

**GATES COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
REMOTE LEARNING PLAN  
SCHOOL CLOSURE: COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Dr. Barry Williams, Superintendent  
Mrs. Tammy R. Boone, Assistant Superintendent

2019-2020 School Year  
Start Date: March 16, 2020



## **GATES COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS REMOTE LEARNING PLAN**

The COVID-19 (Coronavirus) issue is “a fluid event with responses and actions changing as the pandemic continues” ~ Dr. Barry Williams, Superintendent of Schools.

Dr. Barry Williams, Superintendent  
Mrs. Tammy R. Boone, Assistant Superintendent  
Mrs. Chante’ Jordan, Exceptional Children’s Director/Human Resource Director  
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### **OVERVIEW**

Gates County Public Schools is very appreciative to have a dedicated and committed staff who are working diligently to meet the needs of our students during this time of COVID-19. As a school district, the health, safety, and education of our students remains a top priority. Although COVID-19 had caused us to close our schools throughout the state of North Carolina, Gates County Public Schools will continue to provide instructional materials to students in an effort to provide a quality education that will meet the needs of all students. As a result of COVID-19, we are faced with rethinking and restructuring the traditional school setting that our students and staff are accustomed to. Instead of the face-to-face classroom environment, we are tasked with providing our students with blended learning opportunities that are differentiated in nature and span across the traditional setting as well as the online learning setting.

Gates County Public Schools will utilize alternative instructional methods to minimize academic disruptions during this uncertain time. On Saturday, March 14, 2020, Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order 117, closing all schools in North Carolina for a two-week period. Additionally, on Monday, March 23, 2020, Governor Roy Cooper instructed all North Carolina schools to remain closed through May 15, 2020 through Executive Order 120. Our educational institutions scrambled to move online, almost overnight, with little time to plan and even less clarity about what happens next. Undertaken in response to the spiraling coronavirus crisis, the massive and scattershot transition to remote learning highlights both the enormous potential and profound limitations of classroom technology. Therefore, sustaining equitable educational practices for our students requires collaboration, flexibility, and the dedication of all teachers, administrators, students, and parents.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL FACILITATION AND CONTINUATION**

#### **Expectations for Staff and Parents**

- Teachers will make contact with students at least 2 times per week.
- Instructional materials that are provided to students must be focused on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and North Carolina Essential Standards.

- Teachers will provide online instructional delivery of content material. For students who do not have access to a device and/or Internet will be provided a paper and pencil instructional packet for completion that focuses on the same content material as their peers, per grade level.
- Parents are asked to call their child's school if questions arise regarding instruction.

### **Attendance for Students**

Attendance will not be taken March 16<sup>th</sup> to May 15<sup>th</sup> in PowerSchool or until further notice. However, it is expected that teachers work with students and maintain contact in order to provide feedback relative to pass or fail at the end of the year.

### **Student Grading**

#### Grades K-11 Students

Grades will not be given after March 15<sup>th</sup>; however, Gates County Public Schools will provide feedback to promote student growth. Gates County Public Schools will focus on supporting student progress and communicating feedback to students and parents rather than on assigning grades.

#### Grade 12 Students (Seniors)

Gates County Public Schools will adhere to the guidance provided by North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) regarding the Senior Class of 2020 which includes:

- High school Seniors will meet the minimum requirement of earning 22 credits as set by the State Board of Education.
- Remote learning for graduating Seniors will focus on meeting graduation requirements with an emphasis on students who were not meeting expectations as of March 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Grading practices will hold students harmless for the impact of COVID-19.
- Seniors will receive a Pass (PC 19) or Withdrawal (WC 19) based on their academic progress as of March 13 for Spring courses.
- Graduating Seniors who are struggling academically as of March 13, will have the opportunity to engage in remote learning opportunities to improve their grades to a passing grade.

### **Hours of Instruction Offered (ALL STUDENTS)**

- 2-3 hours of instruction in English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies in grades K-5 by via online instruction as well as instructional packets
- 4 hours of instruction in English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies in grades 6-8 via online instruction as well as instructional packets.

- 4 hours of instruction in English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies in grades 9-12 via online instruction as well as instructional packets.
- Students should read to or with someone for at least 30 minutes each day in grades K-12.

