Empowerment Academy Charter School

Emergency Remote Learning Plan SY2024-25

Adopted by the Board of Trustees on November 21, 2024

This Emergency Remote Learning Plan has been designed to support the school's continued achievement of its mission and goals in the event that an emergency (e.g., a fire or pandemic) necessitates that one or more of our school facilities be closed to in-person learning for a period of time. We have sought to build on our experiences during the Covid Pandemic and subsequent data relating to the effectiveness of various instructional strategies and of student and staff social-emotional support strategies.

Ensuring Equitable Digital Access to Instruction

Believing it is important to provide our scholars and their family equitable digital access to digital school instructional and informational resources, all of the steps in this section will be taken in the school year ahead whether or not an emergent situation requires that school facilities be closed to in-person instruction for some period of time.

1. At the beginning of the school year, the school will:
   a. Distribute Chromebooks to all scholars in Grades K-10, together with information for scholars and their families (available in English, Spanish and Arabic) regarding acceptable scholar use of school computers, appropriate online behavior, school rules prohibiting online bullying and misuse of school computers, and disciplinary consequences relating to prohibited online behaviors and/or misuse of school computers by scholars. (When appropriate, scholars with special needs will receive a Chromebook and assistive technologies adapted to the scholar's specific needs.)
   b. Distribute a family survey (available in English, Spanish, or Arabic) to determine, among other things, whether our scholars have wireless internet access at home. When due to financial circumstances a family does not have such access, the school will lend the family a hotspot device and work with the family to obtain free internet service;
   c. Provide scholars and their families detailed instructions (available in English, Spanish, or Arabic) on how to log onto Google classroom and other platforms used by the school to support its instruction program, to support our scholar families' ability to track their scholar's assignments and progress, and to support family-school communications; and
   d. Provide each scholar a school email address and Google classroom password.

2. The school's online systems for helping families support their scholar's learning, track their scholar's progress, and communicate with school personnel are easy to use. Even so, we will have our Family Engagement Coordinator schedule trainings on how to use the system and its various capabilities and extend an invitation to parents/guardians to attend if they believe it would be helpful for them.

3. When parents use our systems to email their child's teacher or any other school employee, our protocol is and will be to have the appropriate staff member respond within 48 hours

4. Faculty will track the progress of each scholar. If work is not getting completed, indicating that a family's situation may have changed since the beginning of the school year, a teacher or dean will reach out to ensure that it is not due to a lack of digital access. If it is, we will provide the technology needed.

5. The following platforms and programs are used at Empowerment Academy to support instruction. The school provides training in the effective use of these free or licensed platforms and programs and how they can variously be used effectively to meet diverse student needs.

   - ✓ Google Classroom (everyone)
   - ✓ Google Hangouts
   - ✓ Google Chat
   - ✓ G-Suite for Education in General
   - ✓ Zoom (Director of IT has created ZOOM Safety Protocols all teachers MUST follow.)
   - ✓ Kami (grade specific)
   - ✓ Screen Castify
   - ✓ You Tube (with safety features enabled)
   - ✓ Flip Grid
   - ✓ Class DoJo (grade specific)
   - ✓ Epic (grade specific)
   - ✓ BrainPop
   - ✓ Flocabulary
   - ✓ ReadWorks
   - ✓ MathWhizz,
   - ✓ Study.com,
   - ✓ KhanAcademy
   - ✓ Vocabulary.com
   - ✓ Rewordify
   - ✓ Mystery Science
   - ✓ EduPuzzle
   - ✓ SplashLearn
   - ✓ Kahoot
   - ✓ Quizlet
   - ✓ NewsELA
   - ✓ Scholastic magazines online

Meeting Diverse Needs and Maximizing Student Learning When Instruction Must Be Remote

Our experience has been that when an emergency requires that instruction be provided remotely to K-12 scholars, synchronous virtual instruction and counseling is generally more effective supporting academic learning and social-emotional health than asynchronous methodologies or primary utilization of computer learning programs. Scholar engagement and community learning is increased when scholars have an

opportunity to hear their peers respond to their teacher and to engage with one another directly in real time.

Accordingly, should we need to return to 100% remote instruction at one or more school sites, our leaders and staff will distribute staff, student and recommended family schedules that are generally comprised of time blocks for synchronous whole class, small group and individual virtual instruction and support.

Teachers in every subject will post pre-instruction assignments on Google Classroom, such as assigned readings; teacher-created and professional instructional videos with worksheets that are to be submitted via Google Forms and Docs; and slideshows with embedded activities, etc.

Following instruction, teachers may assign homework that includes interactive activities using platforms such as Khan Academy, IXL, CommonLit, Study.com, Rosetta Stone, Pearson, and others.

