers.
4. Quarantined students who do not come to virtual instruction are marked as absent by teachers.
5. Quarantined students who do not come to virtual instruction are marked absent-unexcused for their daily attendance code unless one or more of the following is met:
  - a. a doctor's note or medical documentation for the student who missed instruction is provided to excuse the student, regardless of diagnosis (COVID or other)
  - b. a positive COVID test for the student who missed instruction is sent to the nurse (these students are excused)

- c. The student experienced a technology issue that could not be resolved after asking the teacher for guidance AND contacted our technology team for assistance. The technology team emails the main office to let them know of any students that fit this criteria.
- d. The principal or their designee confirms that the student's teacher failed to provide a remote link. These students are excused, and the staff receive feedback from their school leadership.
- e. Another form of documentation is provided that would otherwise suffice for excusal in a non-pandemic school year (for example, documentation for a funeral)
- f. If there is a special case with extenuating circumstances, our policy does allow some discretion for extreme situations.

## **Facilities**

Foundation Academies will continue to adhere to existing required cleaning practices as well as any new specific requirements of the local health department as they arise. Frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as door handles and light switches will be cleaned on an increased schedule in accordance with board policy **3510 - Operation and Maintenance of Plant**. Bathrooms will be sanitized daily and between use as much as possible using protocols outlined by the Department of Environmental Protection. Additional custodial staff has been hired to assist our team with cleaning and disinfection procedures. When students must change classrooms during the day, desks and high-touch areas will be sanitized between groups.

In the event of a period of extended closure, the facilities team, custodial staff, and the technology team will be considered essential personnel and may be required to report for in-person work. A list of these employees will be provided to the county office at the time of transition to remote or virtual instruction. Staff will socially distance to the greatest extent possible in accordance with guidelines, and may work rotational schedules or be assigned to specific areas. Buildings will be deep-cleaned and sanitized in accordance with guidance in effect at the time. Best practices for HVAC and water system maintenance will be followed.

## **Credit Recovery**

High school students in need of credit recovery take board-approved courses through Educere during the summer months.

## **Extra-curricular programs and Community programming**

During previous years, we've learned to pivot our extracurricular and community programming to online platforms when needed, as well as to run in-person events that

incorporate extra sanitary measures and social distancing. If we are required to move to remote learning, we will follow our established practices to safely continue offering strong programming to our students and their families.

Sports programs will be modified or paused in accordance with local, state, and federal requirements. Student safety is of the utmost importance, and available guidance is followed when it is possible for athletics to take place.

### **Childcare**

In the event of extended periods of remote learning, Foundation Academies will work with local organizations to arrange childcare for students. These may include, but are not limited to: The CYO of Mercer County, The Boys and Girls Club, and the YMCA.

### **Community programming**

Foundation Academies partners with Henry J. Austin Health Center to provide Covid-19 vaccination and testing.

### **Transportation**

The Trenton Public School System provides bus transportation to and from school for our students.

## **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.

Using the lessons learned from educating children during previous years, we will pivot and adapt our methods to best fit any future circumstance that requires the shift to remote learning. At all times, we will continue to follow the local, state and federal guidelines, and to act in the best interest of our school community.