## **BEST PRACTICES FOR REMOTE LEARNING (Global Online Academy)**

### **Key Points**

- Online learning requires connecting with others and fostering relationships with students and colleagues. Whether a program is designed for students or adults, relationships are essential to the learning outcomes. Create strong, healthy communities online through connectivity, visibility, and consistency. This is exceedingly important as some students and teachers may feel or become isolated or disconnected using a virtual platform.
- Content may be different from the on-campus environment in several aspects, especially considering the abruptness of our school closure and the reason for our extended closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, this alternative mode of education is an exciting opportunity to continue meeting the needs of our students in a manner that provides access and support through a blended supportive environment.
- Online learning is not a replication of what was done on-campus. Instead, this is an opportunity to reimagine learning in alternative spaces.
- Balance is fundamental to keeping online learning communities healthy. Teachers need to balance synchronous and asynchronous connections and collaboration, and students need to do some of this on their own.

Gates County Public Schools goal is to educate and graduate the students of GCPS through the end of the academic year while maintaining the health and safety of students, staff, and community. As part of our goal, Gates County Public Schools will ensure that suggestions from North Carolina Department of Public Instruction are followed such as:

- Learning is accessible by all students for which the learning is intended and is responsive to diverse learning groups.
- Maintain consistent communication between instructional staff and students;
- Addresses the curricular and instructional needs associated with appropriate standards;
- Includes evidence of student learning; and
- Considers the whole child as well as the home learning environment.

## **COMMUNICATION PLAN**

### **Stakeholder Communication**

- GCPS will communicate weekly with parents and students.

### **Parent and Student Communication**

- GCPS will utilize synchronous (e.g., Zoom, Google Hangout, etc.) and asynchronous (e.g., Remind, etc.) communications to keep our families informed about important information.

### **Staff Communication**

- GCPS will have frequent communication between district and school leadership, school administration, and teachers.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS**

- GCPS will utilize Asynchronous online learning to provide content material and assess student learning.
- GCPS will utilize Synchronous online learning (e.g., chat, streaming, video, instant messaging, web conferences) to provide content material and assess student learning.

### **Continuity of Instruction**

Students will be able to access grade-level and subject-matter content. Instructional support will be provided, which will include feedback on content material completed. Measurable student progress is expected from all students. Gates County Public Schools will provide a blended learning environment that will differentiate instruction to meet the individual needs of all students. All students will be offered a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous activities for all students in grades Pre-K-12.

### **Exceptional Children's Department**

The Exceptional Children's Department will follow these procedures to provide continuity of instruction for students with special needs during school closures due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

#### Parent Contact

- Identify if students have internet access.
- Schedule parent pick-up of instructional resources (signatures required); this can be during general ed. pick-up times on Wednesday (elementary) or Friday (secondary) or Monday, March 23 at the latest.
- Establish a plan of service delivery and support during school closure (office hours, virtual support, work packets, online resources, etc.).
- Obtain parent signatures during drop-off and pick-up of resources (keep the original copy).
- Any denial of services must be provided in writing and include a date and parent's signature.

#### Tiered Service Delivery Options

- A combination of supplemental aids and supports plus direct instruction is how specially-designed instruction will be delivered during this prolonged school closure. Teachers will interact with parents and students (if student can access instruction) via instructional telephone calls, SKYPE, etc. along with sending

home packets of materials, visual supports, and manipulatives in advance. Teachers will log all time online with students.

- Teletherapy is an option for the provision of some related services; however, whether or not it is an appropriate service delivery option will be made on a case-by-case basis. There is no expectation for evaluations to be conducted at home or during school/district/state-wide closures

### Resources

- Parent letter (keep original copy)
- List of online resources and instructional platforms
- Student log-in and access information
- Supplemental parent resources
- Recommendations for continuity of learning
- Instructional materials and resources aligned with individual IEP goals
- Office hours and remote instructional support options

### Updates from the EC Division – March 17, 2020

1. Per executive order of the Governor, schools are closed for all students through March 27, 2020. Students should not be receiving homebound services and teachers should not be providing services in schools, in homes, or in remote locations. However, students with disabilities should not be excluded from the opportunities provided to all students during this time period including voluntary, virtual learning, or work packets. These two weeks should be treated just as they would be over Spring Break.
2. Per executive order of the governor, schools are closed for all students through March 27, 2020. Students should not be evaluated and the Local Education Agency (LEA) should log how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the evaluation timeline.
3. While efforts to ensure that IEP Team meetings occur in a timely fashion is appreciated, the risk of breaching student confidentiality increases when student records are removed from the security of the school building. For this reason, teachers are strongly discouraged from taking records home.
4. Are related services able to continue to deliver services at the school if parents are able to and willing to bring their child to the school (this is considering that the school is providing virtual learning on a preemptive basis and not a mandated closure)?  
ANSWER: In this scenario, LEAs would have to consider whether the child would require special transportation to access the service. If so, the LEA would have to make the special transportation available. During this time, the health and wellness of all involved needs to be considered. If schools are closed per the Governor's Executive Order, then school is closed for all activities.
5. If work packets are specially designed based on IEP goals but are not supported by instruction from the EC teacher, it will not meet the definition of specially designed instruction and compensatory education will have to be determined.