But on a daily basis, teachers will deliver virtual whole class instruction to students in real time, and classes will then break-up into small groups where general education teachers , specialists who support scholars with diverse needs, and teacher assistants will push-in to work with different virtual small groups to provide differentiated instruction and practice support in real time.

Hence, while asynchronous electronic communications via Email, Remind and Google Classroom comments will by no means be discouraged, the bulk of daily faculty-student interactions, albeit virtual, will be synchronous, and computer learning programs will not be utilized in place of real-time virtual new instruction by human teachers, rather only to reinforce it and to provide extended opportunities beyond the school day for effective scholar practice.

In summary, we will be endeavoring to have our scholars' virtual school day and experience be as similar to their in-person school day at Empowerment Academy as possible.

To facilitate a quick and effective emergency transition to our remote learning protocols should the need arise, we will provide our faculty, scholars and their families with varying degrees of advance training and will prepare critical guidance materials in advance, as well. Specifically, each summer, we will provide professional development to staff in how to transition from our in-person to our remote learning protocols. Early on each school year, we will provide scholars and their families with training in many of the technologies they will use in a 100% remote learning emergency: specifically, those technologies they will also regularly use (albeit less intensively and in some instances for different purposes) while learning is in-person. Meanwhile, the critical guidance materials we prepare will be put on the shelf but will updated annually when we update our Emergency Remote Instruction Plan. This will enable us, if the need arises, with quick customization for specific circumstances, to get these emergency guidance materials out to scholars and their families quickly.

A **SAMPLE** recommended family schedule for a third grade scholar follows, below:

7:00am	Wake-Up	Families should encourage their scholar maintaining a regular routine and have the scholar wake up, brush their teeth, and get dressed, etc., just as if the scholar was getting ready for in-person instruction at our school site.

8:00am	Breakfast	Families should encourage their scholar to drink water, eat a light and nutritious breakfast, stretch, and get ready for the day.
8:30	Sign-In	Ensure your scholar signs-In to Google Classroom and reviews their schedule for the day
8:45-11:00am	Instructional Time	Ensure your scholar signs-in to their assigned virtual classrooms or Work On Packet, as per the Daily Schedule emailed to you last night and posted for your scholar on Google Classroom
11:00-11:45am	Physical Health & Extra Help Time	On scheduled PE days, have your scholar sign-in to their virtual PE Class. On other days, unless your scholar is scheduled for an academic or student support small group or to receive virtually provided Related Services, your scholar can communicate with, or get extra help from, any of their teachers who have virtual office hours during this time period, or your scholar can undertake one of our recommended inside or outside workouts for kids.
11:45am	Break/Lunch	Families should encourage their scholars to drink water, eat a nutritious lunch, rest for a bit, and stretch
12:30-2:45pm	Instructional Time	Ensure your scholar signs-in to their assigned virtual classrooms or Work On Packet, as per the Daily Schedule emailed to you last night and posted for your scholar on Google Classroom.
2:45-3:30pm	Customized Small Group, Learning Program and Extra Help Time	This time block is reserved for each scholar to: receive customized small group academic and/or social-emotional support; work with learning programs targeted to meeting the scholar's individual academic and/or social emotional needs; and be able to receive extra help from our teachers and/or student support professionals. For example, during this time period on certain days of the week, a scholar may be assigned to a small group or to use an online learning program targeted to meeting the requirements of the scholar's IEP, or English language learning needs, or social-emotional learning growth needs, or critical learning gaps, or need for on-grade level academic standard mastery, or readiness for above-grade instruction and learning. Some time will also be reserved during this time block on certain days for our teachers and student support professionals to individually touch base with each scholar about extra help the scholar may need, so provision of the extra help can be immediately provided or scheduled for the student in lieu of a learning program assignment.
3:30-3:45pm	Snack/Break	Time for your scholar to eat a snack, take a walk, rest, exercise, etc
3:45-	Extended	Unless your scholar is scheduled to participate in an extended learning

4:30pm	Learning, Counseling and / or Extracurricular Program Time	academic or student support small group, your scholar can communicate with, or get extra help from, any of your scholar's teachers who have virtual office hours during this time period, can do their homework, or can participate in one of the extracurricular activities we will offer during this time period.
4:30-5:00	Homework and/or Virtual Learning Program Time	On a daily basis, your scholar will receive Life's Work assignments as well as learning program assignments they can complete for extra credit.
5:00pm	Chore/Play Time	Encourage a routine of chores and helping out around the house. Have your older children help supervise younger children. Allow scholars some free time
6:00pm	Dinner Time	A healthy nutritional dinner will support your scholar's health and well-being.
7:00pm	Family Time	Play a game or interact with your child if possible.
8:30pm	Bath/Story/ Bed Time	Read to your child every evening if possible and make sure they get to bed early enough to get the daily sleep they need.

