The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School
6 Kingsbridge Road, Suite 3
Fairfield, NJ 07004
Phone: (862) 210-8781 Fax: (862) 210-8791 Principal: (973) 558-4261

County: Essex
Name of APSSD: The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School
Chief School Administrator: Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen
School Phone: 862-210-8781

Emergency Virtual/Remote Learning Plan: July 30, 2026

The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School is an out-of-district placement serving students ages 3-12 with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The program currently includes 4 students classified as Preschoolers with Disabilities and 23 students in our primary classrooms who are served in programs for students with Multiple Disabilities. There are 0 students enrolled who are medically fragile.

Each student receives an individualized academic and therapeutic program designed to meet their unique needs. In the event of an emergency school closure, instruction and related services will continue through individualized virtual/remote learning plans. These plans will be shared with families via email and/or text message and will include activities and supports that families and caregivers can implement at home. Teachers and related service providers will collaborate with families to provide guidance, instruction, and ongoing support through a variety of communication platforms, including phone calls, video conferencing, email, and text messaging, to ensure continuity of learning and services.

Component 1- Equitable Access and Opportunity to Instruction:

In the event of an emergency school closure, teachers and related service providers will prepare individualized virtual/remote learning packets and materials for each student. A designated time for families to pick up these materials from the school will be coordinated in advance. Each packet will include instructional handouts, worksheets, printed resources, and any necessary supplies (e.g., math manipulatives, scissors, glue, markers) needed to complete the assigned activities at home.

In addition to the printed materials, families will receive access to a variety of digital resources, including educational websites, apps, videos, and links to free online supports. Information on accessing free internet service, virtual meeting platforms, email setup, and other technology resources will also be provided as needed.

During virtual/remote learning, students will participate in both synchronous (live) and asynchronous (independent) instruction. To ensure families have timely access to each

student's educational and therapeutic programming, teachers and related service providers will email and/or text an individualized daily agenda to families each morning by 8:30am**.**

The daily agenda will outline all scheduled learning opportunities, including both synchronous and asynchronous activities. Students will engage in individualized educational and therapeutic assignments, as well as participate in live virtual sessions with their teachers and related service providers using platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams at the designated times listed on their daily agenda.

During asynchronous learning, teachers and related service providers will remain available throughout the school day via phone, text, and email to provide instructional support, answer questions, and offer guidance to students and families as needed.

Teachers and related service providers will communicate with families at least twice per week to monitor student participation, address concerns, and review progress with asynchronous learning activities. In addition, all live sessions will be documented using a tracking form that records scheduled, completed, canceled, and missed sessions.

Following each live therapy session, related service providers will complete a therapy session summary documenting the activities completed, goals addressed, progress toward goals, goals mastered, and any modifications or challenges encountered during the session. Similarly, teachers will maintain instructional progress notes identifying educational goals addressed, student performance, goals mastered, and other relevant observations regarding student progress during live instructional sessions.

At the beginning of each school year, Stepping Stones School administers a technology survey to all families to assess their access to devices, internet connectivity, and other technology needs. This information allows the school to identify and address individual family needs and collaborate with each student's sending district to ensure appropriate technology access and support. As needed, the school will work with sending districts to help families obtain internet access and provide information on free technology resources to ensure students can fully participate in virtual academic instruction and related therapeutic services.

Component 2- Addressing Special Education Needs:

Students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) will be implemented to the greatest extent possible through virtual service delivery, including live video conferencing, telephone, email, and other remote learning platforms. To ensure families have timely access to each student's educational and therapeutic programming, teachers and related service providers will email and/or text an individualized daily agenda to families each morning by 8:30am. The daily agenda will include all instructional and therapeutic activities, live session schedules, and links to any online resources needed throughout the school day.

The virtual school day will follow the same schedule as the regular in-person school day, from 8:50am to 2:40pm.

Each student's individualized educational agenda will include instructional activities, lessons, and classroom learning experiences designed to address the goals and objectives outlined in the student's IEP. These activities may be completed during live virtual instruction with school staff using platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams, or independently with support and guidance from teachers as needed.

Individualized therapy agendas will include activities and interventions aligned with each student's related service goals. Therapy services may be delivered through live virtual sessions or completed independently with guidance and support from related service providers. Therapists will remain available throughout the school day to provide consultation, coaching, and assistance to students and families.

All instructional and support staff, including teachers, teaching assistants, one-to-one teaching assistants, related service providers, and other school personnel, will be available to students and families during the regular school day from 8:50am to 2:40pm.

Teachers and related service providers will maintain documentation of all virtual service delivery. Related service providers will use tracking forms to record sessions that are scheduled, completed, canceled, or missed. Following each therapy session, a therapy session summary will be completed documenting the activities provided, goals addressed, progress toward goal attainment, goals mastered, and any modifications, accommodations, or concerns identified during the session. Teachers will similarly maintain instructional progress notes documenting educational goals addressed, student participation, progress toward mastery, and other relevant observations throughout the remote learning process.

Stepping Stones administration will provide each sending district with weekly educational and therapeutic progress summaries. These reports will include documentation of instructional and therapy activities completed, IEP goals addressed, student progress toward goal mastery, and verification of IEP service delivery.

Case managers will communicate with families in accordance with the requirements of each student's sending district and will collaborate with school staff to monitor student progress and address any concerns.