However, teachers will interact with parents and students (if student can access instruction) via Instructional telephone calls, SKYPE, etc. along with sending home packets of materials, visual supports, and manipulatives in advance. Teachers can log this time online with children. The combination of supplemental aids and supports plus direct instruction is a good example of how specially-designed instruction could be delivered during a prolonged school closure. It is unlikely that one of these variables alone would be sufficient.

### **English Language Learners**

Our English Language Learner teachers will develop a schedule to work with all students with an Individual Language Plan., via online or instructional packet. They will communicate with each ELL student's family to address individual supports necessary. In addition, translation services shall be provided to ELL families, as needed.

### **School Counseling Services**

Schools will continue to provide school counseling services. School counselors should also work collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure equity, access, and success of all students, whether virtual school counseling is offered synchronously or asynchronously. Counselors will continue to contact students who have received or need to receive counseling services during the 2019-2020 school year by phone call. Students and parents can set up individual meetings either using Zoom or by phone call. These meetings will be set up by corresponding through email or phone call to decide on a time that works for both parties. Counselors will provide pertinent videos or links on a weekly basis on the distance learning page to help all students during this time.

### **Additional Suggestions for Disseminating Information**

- Facebook page per teacher/school
- Updating individual teacher websites on school page with information
- Work packets
- Online options (see below)
- Bus delivery (meals and packets)
- Curbside pickup first; bus delivery for those who didn't pick up curbside
- Paper and pencil will have to be a part of the equation

### **Online Resources**

- iReady
- Khan Academy
- NewsELA
- Read Theory
- PBL
- Flip Grid App
- IXL

### **Instructional Delivery Options**

- Google Hangout

- Google Classroom
- Face-time
- Canvas
- Zoom

## SCHOOL NUTRITION

Gates County Public Schools will serve the students of Gates County nutritious meals during the statewide school closure. Below are the procedures for distribution of meals with instructional packets.

Who will be served:	Any student 18 years of age and under (or up to 21 years of age if enrolled in Gates County Public Schools).	
Meals to be served:	Breakfast Lunch	
Types of Meals:	Cold Meals with option to warm up if desired	
<p><b>Notification Plan</b> <i>All call message to all parents was sent out to parents on Monday March 16, 2020 at 5 p.m.</i></p> <p><b>Distribution Plan</b> <i>Dates, Times and Locations are provided.</i></p> <p><b>Instructional Plan</b> <i>The integrity of instruction will be continued with packets of learning materials sent home or picked up at the home school.</i></p>	<p>Gates County Public Schools will offer free breakfast and lunch to all of our students. We will offer curbside pick-up service for meals from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. &amp; 12 noon to 2 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17, 2020, and Wednesday, March 18, 2020, at the child's school.</p> <p>Beginning Thursday, March 19, 2020, Gates County Public Schools will use its transportation services to deliver breakfast and lunch to our students' homes. Parents will call their child's principal for notification of the preference for meal pick up or delivery.</p> <p>Instructional packets will be available for pickup at the school level for students in grades K-5 on Wednesday, March 18, 2020 from 8 am to 10 a.m., 12 noon to 2 p.m., and 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Instructional packets will be available for pickup for students in grades 6-12 on Friday, March 20, 2020 from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 12 noon to 2 pm. In the event a parent cannot pick up their child's instructional packet it will be sent with the meal delivery beginning Thursday, March 19, 2020, for grades K-5 and on Monday, March 23, 2020, for grades 6-12.</p>	
<b>Breakfast Item Examples</b>		<b>Lunch Item Examples</b>
Applesauce, cheese stick, yogurt, biscuit, milk, juice, granola, cereal		Ham/cheese sandwich, fruit cup, vegetable cup, milk or juice



## **Gates County Public Schools/ School Nutrition/Procedures for Distribution of Meals**

<u>Eligibility</u>	Meals will be provided to all students free of charge, 18 years of age and under.
<u>Location</u>	All schools in Gates County will prepare meals for distribution.
<u>Meal Type</u>	Bagged breakfast and lunch served with juice/cold milk.