Notice that in addition to the instructional time blocks providing for virtual whole class and small group instruction in real-time, time blocks are scheduled during which our teachers can provide virtual one-on-one help for scholars. Time for such help will be scheduled: daily for ELA and Math ; four times a weeks for Science and Social Studies; and twice a week for Specials courses. These one-on-one help meetings will take place via Google Meets.

Providing Remote Academic Instruction to Scholars of Different Ages and Possessing Diverse Needs

As we do when our schools are open for in-person instruction, we will differentiate our remote instruction for different grade levels of scholars and for scholars with different needs.

Kindergarten to Grade 2

- Paper curricular materials and assignment worksheets will be delivered via our buses to the parents/guardians of K-1 scholars who will have a difficult time using instructional technologies and digital curricular materials if older family members are not available.
- Electronic daily lesson plans and materials will be emailed by 8 pm the night before to parents/guardians. They will be accompanied by assignments, videos, and examples of the work to be done in digital or paper notebooks.
- Our second grade scholars will already be using Google Classroom regularly while school is in-person. Even so, if instruction goes 100% remote, we will "over communicate" to families and our scholars in the beginning to address all questions concerning the platform and how second-grade scholars are to be using it.

- Whenever possible, teachers will deliver virtual whole class instruction to students in real time, and classes will then break-up into small groups where general education teachers , specialists who support scholars with diverse needs, and teacher assistants will push-in to work with the virtual small groups to provide differentiated instruction and practice support in real time.
- When instruction cannot be delivered in real time, it will be provided using principally teacher-created daily videos (generally using Screencastify).
- Electronic workbook assignments or photos of work completed on paper will be submitted via Pearson and Google Forms.
- Second grade teachers will also use some of the age-appropriate learning programs listed on page 2, above.
- Importantly, there will be a weekly group Social and Emotional Learning activity check-in with scholars' parents/guardians via Video Call.
- There will be daily communication via email, phone, Zoom/Google Video Call.
- Teachers will schedule one-one virtual meetings with parents and/or scholars when necessary in response to individual scholar needs.
- A plan will be implemented for teachers and Deans to support scholars/parents with extenuating circumstances.

Grades 3 to 5

- Our Grade 3-5 scholars will already be using Google Classroom regularly while school is in-person. Even so, if academic instruction goes 100% remote, we will "over communicate" in the beginning to address all questions concerning the platform and how scholars are to be using it.
- Electronic daily lesson plans and materials will be emailed by 8 pm the night before to scholars and their parents/guardians. They will be accompanied by assignments, videos, and examples of the work to be done on digital worksheets.
- Whenever possible, teachers will deliver virtual whole class instruction to students in real time, and classes will then break-up into small groups where general education teachers , specialists who support scholars with diverse needs, and teacher assistants will push-in to work with the virtual small groups to provide differentiated instruction and practice support in real time.
- When instruction cannot be delivered in real time, it will be provided using principally teacher-created daily videos (generally using Screencastify).
- Completed worksheets and written student work will be submitted via Google Forms or Google Docs.
- Teachers will also utilize some of the age-appropriate learning programs listed on page 2, above.
- Teachers will work with Reading and other Specialists, as well as our SPED and ESL teachers to ensure additional/modified services continue to be provided to scholars who require them.
- There will be a weekly Social and Emotional Learning activity check-in with scholars via Video Call.

- There will be daily communication via email, phone, Zoom/Google Video Call.
- Teachers will schedule one-one virtual meetings with parents and/or scholars when necessary in response to individual scholar needs.
- A plan will be implemented for teachers and Deans to support scholars/parents with extenuating circumstances.

Grades 6 to 8

- Electronic daily lesson plans and assignments, videos, and examples of the work to be done on digital worksheets will be posted by 8 pm the night before on Google Classroom. Scholar's daily schedule and assignments will be emailed to their parents/guardians.
- Whenever possible, teachers will deliver virtual whole class instruction to students in real time, and classes will then break-up into small groups where general education teachers , specialists who support scholars with diverse needs, and teacher assistants will push-in to work with the virtual small groups to provide differentiated instruction and practice support in real time.
- When instruction cannot be delivered in real time, it will be provided using principally teacher-created daily videos (generally using Screencastify).
- Completed worksheets and written student work will be submitted via Google Forms or Google Docs.
- Teachers will also utilize some of the age-appropriate learning programs listed on page 2, above.
- Teachers will work with Reading and other Specialists, as well as our SPED and ESL teachers to ensure additional/modified services continue to be provided to scholars who require them.
- There will be a weekly Social and Emotional Learning activity check-in with scholars via Video Call.
- There will be daily communication via email, phone, Zoom/Google Video Call.
- Teachers will schedule one-one virtual meetings with parents and/or scholars when necessary in response to individual scholar needs.
- A plan will be implemented for teachers and Deans to support scholars/parents with extenuating circumstances.

