



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PASSAIC COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
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MIKIE SHERRILL
Governor

DR. DALE G. CALDWELL
Lt. Governor

DR. LIY LAUX
Commissioner

KESHA T. DRAKEFORD
Executive County Superintendent

August 28, 2026

Wendy G. McNeill, MA, LDTC
Executive Director, Banyan School
12 Hollywood Avenue
Fairfield, NJ 07004

RE: Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Plan Approval – 2026-2027

Dear Ms. McNeil,

The staff at the Executive County Superintendent of Schools has reviewed your district's submission of the Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Program Plan for the 2026-2027 school year as per P.L. 2020 c. 27 and has found the plan to be compliant with the required checklist elements.

In the event that a school facility in your Local Education Agency (LEA) must close due to a declared state of emergency, a declared public health emergency, or a directive by the appropriate health agency or officer to institute a public health-related closure, you may use virtual or remote instruction to satisfy the 180-day requirement if the closure is for more than three (3) consecutive days.

In addition, please remember all LEAs are required to post the approved plan on their websites. If revisions are made to this plan, please resubmit the revised plan to the County Office of Education accompanied by a certified board resolution and a new attestation, which can be found at [Guidance and Checklist: Virtual or Remote Instruction Programs \(nj.gov\)](https://www.nj.gov/education/guidance-and-checklist-virtual-or-remote-instruction-programs).

Thank you and best wishes for a successful school year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kesha T. Drakeford", with a circular stamp or mark to the right.

Kesha T. Drakeford
Executive County Superintendent of Schools

KTD/tp
Attachments

Banyan School
Virtual or Remote Instruction Plan
for the
2026-2027 School Year



Approved by Board of Trustees: July 23, 2026

Banyan School ~ Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Plan

I. COMMUNICATION:

Banyan School will communicate the need for an emergency remote closing in the following manner:

- Realtime Notification System will be used to send phone messages, email blasts, and text messages.
- Updates will be posted on the District Website.
- Sending districts will be notified by email to Case Managers.
- Administrative communications as necessary via email.

II. CONTINUUM OF EDUCATION:

In the event that the Banyan Schools are impacted by a required closure, we would proceed with daily instruction virtually as per Policy 2425.

1. The district is able to distribute a device and charger to every student and staff member.
2. Utilizing Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meets, and online versions of our instructional materials, teachers would be able to provide the regular day's instruction.
3. The regular daily schedule will be followed. School hours will be consistent with the current in-person, full day schedule, exclusive of homeroom and lunch periods. (5.75 hours of instruction)
4. Instruction is most often synchronous, given the special needs of our population. If a student is able to work independently, asynchronous instruction may be utilized through the Google Classroom.
5. Specialized manipulative materials as are needed for multi-sensory activities and support will be distributed in advance, based on varying levels of student performance.
6. Based on a recent survey, the Administrative Team is aware of the households that will require technology for their students. Many have Wi-Fi access as well as digital devices. The Administration and Tech Coordinator will monitor needs based on participation and ongoing surveys/communication with parents.
7. If anyone reports lack of Wi-Fi access, a hotspot will be provided to them by the district.
8. Ongoing assessment is conducted via multiple measures, including: curriculum-based assessments (e.g. Wilson Reading and Multisensory Math), collection of student work samples, and individual surveys conducted through use of Zoom, KAMI and Google Slides.)
9. If schools are closed, there will be a temporary suspension of extracurricular activities until such time as guidance suggests that a reinstatement of such activities can safely take place.

III. ON-GOING PROGRAM OVERSIGHT - ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

If a student is not submitting assignments through Google Classroom, or attending sessions:

1. The teacher sends email to parents/guardians.
 2. The teacher follows up with a phone call home.
 3. If there is no response, the nurse will call home.
 4. If there is no response, the Case Manager will contact the district case manager to problem-solve a solution.
- It is important to note that these procedures are handled in a positive and proactive manner to ensure students' social/emotional well-being.

IV. STAFF ATTENDANCE:

Staff attendance will be accounted for in the following ways:

1. Frontline/Aesop Log In reports.
2. Faculty attendance is monitored at meetings via Zoom sign in.

***Staff should contact their school secretary, school nurse and administration if they are sick so that we are able to monitor attendance as well as illness indicators. In addition, staff should document their absence in Frontline/Aesop.**

V. STUDENT ATTENDANCE:

Student attendance will be accounted for in the following ways:

1. Realtime student attendance entered by first period teachers.
2. Period by period attendance will be logged in Realtime.
3. Parents are requested to report absences to the School Nurse.
4. Parents will be contacted by the Nurse or Teachers if absence is not reported, or attendance is not consistent.