### **Distribution Plan/Transportation**

1. The school buses will be utilized to deliver the students' meals (Breakfast and lunch).
2. The meals will be delivered to the designated locations/addresses of the students.
3. Transportation department will prepare the student roster for the bus drivers.
4. Bus drivers will be given a copy of student roster for their routes.
5. Bus drivers assigned to their respective schools will pick up the packed meal from the cafeteria prior to their routes.
6. Bus drivers and other staff assigned are responsible to deliver the meals based on the student roster.
7. The meals will be picked up by bus drivers for breakfast and lunch at 8 a.m.
8. Meals can be picked up by parents from the schools Monday-Friday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### **School Nutrition Guidelines**

1. School Nutrition will follow the guidelines for the Summer Feeding Program.
2. All cafeteria staff will work their regular scheduled hours daily (Monday - Friday).
3. Cafeteria managers will monitor the student roster of their respective school.
4. Cafeteria staff will prepare breakfast and lunch for students.
5. Cafeteria staff will provide safety food containers for the delivery.
6. Cafeteria managers will always check and monitor the security and safety of the food.
7. The meals will be picked up for breakfast and lunch 8 a.m.
8. Cafeteria managers will get the student roster from the bus drivers daily in order to get the daily meal counts.
9. Cafeteria managers will complete production records and keep record of inventory daily.

# Instructional Design Principles for Remote Teaching and Learning

## RATIONALE

The *Instructional Principles for Remote Teaching & Learning* are designed to provide guidance for student learning across North Carolina when a crisis impedes students from learning in their regular school setting. In NC K-12 public schools, remote learning is defined as learning that takes place outside of the traditional school setting using various media and formats, such as but not limited to: video conference, telephone conference, print material, online material, or learning management systems. These Instructional Design Principles are overarching and intended to apply to a range of learning environments and contexts with the acknowledgement that students and teachers have different levels of access to devices and the Internet.

### 1 Instructional Time Expectations

The amount of time students are expected to learn and complete academic work in a remote setting should differ from instruction delivered in a physical classroom. You should not assume students will be spending the traditional hours or the same amount of time on learning as when they are in the classroom.

### 2 Connection and Communication with Families and Students

Schools are often the hub of our communities and play a significant role in their students' and families' lives, including and beyond academics. In transitioning to remote learning, having regular and predictable opportunities for families and students to connect with their teachers and schools is key.

### 3 Student Engagement in Learning Opportunities Aligned to Standards

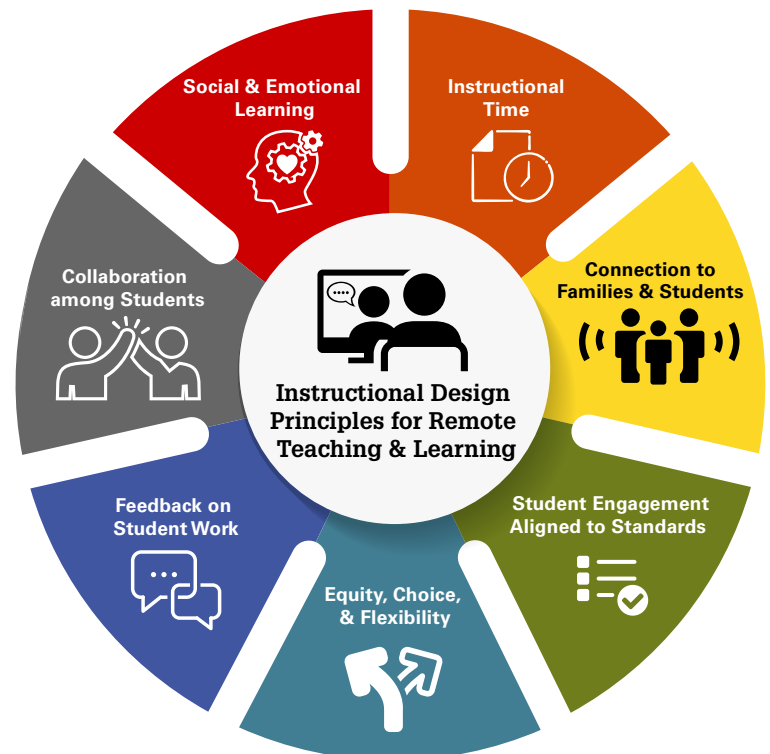
Designing learning opportunities aligned to standards that engage students is critical to support students' academic and social and emotional growth. Educators will have to adapt these learning experiences to a remote setting with and/or without access to devices and the Internet. Educators should provide a recommended schedule with flexible options and assume that students will have minimal supervision or guidance.