Grades 9-10

- Electronic daily lesson plans and assignments, videos, and examples of the work to be done on digital worksheets will be posted by 8 pm the night before on Google Classroom. Scholar's daily schedule and assignments will be emailed to their parents/guardians.
- Whenever possible, teachers will deliver virtual whole class instruction to students in real time, and classes will then break-up into small groups where general education teachers , specialists who support scholars with diverse needs, and teacher assistants will push-in to work with the virtual small groups to provide differentiated instruction and practice support in real time.

- When instruction cannot be delivered in real time, it will be provided using principally teacher-created daily videos (generally using Screencastify).
- Completed worksheets and written student work will be submitted via Google Forms or Google Docs.
- Teachers will also utilize some of the age-appropriate learning programs listed on page 2, above.
- Teachers will work with Reading and other Specialists, as well as our SPED and ESL teachers to ensure additional/modified services continue to be provided to scholars who require them.
- There will be a weekly Social and Emotional Learning activity check-in with scholars via Video Call.
- There will be daily communication via email, phone, Zoom/Google Video Call.
- Teachers will schedule one-one virtual meetings with parents and/or scholars when necessary in response to individual scholar needs.
- A plan will be implemented for teachers and Deans to support scholars/parents with extenuating circumstances.

Assessment

Parents are sometimes tempted to help their scholars on assessments. To ensure assessment fidelity should 100% remote instruction need to be implemented, we will administer unit tests and benchmark assessments using OnCourse coupled with Go Guardian. The latter enables teachers to see our scholars and our scholars' computer screens while they were taking an assessment and ensure that scholars were not being aided by others or viewing non-permitted resources during test-taking.

Class assignments and checks for understanding will be modified somewhat and converted to Google-Documents for students to complete in their Google Classrooms. Checks will contain fewer multiple choice questions and instead have scholars provide short, constructed answers to open-ended questions, making it more obvious when scholars are copying responses. We will also increase project-based learning, in connection with which we will require significant writing.

All assessments, formal and informal, formative and summative, will be modified as appropriate for scholars with special needs.

On the non-academic front, to assess our scholars' social-emotional well-being and provide support, our student support professionals will constantly reach out to our scholars and their parents/guardians by voice or video phone, email, alternate computer platform and survey.

During the COVID Pandemic, our assessment regime produced learning data that was somewhat less quantitative and more qualitative than would be the case in a normal year, but we believe the assessments gave us a good sense of each scholar's mastery of academic standards.

Even so, appreciating that one cannot have the same level of confidence in the results of formal assessments that scholars take when teachers are not physically present, we will reduce the weighting of assessment results in the calculation of students' grade for a subject and modify our grading scale. We will still use our regular 1-4 grading system for ELA and Math, but in other subject areas, we will use an ESW grading system: Exemplary; Satisfactory; or Working towards mastery.

Supporting Social-Emotional Learning and the Social and Emotional Health of our Scholars and Staff

We have hired additional School Counselors and Social Workers to increase our capacity to provide scholars both more whole class social and emotional learning instruction and more small group and/or one-on-one counseling support.

As regards small group and one-on-one counseling support, in SY24-25 we will be providing it both to more scholars and for more hours. This will be the case whether or not an emergency requires that we implement 100% remote instruction and counseling. Note in our Sample Recommended Family Schedule for a third grade scholar on page 4 of this Remote Instruction Plan that we have three time blocks – 11:00 to 11:45am; 2:45-3:30pm; and 3:45-4:30pm – during which time can be reserved for a scholar to receive such counseling. The first two time blocks are school day time blocks. The third is an extended day afterschool time block. Moreover, we are also now providing counseling support to scholars during summer school.

Our Student Support Services Department Chairperson provides professional development training to our faculty in how to infuse social-emotional learning in all of their instruction, and will also be conducting workshops for parents to learn strategies for supporting their scholar's social-emotional health. If schooling needs to be delivered remotely for a period of time in SY24-25, faculty and family understanding of how to support social-emotion learning and health will become extra-important and additional such trainings will be scheduled.

Serving Our Scholars with IEPs

Our Coordinator of Special Education, special education staff, social workers, counselors, nurses and contracted Related Services providers will all continue to provide services required under a scholar's IEP, except that those services will be provided virtually as permitted by NJ Statute A3904, with Empowerment Academy providing the scholar with assistive technologies adapted to the scholar's specific needs.