Sending districts will receive electronic copies of any revised Remote Learning Plan, as well as updates regarding student status, remote learning implementation, school reopening plans, IEP meeting scheduling, and any necessary meeting changes or rescheduling. School administration will maintain ongoing communication with district case managers to coordinate scheduling needs, share relevant updates, and support continuity of services.

Individualized Education Plans (IEP):

For students whose Annual IEP, eligibility review, reevaluation planning meeting, or other IEP meeting is due during a period of virtual/remote learning, Stepping Stones administration will collaborate with the student's sending district to schedule or reschedule the meeting, as appropriate. When feasible, meetings will be conducted using a virtual platform, such as Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, or by conference call.

The sending district will be responsible for notifying the student's family of the meeting date, time, and location or virtual access information. In collaboration with the sending district, Stepping Stones will confirm the virtual meeting platform and ensure that all required educational and therapeutic information is provided in advance of the meeting. Updated progress reports, annual review documentation, therapy summaries, and any other relevant educational records will be shared electronically with the sending district and the student's family prior to the scheduled meeting. Quarterly progress reports will also be distributed to sending districts and families in accordance with applicable state requirements and reporting timelines.

The student's case manager will provide the family with the virtual meeting invitation and will assist in ensuring the family is able to access and participate in the meeting using the selected platform. Reevaluation planning meetings will follow the same procedures for scheduling, notification, and virtual participation.

During periods of virtual/remote learning, the sending district will remain responsible for coordinating and conducting any required reevaluations in accordance with applicable federal and state special education regulations. Stepping Stones will collaborate with the sending district by providing educational records, progress data, and other documentation necessary to support the reevaluation process.

Component 3- Addressing ELL and Bilingual Needs:

At the time of this plan's implementation, Stepping Stones has 0 students identified as English Language Learners (ELLs) or requiring bilingual education services.

Should a student or family require language assistance, bilingual staff will be available to provide interpretation and translation services through phone, text, email, or virtual meeting platforms. School staff will ensure that families have meaningful access to educational information and communication in their preferred language whenever possible.

For families requiring language support during virtual/remote learning, bilingual staff will assist with the implementation of the student's educational and therapeutic program. This support may include reviewing individualized daily agendas in the family's preferred language, participating in live instructional or therapy sessions to provide interpretation, assisting with communication between families and school personnel, and supporting IEP meetings or other school-related conferences as needed.

Bilingual staff will also be available to assist families with questions related to remote learning, educational programming, therapeutic services, IEP implementation, and other school-related matters. In addition, the school social worker will collaborate with bilingual staff to provide outreach, connect families with available community resources, and support access to services throughout the period of virtual/remote instruction.

Component 4- Attendance Plan:

Student attendance during virtual/remote learning will be monitored through a daily family check-in process. Each morning, teachers will email and/or text families an individualized daily learning agenda. Families are expected to respond to the teacher by **9:15am** via text, email, or other designated communication method to confirm that their child is available to participate in virtual instruction and related services for the day. Teachers will use this daily check-in to document student attendance.

For students who are present, families will be asked to complete any required daily learning or therapy feedback forms, including assessment overviews, and submit them to the appropriate teacher and/or related service provider by the end of the school day. This information will assist staff in monitoring student participation, documenting progress, and planning future instruction and services.

If a family has not responded regarding a student's attendance by the designated check-in time, the teacher, teaching assistant, school nurse, or another designated staff member will contact the family to verify the student's attendance status and determine the reason for the absence, when appropriate.

For any student who is absent for five (5) or more consecutive school days, Stepping Stones will notify the student's district of residence in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.9(a)3 and the attendance requirements outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:32 regarding prolonged absences and habitual tardiness.

Attendance records will be maintained by classroom teachers in the official New Jersey Department of Education attendance registers. Monthly attendance reports will also be provided to each sending district as part of the school's regular monthly reporting and billing process.

Component 5- Safe Delivery of Meals:

There is no school food service, meal delivery, or school nutrition benefits at our program.

Component 6- Facilities Plan:

The building is being cleaned by the cleaning company throughout the period of school closure.

Component 7 – Other Considerations:

As per DOE checklist:

- The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School does not have accelerated learning or other extended student learning opportunities.
- The School Social Worker will maintain frequent contact via phone, video call, or text to families and staff to address any social and emotional health needs. If needed, virtual support groups can be created and implemented on an as-needed or ongoing basis.
- There are no Title 1 learning programs.
- The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School does not have 21st Century Programs.
- There are no credits for school, high school students, or situations where there may be credit loss.
- The sending district is responsible for any student transportation needs.
- There are no Extra-curricular programs.
- There is no childcare.
- There is no formalized community programming.

Component 8 – Sharing Plans:

The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School Virtual/Remote Learning Plan will be shared with all sending districts.

Component 9- Essential Employees:

- Director
- Principal
- Head Therapist
- Social Worker
- School Nurse
- Administrative Assistant
- Special Education Teacher
- Occupational Therapist
- Physical Therapist
- Speech Therapist
- Teaching Assistant
- 1:1 Teaching Assistant
- Custodian

Component 10- Board Approval:

The plan will be board approved on **September 22, 2026.**

Component 11- Posted on Website:

The plan was posted on the school website on July 29, 2026.