### 4 Equity, Choice, and Flexibility

As educators design learning opportunities for students in a remote learning environment, it is important for educators to design instruction with choice and flexibility, especially when considering student populations that typically have additional support while in school. Instruction should include enough flexibility and choice to reduce instances of students feeling overwhelmed, disinterested, and/or frustrated.

### 5 Collaboration among Students

Students need social interaction, and collaborating with one another is an effective strategy for learning that also supports the whole child. The key is trying to ensure



that students are collaborating and connecting with each other multiple times each week through thoughtful, yet simple lessons.

### 6 Feedback on Student Work

Feedback has the potential to have a powerful impact on student learning and motivation, and educators will need means to assess (even if not through graded tests) how students are progressing in their learning. Regular and timely feedback will play an important role in guiding students in their instruction.

### 7 Social and Emotional Learning (Cross-cutting, Embedded, or both)

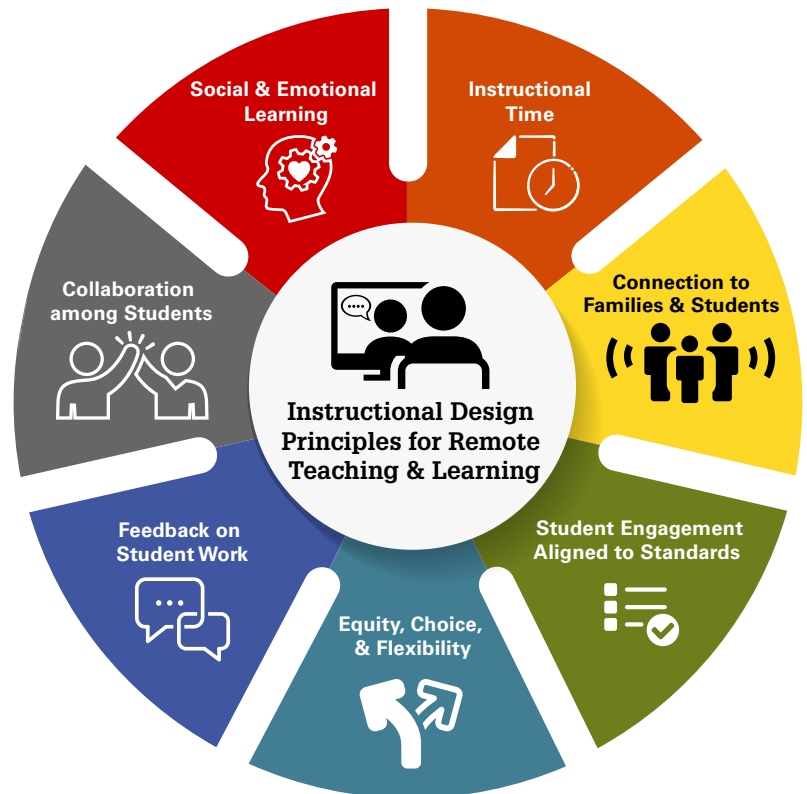
Addressing [social and emotional learning](#) (SEL) effectively is proven to support the whole child and increase achievement; and this is never more important than during a crisis. As schools, districts, and teachers work to provide continuity of learning for their students, SEL should be at the forefront of structures and learning opportunities.

# Instructional Design Principles for Remote Teaching and Learning

## RATIONALE

In alignment with NCDPI and the NC State Board of Education's mission and vision, the *Instructional Principles for Remote Teaching & Learning* are designed to provide guidance for student learning across North Carolina when state, national, or international crises impede students from learning in their regular school setting. In NC K-12 public schools, remote learning is defined as learning that takes place outside of the traditional school setting using various media and formats, such as but not limited to: video conference, telephone conference, print material, online material, or learning management systems. These instructional design principles are overarching and intended to apply to a range of learning environments and contexts with the acknowledgement that students and teachers have different levels of access to devices and the Internet.

These seven principles assume that the level of instruction in a remote setting will not directly align to teaching in a traditional, physical space. Parents, guardians, siblings, neighbors and other family members are all playing an unexpectedly more active role in their child's educational experience. Students may be experiencing less structure, social interaction, and timely support than what they normally experience in classrooms. The seven principles were designed to maximize the potential for learning to continue on a manageable scale for all stakeholders. Additionally, these principles highlight the importance of flexibility for educators and students and support for the social and emotional well-being of all in their temporary, but new academic settings.