The aforementioned services will generally be provided during the Instructional Time, Physical Health Time, and Customized Support Time blocks in the Daily Schedule that will be provided to the scholar should their school facility need to close to in-person learning.

All such special education programming will be consistent with the scholar's individualized education program (IEP) and will meet New Jersey Learning Standards. Our SPED Coordinator, SPED teachers and case managers will work with our Academy Deans, Department Chairs and teachers to ensure that the modifications and accommodations listed in IEPs are implemented in a scholar's lesson plans, assignments, and assessments and are properly documented. Our SPED team will also conduct a bi-weekly review of a scholars' progress including not only a review of class assignments and assessments, but also SPED Coordinator and Counselor virtual classroom observations to track scholar progress and/or changes in need. In addition, the team will regularly survey parents and scholars to ensure that the services being provided are equitable and meeting the scholar's needs. Finally, our case workers, with checklists in hand, will regularly review scholar files and reach out by email or phone to scholar families to ensure procedure and deadline compliance and proper documentation thereof.

Empowerment Academy provides parents with progress reports of scholars' academic and

behavioral progress each term. This data can help guide Individual Education Program revisions as the special needs of scholars change.

During periods when required meetings must be conducted remotely, identification meeting, eligibility meetings, IEP and re-evaluation planning meetings, etc., will all be held via audio or video conference to stay in compliance with annual/re-evaluation due dates. With scheduling guidance from our Coordinator of Special Education and case workers, the SPED Department Chair at a school site will schedule calendar invites and follow-up on all IEP meetings and deadlines.

Our procedures to properly identify, evaluate and re-evaluate scholars with disabilities are as follows:

- When a scholar is enrolled at Empowerment Academy, the Special Education coordinator and/or School Nurse, as appropriate, review the scholar's records. They protect the confidentiality of this information in accordance with federal and state law.

- Not all scholars in need of Special Education services will arrive with such information in their student record. To ensure that all scholars who are in need of special education and related services are identified and evaluated, our Special Education Coordinator:

  o Provides our instructional staff with induction and on-going training that includes information about indications a child might be in need and eligible for special education and related services; and

  o Conducts screenings that can help identify students who may be in need of such services.

- Alternatively, a parent/guardian may expect a problem and complete a request form that will be reviewed by the Special Education Department Chair at a scholar's grade level.

- Within two weeks of our discovering indications of disability, or the parent/guardian request being sent, the SPED Department Chair will schedule a meeting for the Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) Committee to meet with the scholar's parent/guardian and will send information home that informs the parent/guardian of their rights under the law to request (or deny) evaluations and/or services.

- In preparation for the school-parent meeting, our I&RS Committee will collect information about the scholar's behavior, health and academics to formulate a complete picture of the scholar's needs. They will bring an information sheet including this information to the meeting.

- At the meeting, the Committee brainstorms about how scholar-specific support strategies and interventions might effectively be implemented. The Committee ensures that the scholar's teachers and parent/guardians are actively involved in the development of the I&RS action plan; that the plan is culturally appropriate and family-supported; and that the role of intervention team members is coordinated. In addition, its expert members will provide the scholar's teachers and family members training and support.

- Under the oversight of the Committee, the scholar's teachers and intervention team members

will track the effectiveness of the plan's interventions. If the I&RS action plan fails to achieve its objectives, the scholar's intervention team will propose revisions as data and experience guide and under the Committee's guidance will implement the revised plan.

- The scholar's teachers and intervention team members, and our I&RS Committee as a whole, will track the success of the revised plan and continue to make revisions as indicated by data to be appropriate.

- Only after these intervention action plans have not proved successful, will the scholar be referred to our contracted Child Study Team, where the identification process continues in conformance with regulations pertaining to timeline, consent, and evaluation procedure requirements. The Child Study Team then proceeds with evaluation to determine if a child is eligible for Special Education services, and if so, to what extent. Once the findings and data are compiled, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is developed and our Special Education Coordinator ensures that it is implemented with fidelity.

Serving Our English Language Learning Scholars

To comply with federal and state requirements for meeting the needs of English Language Learning scholars (ELLs), Empowerment Academy: makes use of translation services and our diverse staff to communicate in writing and verbally with the parents/guardians of prospective and identified ELL scholars in a language the family understands; works to accurately and efficiently identify scholars in need of English Language services within the first thirty days of a scholar's attendance at Empowerment Academy; obtains the necessary parent/guardian approvals for the provision of ESL services; provides appropriate and effective ESL services for the scholar; and keeps parents/guardians apprised of their scholar's progress attaining mastery of the English Language.

