

## **GUIDANCE FOR K-12 DISTRICTS ON REMOTE LEARNING**

*Updated March 16, 2020*

During this unprecedented time in our nation's history, we need creativity, tenacity, and agility to address the immediate instructional needs of our K-12 students. We offer the following guidance for K-12 districts currently designing remote learning plans. Our caveat is that districts and schools are unique and that individual plans should be situated within the context of each school.

### **Communicate Principles of Learning**

- The focus should remain on exploration and discovery in learning. You may be reinforcing difficult concepts or moving along with a refined scope and sequence. Either way, student understanding is important. How can you enable teachers to work in this way? Be mindful that there is a tendency to transfer didactic instructional approaches when working online.
- Formative assessment is needed. Students need support as they navigate the learning process. Regular check-ins regarding students' ideas and misconceptions are critical. This could include telephone or virtual conferencing with students, written or verbal feedback on collected student work, or student self-assessments via survey tools.
- Social learning is essential and should continue. Based on the most recent research about how today's students learn, collaboration should be encouraged, even when students are working at a distance. Be aware of the pitfalls of online/remote learning, which can isolate students. Support teachers in engaging their students in social learning via discussions, group work, and reflection at a distance.
- Ensure that students still have access to music, the arts, and physical activity. Support teachers in integrating creative and physical pursuits both within and alongside the core disciplines.

## Identify a Process for Facilitating Instruction

- Establish a routine. Provide for interaction between teachers and students, and between students and students. This can be challenging. Can your teachers run morning meetings using digital platforms? Can teachers facilitate student conferences or individual check-ins? Can teachers close the day with a reflection on learning? Identify tools to support interaction, such as synchronous online conferencing or phone conferencing, or asynchronous discussion groups, email, or even snail mail. Supporting teachers in accessing appropriate tools and in developing related skills will be important.
- Support teachers in brainstorming and establishing new procedures for their daily instruction. Teachers should scaffold learning daily. Students need directives and feedback on a daily basis; providing the appropriate amount of self-paced curriculum online for students or caregivers can be helpful in small doses.
- Continue to provide frequent professional learning opportunities for teachers and instructional leaders as they adopt new digital tools and methodologies for learning. These should include virtual workshops and coaching meetings on evolving procedures for remote instruction.
- Communicate expectations to guardians and caregivers. Provide support in accessing digital resources and instruction, as appropriate.
- Enlist a team that has access to the district/school website, with the ability to update messaging and learning resources online. Anticipate increased demand for lost passwords, log-in information and other access issues.

## Address School-to-Home Issues

- Survey your school community to identify barriers to remote learning. Provide devices and access to broadband service, when possible. Consider constraints that community members might face, such as pay-as-you-go data plans that might limit access to educational content.

- Be mindful of the constraints of guardians and caregivers in supporting digital learning at home.
- Be mindful of students' attitudes towards online learning, and students' motivation to participate in learning at a distance. Provide support for guardians and caregivers who need strategies and ways of talking to their children about the importance of learning from home.
- Find ways to continue to address the social and emotional needs of students. If school counselors are available for support, their services could be integrated into the regular check-in process.

Prepared by:

Caron Mineo, Ellen Meier, & Karen Kirsch Page  
Center for Technology and School Change  
Teachers College, Columbia University  
<http://ctsc.tc.columbia.edu> | @CTSC\_TC  
Contact us: [ctsc@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:ctsc@tc.columbia.edu)