### Instructional Time Expectations

The amount of time students are expected to learn and complete academic work in a remote setting

should differ from instruction delivered in a physical classroom. You should not assume students will be spending the traditional hours or the same amount of time on learning as when they are in the classroom. Regardless of how instruction is delivered (e.g., synchronously or asynchronously), students are going to be required to be more self-directed in their learning. According to decades of medical research, young children have the capacity to stay focused for 5 to 10 minutes, while older students can stay on

task for 10 to 15 minutes. After about 12 minutes, their minds begin to [wander](#) and they are no longer able to focus on learning.

To hold the students' attention in a remote setting, it is recommended to either **pause after 5 or 10 minutes** to give students time to reflect on what they learned; assess their level of understanding; or simply give students a quick break. Also, teachers can **switch the modality of instruction**, e.g., move from lecture to reading materials to discussion. Breaking instruction into small manageable segments or *chunks* has been shown to increase learning and

engagement. If instruction is being delivered with limited or no technology, educators can provide students with a schedule that is chunked with breaks and quick formative assessments embedded throughout.

The total time students spend in a remote learning environment per day depends on the age of the student. Various models have been put forth by states and districts across the nation: [Kansas](#) and [Lexington Public Schools \(MA\)](#). ■



***Understanding students' attention span is essential for setting instructional time expectations for teachers, students and families.***



### **Connection and Communication with Families and Students**

Schools are often the hub of our communities and play a significant role in their students' and families' lives, including and beyond academics. In transitioning to remote learning, providing regular and predictable opportunities for families and students to connect with their teachers and schools is key. These connections should be short and simple and provide support for individuals and the community overall. It is helpful to put a consistent means in place, so that students and families can depend on, and look forward to outreach and connection on a regular basis. Some replicable examples from NC schools include:

- Share morning or weekly school-wide videos from the principal or staff members or students on a rotating basis. This could be a new version of the school news program, a Monday Kick-off, or Friday Wrap-up.
- Host Morning Meeting, Read Alouds, or Advisory Periods streamed and/or by video to provide consistency and familiarity in the remote setting.
- Publish a weekly Family Guide that helps students and families know what went well (highlight student and teacher examples, videos, or pictures ) and what to expect the following week. The Family Guide provides current information in one place for access for families and students.
- Host office hours with teachers, specialists, social workers, counselors, EC teachers, or nurses. This can be especially important for those services that support students across classes and grade levels.
- Host virtual spirit weeks and post pictures. One school had students share pictures of studying with their pets. Another had school spirit and favorite team days.
- Check-in with individual students and families by phone, video, or postcard. Knowing that an adult in their school cares about them and is checking on them is critical in this time that can feel very isolating. ■



***Identifying a few consistent and predictable ways that you will connect with families and students, and to ensure that you know if a student or family is not engaging, will make a significant difference in supporting students and their families.***



## Student Engagement in Learning Opportunities Aligned to Standards

Designing learning opportunities that engage students is critical to support students' academic and social and emotional growth. These experiences must align to standards and should build upon the district's current instructional framework(s), learning science, and other research based strategies used in face-to-face settings. It is important that educators continue to design meaningful learning experiences aligned to the essential *concepts* and *skills* that students need to be successful in their respective grade levels and subject areas. However, educators will have to adapt these learning experiences to a remote setting with and/or without access to devices and the Internet.

Educators should provide a recommended schedule with flexible options and assume that students will have minimal supervision or guidance. Educators should utilize many [different instructional strategies](#) to sustain student engagement and motivation in a remote setting. Since the level of independent learning increases in a remote setting, it is more vital to provide a variety of engaging activities to maintain student enthusiasm and motivation to learn. This is the perfect time for teachers to collaborate with instructional support specialists (e.g., instructional coaches, media center coordinators, math coaches) to design standard-aligned learning opportunities that utilize the full depth and breadth of the district's effective teaching practices. ■



***Ensuring many different opportunities for students to reach their goals will help ensure their success.***



## Equity, Choice, and Flexibility

As educators design learning opportunities for students in a remote learning environment, it is important to provide students with choice and flexibility. When possible, provide students with options in how they learn content and/or demonstrate what they have learned. This could be as simple as providing students with a choice of reading a text or listening to an audio file of the text. Additionally, students can demonstrate what they have learned by writing a short paragraph or sending the teacher a 30-second video explaining their understanding of a concept. Even further, more advanced options could include providing students with [choice boards](#) or [project-based learning](#). All of these options are dependent on how students were accustomed to learning prior to this transition and the educators familiarity and training on various instructional strategies.