VI. RELATED SERVICES (Speech, OT, PT, Counseling):

- Related services will continue to be provided through electronic communications, virtual, remote instruction, as appropriate and as required by the student's IEP to the greatest extent possible.
- Therapists will ensure that extension activities are provided to engage students in therapy-related tasks at home.
- All Related Services providers will take attendance and log services to ensure the ongoing and appropriate provision of services.
- Logs and attendance to be reviewed by the Case Managers to ensure appropriate implementation of IEP services.

VII. SUPPORT SERVICES

❖ Behaviorist:

- Will contact the families of students with behavior plans on a weekly basis (or more if needed), to check and provide suggestions and support. Contact and activity logs will be documented.

❖ Case Managers:

- Case managers will remain available to families to provide support. Contact with families will be via phone or email.
- IEP meetings will be conducted virtually to maintain compliance with required timelines.

❖ Social and Emotional Needs

- School Counselors will provide resources for students through Google classrooms and individual sessions, as applicable.
- Community Resources such as Care Plus will be shared via parent presentations. Further resources and information will be shared via the school website.
- Additionally, the Mental Health staff will be available for the expressed needs of faculty and staff.

❖ Nurses:

- Check absences entered in Realtime to compare with parent absences reported.
- Maintain documentation of Covid related illnesses and quarantine timelines.
- Report cases as required to the County Office of Education and the Department of Health.
- Communicate regularly with the local health department with incidences, questions and to seek guidance.
- Disseminate any information necessary to staff and/or administration.
- Disseminate any information necessary to parents.
- Serves as a member of the Pandemic Response Team, comprised of:
 - Director
 - Principals

❖ Paraprofessionals:

- Will assist teachers in the preparation of materials.
- Will support students during virtual instruction.
- Complete additional online training through Vector.

VIII: MEAL SERVICE:

- Banyan School does not participate in the National School Lunch program. If and when sending districts provide meals to district students, they notify us, and we relay messages to our students as appropriate so that they can benefit from meal distribution.

IX: FACILITIES PLAN:

- When buildings are empty of most students and staff, the central office personnel will continue to work. As such, Custodians will also report to the building to perform essential cleaning tasks as required daily and will also be consulted and advised regarding more intensive cleaning and maintenance requirements that can be accomplished during this time.



Local Education Agency Guidance for Virtual or Remote Instruction Plan

The New Jersey Department of Education (Department) is providing the following guidance pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9(c) and N.J.A.C. 6A:32-13.1 and 13.2, to assist LEAs in the development of their annual virtual or remote instruction plans. The Department encourages LEAs to reflect on the previous school year to enhance elements of the prior year's plan to provide the most substantive education, and including, but not limited to, related services, for all students in the event of an LEA closure.

For each of the areas below, the chief school administrator or lead person will either mark "yes," confirming that the information is in the Plan and list the corresponding Plan page number, or mark "no" if the information is not contained in the Plan. The chief school administrator or lead person is expected to provide an explanation to the County Office of Education for all areas marked "no."

By July 31 annually, the chief school administrator or lead person must submit a board-approved LEA Guidance for Virtual or Remote Instruction Plan for the coming school year, along with this form to their County Office of Education. At the time of submission to the county office of education, the plan must be posted on the LEA's website. Plans will be reviewed in each county office of education on a rolling basis with an electronic response communicated within two business days of receipt.

LEA Checklist for Virtual or Remote Instruction Programs

LEAs must enter the page number where each checklist item may be found in the virtual or remote instruction program submitted to the County Office of Education.