To do so during a time of emergency when the school is operating remotely:

- The Registrar will ensure that all incoming families receive and complete a home language survey with their admission paperwork and our English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers will review these surveys and compile a list of scholars who do not speak English full time at home.

- Our ESL teachers will conduct virtual classroom observations of potential ELL scholars in at least two core content subjects for indications of how the children appear to be taking in language through listening and reading, and how they appear to output language through speaking and writing. They will document these observations with notes.

- Our ESL teachers will also gather initial benchmark data on scholars from basic skills screeners and diagnostic testing. If the scholar is an older student, the ESL teachers may spend time reviewing the scholar's academic file to determine how the scholar performed previously at their old school, and if they received language services there.

- Additionally, our ESL teachers will ask for teacher recommendations to gain deeper insight into

a scholar's language abilities as demonstrated in class. Especially with Kindergarten students, who may need time adjusting to school, teachers can provide significant insights into a child's English language skills.

- After gathering all this information, our ESL teachers will determine which scholars require further assessment with the WIDA Model Assessment, Empowerment Academy's English Language Proficiency test. Our ESL teachers will administer this assessment, which measures a scholar's English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing, either in-person at an Empowerment Academy school site that is not closed to in-person learning, or remotely, to all students deemed potentially deserving of ESL instruction.

- If a scholar scores below a cumulative 4.5 on the WIDA Model Assessment and need is indicated by at least one other kind of data – e.g., classroom observations, initial benchmark data, teacher recommendations and/or a family interview – our ESL teachers will notify the scholar's parent /guardian and seek approval to begin providing appropriate and effective ESL services.

- Our approved English as a Second Language services follow a Sheltered English model that involves both push-in and pull out provision of services. These services would both be provided virtually during a time of 100% remote instruction.

- We provide progress reports each term throughout the year to the parents/guardians of our English Language Learners on their scholar's progress attaining English language proficiency.

- English Language Learners continue in a program until their English language proficiency skills score above 4.5 on the WIDA assessment and their ESL and general education teachers believe they no longer need special ESL support. Scholars exiting the program continue to be monitored for two years. Teacher input, a scholar's academic performance, and third-party assessment data (e.g. Terra Nova or PARCC assessment data) can lead to a scholar re-entering a program.

Empowerment Academy has five full-time ESL teachers supporting its ESL program. As noted above, some of these teachers will push-in to provide ELLs' development of language skills and content learning during subjects such as Math, Science or Writing. However, they will also pull-out ELLs during Guided Reading to provide more targeted instruction around reading. These determinations are made based on the child's needs and progress towards achieving proficiency of WIDA Language Standards.

Additionally, our ESL teachers train *all* Empowerment Academy educators in the effective differentiation of instruction, and the provision of appropriate accommodations, for English Language Learners at the beginning of the school year. They then provide additional guidance and training as scheduled on Professional Development Days or during Professional Learning Community meetings throughout the school year. Some examples of professional development topics covered in training include how to make input comprehensible, how to target and emphasize vocabulary instruction across content areas, or how to develop strong oral language through purposeful interaction.

Attendance and Assignment Submission

Scholar attendance in virtual classes and small groups and scholar submission of work assignments will be tracked by teachers and added to student records maintained in our Oncourse Student Information System.

When a scholar is deemed "absent" based on the above, the teacher will notify the scholar through a Google Classroom email. The teacher will also notify the parent/guardian via an email and inquire about the reason for the absence in a way that is sensitive to a family's prospectively changed home situation. If the scholar is absent for two or more consecutive days and the parent/guardian has not responded to the teacher's emails inquiring about the reason, the teacher will alert a school leader who will engage Deans and Student Support professionals in reaching out to and virtually meeting with the parent/guardian.

If a scholar has not submitted an assignment, the teacher will notify the scholar through a Google Classroom email. The teacher will also notify the parent via an email. If the scholar misses two or more consecutive days of assignments, the teacher will send an email alerting the parent and inquiring about the reason in a way that is sensitive to a family's prospectively changed home situation. If the parent does not respond, the teacher will follow up with a phone call. If there is still no response, the Teacher will alert a school leader who will assign a dean or student support professional to continue reaching out to the family, learn the cause of the problem, explain the importance of scholar attendance and work submission, offer school support in areas where it might be able to help address a problem, and endeavor to initiate a home-school partnership and plan to improve scholar attendance and work assignment submission.

When a scholar's attendance or work submissions fall below 75% or the scholar's weekly grades indicate that the scholar may fail one or more classes for the semester or, worse, be at risk of not meeting the standards for grade level promotion at the end of the school year, the scholar's homeroom teacher or a Dean of Students will clearly communicate the magnitude of the problem to the scholar's parents/guardians in writing, and will also schedule a meeting with the scholar's parents/guardians and appropriate school professionals to: 1) ensure that the parents/guardians truly do appreciate the magnitude of the problem, and 2) develop a more comprehensive home-school intervention plan.