It is especially important for educators to design instruction with choice and flexibility when considering

student populations that typically have additional support while in school, e.g., English Learners, Exceptional Children, Academically/Intellectually Gifted, and students who receive free or reduced lunch. Instruction should include enough flexibility and choice to reduce instances of students feeling overwhelmed, disinterested, and/or frustrated. It is critical to keep in mind that the academic and familial worlds have just been blended together. Educators should be particularly considerate of and make adjustments for students who are experiencing new or existing family dynamics that limit their ability to access school work during prescribed hours. Some additional things to consider include additional support and time needed for students in a single-parent household, families with multiple members and limited or no devices, students with parents who are suddenly unemployed, students in areas with no/little access to broadband, households experiencing food insecurities, or students who have to supervise younger siblings. ■



***Providing choice and flexibility can help ensure that all students have equitable access to learning in a remote setting.***



## Collaboration among Students

Students need social interaction, and collaborating with one another is an effective strategy for learning that also supports the whole child. While many educators build collaboration into their face-to-face instructional strategies, this is also possible with remote learning whether using computers or other non-digital means. Working in small groups is possible through online platforms, video calls, working on shared documents, or students calling each other. Teachers can host

online sessions for students to share how they are doing and to discuss or share ideas on what they are learning. Students can be assigned reading partners to call and share a summary of what they read or to ask each other a series of questions. They can work together virtually to build a shared presentation and post it to share with the class for feedback and comments. Teachers can host meetings with seminar type discussions. ■



***Ensuring students are collaborating with each other multiple times each week through thoughtful, yet simple lessons is a key element for staying connected.***



## Feedback on Student Work

Students will be more isolated than normal and will need guidance and feedback from teachers. Feedback has the potential to have a powerful impact on student learning and motivation, and educators will need the means to assess (even if not through graded tests) how students are progressing in their learning. Educators should ensure that they have different opportunities to interact with and review student work so that they can provide feedback and consider what the student needs next. Teachers are not expected to provide feedback on all assigned work,

but rather on *select* student work. Teachers should aim to provide feedback, formally or informally on at least a weekly basis on targeted assignments that demonstrate their understanding of core standards. To continue the academic progress of students in a remote environment, feedback to students should be [timely and specific](#). This feedback may be through a presentation to the class in an online platform or a one on one discussion between the teacher and student. A teacher could provide comments and guidance directly on a writing assignment using a shared document. ■



***Developing new methods for providing feedback to students about their understanding of content can positively impact student motivation and learning.***



## Social and Emotional Learning (Cross-cutting, Embedded, or both)

Addressing [social and emotional learning](#) (SEL) effectively is proven to support the whole child and increase achievement; and this is never more important than during a crisis. As schools, districts, and teachers work to provide continuity of learning for their students, SEL should be at the forefront of structures and learning opportunities. School- and class-wide

approaches that bring students together and help them see they are not alone and have support from their school community are essential. Intentionally connecting with students and families on a regular basis will be a whole school effort with teachers, teacher assistants, school counselors, social workers, administrators, and others working together. Schools can share videos and announcements in ways that

make students feel a sense of consistency. For those families without access to broadband and/or devices, the school staff can create a telephone schedule to check on these families.

Learning opportunities can also support SEL. Supporting students in self awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills, and

responsible decision making all come into play in new ways in the transition to remote learning. Weaving in SEL themes to assignments can provide students with opportunities to reflect and share. Providing space and time for students to share how the current situation is impacting them may also be helpful. ■



***Ensuring that students have opportunities to continue to see their place in our school community is imperative. Addressing SEL is not optional, it is critical to supporting our students and their learning.***

### **APPLYING THE INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

As schools and teachers design learning opportunities, the Instructional Design Principles are intended to serve as guideposts for developing lessons and connecting communities. It is important to remember that instruction during remote learning will look different than it does in the face-to-face classroom. The current cause of remote learning and the fact that students and families cannot come together in a physical space make the sense of community and belonging only more important. As the weeks progress, educators and students need to be open and flexible as we figure out remote learning together. The Instructional Design Principles illustrate the importance of focusing on the whole child and connecting with students and families to ensure that schools continue to play their essential and central role in the community.

# Recommendations for Instructional Leaders

The *Recommendations for Instructional Leaders* are designed to provide action steps and guidance for principals, coaches, counselors, social workers, library media specialists and others who support educators and staff in their transition to remote learning.