School Year: 2026-2027

Contact Information

County: Passaic

Name of District, Charter School, APSSD or Renaissance School Project:

Banyan Upper School

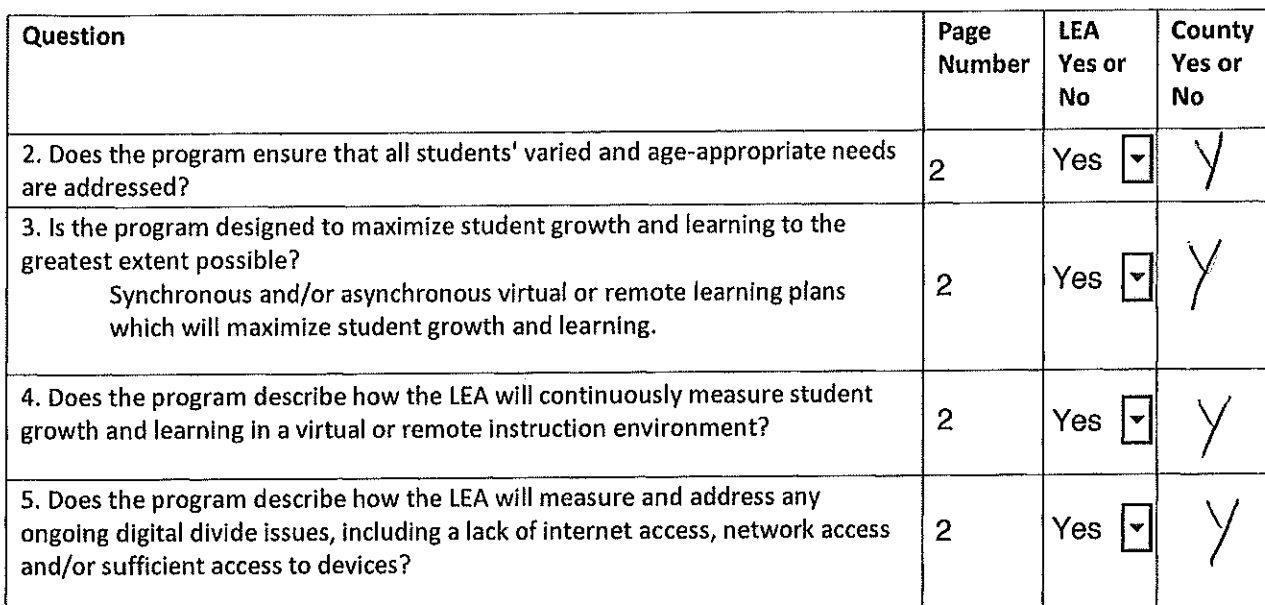
Chief School Administrator/Charter or Renaissance Leader Name/APSSD Leader:

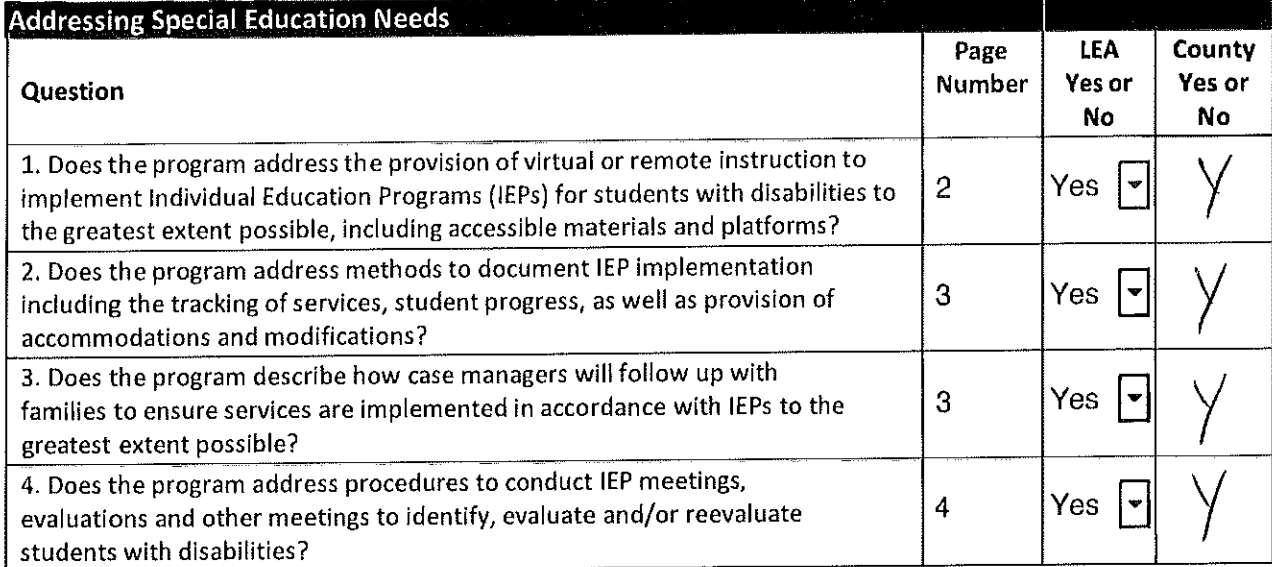
Wendy McNeill

Phone Number of Contact: (973) 439-1919

Equitable Access and Opportunity to Instruction

Question	LEA Yes or No
1. Is the LEA ensuring equitable access and opportunity to instruction for all students?	Yes