**21st Century Community Learning Center Offerings /
Extended Learning, Student Support and Enrichment Opportunities**

The school uses its regular operating funds, as well as Title I and other grant funds, to support its 21st Century Community Learning Center services and programs. During a time of 100% remote learning, not all of our building sites and physical resources may available for use by students, but Empowerment Academy will continue to offer afterschool, weekend, and summer extended learning programs, social-emotional health programs, and enrichment programs. It will continue to offer student and family support services. And it will continue to support family literacy, and family engagement and partnership with the school, supporting the academic and social-emotional growth of Empowerment Academy scholars.

Note, for instance, that the sample family schedule on page 4 schedules Extended Leaning time each afternoon from 3:45 to 4:30pm for the provision of high-dosage small group tutoring to students who are academically struggling. Just as currently provided during in-person instruction, this afterschool "Intensive Tutoring" (in our parlance) will be provided by faculty members to scholars identified as in need; the faculty members will be compensated for providing this supplement instruction via stipend payments; and these stipend payments will be partially paid using Title I and other grant funding. The only thing that will be different is that the Intensive Tutoring small groups will meet virtually.

Also just as currently provided during in-person instruction, we will continue to invite academically struggling scholars to Saturday School and Summer School, and will invite scholars struggling with social and emotional stress and/or behavior to receive afterschool and/or summer individual or small group counseling and mentoring.   Once again, everything will be the same in a remote learning environment except that individual or small group meetings will take place virtually, not in-person.

Accelerated Learning and Credit Recovery

In response to a SY22-23 National Center for Education Statistics study, American public schools estimated that 49% of their scholars are currently behind grade level in at least one subject. This is a problem at all grade levels, but it is especially significant for high school students who in most states – including New Jersey –must receive a passing grade in state-specified courses to earn the credits needed to graduate.

Coming out of the Covid Pandemic, Empowerment Academy implemented strategies to accelerate the learning of its behind-grade-level students. These strategies, which are consistent with New Jersey's Learning Acceleration Guide and are discussed all throughout this Remote Learning Plan, seek to support students' physical, social and emotional well-being to increase their readiness for learning; to make the school a place where scholars feel safe and cared for; and to provide all students access to grade level instruction while addressing their diverse learning gaps, challenges and needs using school-day differentiated small group instruction and through extended day high dosage tutoring, computer learning programs and enrichment opportunities that diverse learning needs of individual students.

Further, we have taken note of the research indicating that to accelerate the pace at which scholars achieve mastery of the *pre-requisite* skills and knowledge needed to achieve *on-grade level* academic standard proficiency, schools should identify scholars' *most critical* earlier grade level learning gaps and focus on closing those gaps as rapidly as possible. This research informs the differentiated small group and high dosage tutoring we provide our scholars during and outside of the regular school day, and will continue to should we need to change from in-person to remote delivery of instruction and student support.

Empowerment Academy is now offering high school grade levels, which creates the imperative of providing for high school credit recovery. To ensure scholars are able to pass subjects they initially fail but must pass to earn course credits needed to graduate high school, Empowerment Academy will provide in-person high dosage tutoring at its high school, or if the site is required to be closed to in-person instruction, will use virtual high dosage tutoring; it will not simply direct students to work with online learning programs. This high dosage tutoring will be offered afterschool, on weekends and during the summer to enable scholars to meet New Jersey's seat time requirements to obtain credit for retaken courses.   Attendance will be tracked in the same way it is for regular school day classes.

Sports and Extracurricular Programming

Sports that cannot be play because of Health Official Guidance during an emergency will be suspended until further notice. The sport's Coach will reach out to affected families and scholars to provide exercise, training, and nutritional guidance that scholars can follow at home. Where the disruption to the sport is expected to be brief, the sport's Coach will also schedule virtual athletic training sessions 2-3 times a week to help keep our scholars active and ready to resume the season when possible.

As noted on page 4, above, from 3:45 to 4:30pm, we have scheduled time for afterschool extracurricular programming. All afterschool extracurricular activities offered in SY24-25 that *can* be provided virtually (i.e.: Chess Club, Art Club, Student Council, Debate, Honors Society, Tutoring, Knitting, Book club, etc) *will* be provided virtually. In fact, appreciating the need to create increased opportunities for virtual social engagement when opportunities for in-person social engagement are diminished, we will endeavor to augment such activities with additional virtually provided activities, and will strongly encourage the parents/guardians of scholars not more urgently needing high dosage tutoring to have their children participate in one or more of the virtual afterschool extracurricular programs we offer.

Providing Food for Eligible Students / Transportation

Approximately 80% of our scholars use our free bus transportation for traveling to and from school and we have school bus stops in every Jersey City neighborhood. Accordingly, should we need to return to 100% remote instruction for a period of time, we will use our buses to re-implement the food provision system we used successfully during the Covid Pandemic. Specifically, for as many family members as we are authorized during the emergency to serve, we will ask school families if they need and desire food deliveries from the school. Then, at a specified time on Monday and Wednesday mornings, we will bus two days-worth of free bagged breakfasts and lunches for the specified family members to the neighborhood bus stop our scholars in the area use, and at a specified time on Friday mornings, we will deliver three days-worth of breakfasts and lunches. Other materials for instructional or family support that need to be distributed to scholar families will also be brought to them on these buses.

We want to ensure that all community members are able to meet basic nutritional needs. Hence, if we are not authorized during the emergency to provide food for all community members, we will direct those we cannot serve to community-based providers of food assistance in their home area that may be able to help.

Aftercare and Childcare

Any emergency requiring that an Empowerment Academy site be closed to in-person instruction will likely also require that any Aftercare services provided at the site be suspended until further notice.

If an emergency requires that public schools and aftercare programs all throughout New Jersey be temporarily closed, many Empowerment Academy community members will experience a childcare crisis as the services they presently use either are suspended or become significantly more expensive as a function of decreased childcare supply. During the Covid Pandemic, the New Jersey Department of Health and Human Services initiated a childcare tuition assistance program for families making less than

$75,000 a year and we undertook steps to provide childcare support for staff. To be ready for the next emergency that creates a childcare crisis, our social workers will put together a list of childcare assistance programs and strategies that can be utilized by Empowerment Academy community members at such a time.

Community Programming and Community-Based Instruction for Scholars with Special Needs

Empowerment Academy's instructional and student support faculty members have established relationships with diverse Jersey City organizations and social service providers that have expanded opportunities for its scholars, scholar families and staff to meet needs and interests relating to everything from obtaining mental health support or adult literacy instruction to participating in sports and extracurricular activities that are not offered by the school.

Our school social workers maintain a list of community organizations that, in addition to those with which we have an active relationship, could also be contacted to prospectively provide assistance to community members.

Should an emergency may a particular set of community needs acute, our social workers will email blast information about these community resources to Empowerment Academy community members and will also post information about them on our website. In addition, our social workers and guidance counselors will schedule virtual informational meetings to provide our scholar families and staff help identifying community resources that can help them address needs.

In SY24-25, the school will for the first time offer tenth grade and we are approved to offer grade levels 11 and 12 over the next two years. To increase positive outcomes for its special needs scholars after they graduate high school, we will be establishing new relationships in the years ahead with community service providers that assist adults with special needs in pursing further education, obtaining training and employment, and connecting to government and community organizations offering basic needs support and social engagement.

Maintenance of Buildings

Assuming the cause of our need to implement 100% remote learning at a facility does not make the facility unsafe to be entered (as would a fire that has damaged the building's structural integrity), our plan to maintain the building while it is closed to student in-person learning is to have our building maintenance staff: 1) check and operate school facility systems daily to keep our facilities and systems in good condition; and 2) complete the daily tasks necessary for other essential staff to be able to continue using the building, if it can thusly be made safe. In addition, we will have our Operations Director review whether each such facility needs building or system upgrades in response to emergent conditions, and then execute a plan for the implementation of upgrades necessary to provide for the safe return of our scholars and all building staff when in-person learning can begin again.

Essential Employees

Empowerment Academy will follow NJDOE and/or public health or safety official guidance regarding the conditions under which school employees may be allowed to use school facilities.

For pandemic-related emergencies, we consider our core essential employees to be our: School Business Administrator, Director of Education, Director of Operations, Director of IT, School Principals, Office Managers, Registrar, School Nurses, IT Support Staff, Food Service Staff, Administrative Assistants, Site Operations Heads, Custodians, & Security Guards.

Of course, different kinds of emergencies will produce different kinds of conditions under which a facility can safely be accessed and utilized. The Covid Pandemic made it safe for a limited number of employees operating at a safe distance from one another to occupy both of Empowerment Academy's school sites. By contrast, a fire at one school site may make it impossible to occupy that facility with any employees, but may not create restrictions at other school sites, although there may be pre-emergency restrictions related to maximum building occupancy. Hence our essential employees list for emergency conditions resulting in only one school site needing to be closed or limited in use will not include those Food Service Staff, Administrative Assistants, Custodians & Security Guards who would not be needed and/or could not be accommodated at other school sites.