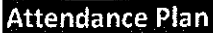


**Addressing Multilingual Learners (MLs) Plan Needs**

Question	Page Number	LEA Yes or No	County Yes or No
1. Does the program include an English as a Second Language and/or bilingual education program aligned with State and Federal requirements to meet the needs of MLs?	N A		Y
2. Does the program describe how the LEA communicates with families of MLs including providing translation materials, interpretative services, and literacy level appropriate information?	N A		Y
3. Does the program include the use of alternate methods of instruction (that is, differentiation, sheltered instruction, Universal Design for Learning), access to technology and strategies to ensure ELLs access the same standard of education as non-ML peers?	N A		Y
4. Does the program include 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)?	N A		Y

Notes on Supporting Multilingual Learner Educational Needs

N/A - Banyan Upper School does not offer and ELL Program.



Notes on Attendance Plan

Safe Delivery of Meals Plan

Notes on Safe Delivery of Meals

6



Facilities Plan

Question	Page Number	LEA Yes or No	County Yes or No
1. Does the program contain an outline of how buildings will be maintained throughout an extended period of closure?	4	Yes ☒	Y

Notes on the Facilities Plan

Although we have a very small custodial team, they will be present in the buildings during closures, to take care of regular cleaning as well as maintenance projects that are required.

Other Considerations

Does the program contain the following considerations?	Page Number	LEA Yes or No	County Yes or No
a. Accelerated learning opportunities	NA		Y
b. Social and emotional health of staff and students	4	Yes ☒	Y
c. Title I Extended Learning Programs	NA		Y
d. 21 st Century Community Learning Center Programs	NA		Y
e. Credit recovery	NA		Y
f. Other extended student learning opportunities	2	Yes ☒	Y
g. Transportation	NA		Y
h. Extra-curricular programs	2	Yes ☒	Y
i. Childcare	NA		Y
j. Community programming	NA		Y

Notes on Other Considerations

**APSSD Applicable Only: Sharing Plans**

Was the program shared with all sending districts? Yes ☒ No ☐

Notes on APSSD Sharing Plans

The plan is also posted on our website for sending districts' and parents' information.

Essential Employees

Question	Page Number	LEA Yes or No	County Yes or No
1. The LEA will ensure essential employees are identified and a list is provided to the county office at the time of the LEA's transition to remote or virtual instruction.	4	Yes ☐	Y

Notes on Essential Employees

The administrative team and central office personnel are considered to be essential employees and will be on site at the building, if closure is warranted.

Board Approval

Date of board approval (mm/dd/yyyy): 07/23/2026

Notes on Board Approval**Posted on Website**

1. Is the program posted on the school district/APSSD/Charter/Renaissance School Project Website? Yes ☒ No ☐

2. Link to website: www.banyanschool.org



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Heather Podesta

HIGH SCHOOL | LIFE ACADEMY
Janet Blanchard

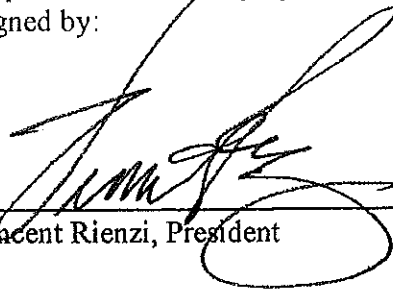
Board Action: Approval of the Banyan School Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Plan for the 2026-2027 School Year

In compliance with the requirement of the Department of Education that the Board approve the proposed Banyan School Virtual or Remote Plan for the 2026-27 School Year, the Banyan School Board of Trustees, on July 23, 2026, took the following action to approve the Plan for submission to the Department of Education.

- MOTION: Be it resolved that the Banyan School Board of Trustees, upon recommendation of the Director, approve the submission of the Virtual or Remote Instruction Plan for the 2026-27 School year.

Motion: Vincent Rienzi
Second: Bill Presutti

Approved unanimously by the Banyan School Board of Trustees: Date: July 23, 2026
Signed by:



Vincent Rienzi, President