## RATIONALE

During the COVID-19 crisis, communities across the world are adjusting to a new way of life, “Stay Home, Save Lives” that impacts all facets of their lives, including education. School leadership is essential to help teachers, students and families adjust to learning from home.

### 1 Communicate a Clear Vision

In this time of constant change in our personal and professional lives, school leaders should communicate a clear vision for teaching and learning remotely. The [Instructional Design Principles for Remote Learning](#) provides a common language for lesson design and reflection that school leaders can share with instructional leaders.

### 2 Support Educators and Staff in Implementing Instruction

Teachers need support from school and instructional leaders to develop effective remote learning lesson plans to meet the needs of all students. This includes, but is not limited to: guidance counselors, social workers, instructional technology facilitators, district office specialists, Exceptional Children teachers, Academically & Intellectually Gifted (AIG) specialists, coaches, library media specialists, and teacher assistants.

### 3 Develop Communication Structures

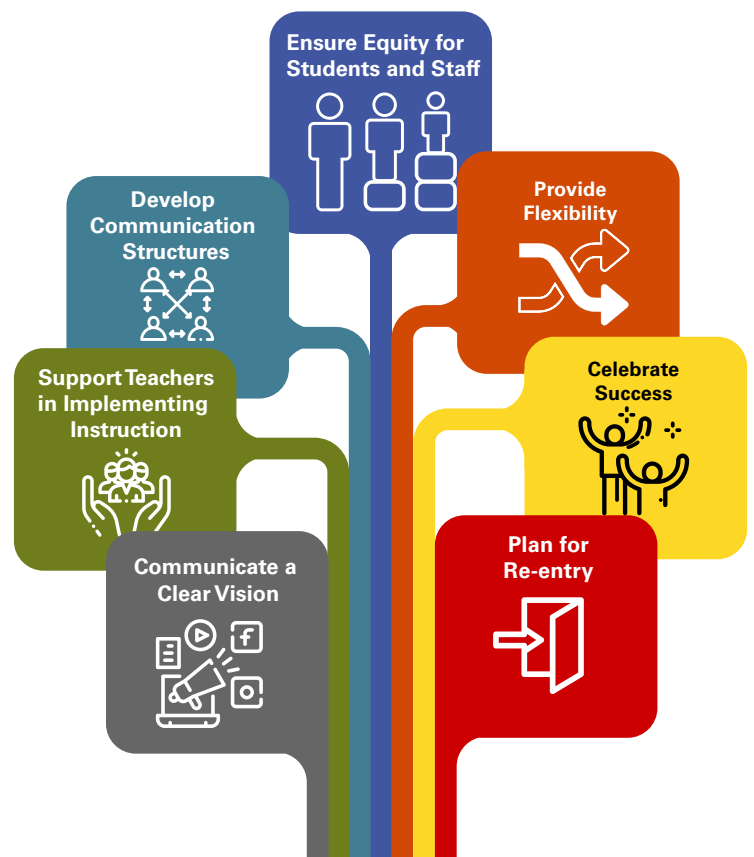
Focusing on communication structures that will sustain your school community and reinforce a sense of belonging across distances helps everyone. It is important to think about the entire school community, including teachers, staff, students and parents. Communication with these groups is always important, but is especially vital in time of crisis.

### 4 Ensure Equity for Students and Staff

Crises have a way of exposing the inequities in our society, and the most vulnerable communities tend to suffer the most. During these times, it is vital that instructional leaders provide the necessary structures that allow the staff to continue to “deliver equitable opportunities for every student...bearing in mind that ‘fair’ is not always ‘equal’, and equal is not always equitable” as defined in the [NC Equity Plan](#).

### 5 Provide Flexibility

Everyone is adjusting to new schedules, a new way of life and full-time remote learning is definitely new for everyone. We must recognize that the shift to remote learning is difficult for families, as they are now asked to provide a home learning environment for their children. Encouraging administrators, teachers, students and families to be flexible is essential as we are all figuring out remote learning together.



### 6 Celebrate and Appreciate Efforts.

Because everything is changing so quickly, it is easy to focus on the challenges and the daily obstacles, rather than the successes. Celebrating the small victories and highlighting what is working well will go a long way with staff members.

### 7 Plan for Re-entry

While the focus is clearly on transitioning to remote instruction, it is important to start making plans for the transition back to face-to-face instruction. This is important for instructional elements, as well as extra-curricular and end of year events and processes. The timeline may be nebulous, but having some key components in place to welcome students back will accelerate and ease the transition to face-to-face learning.

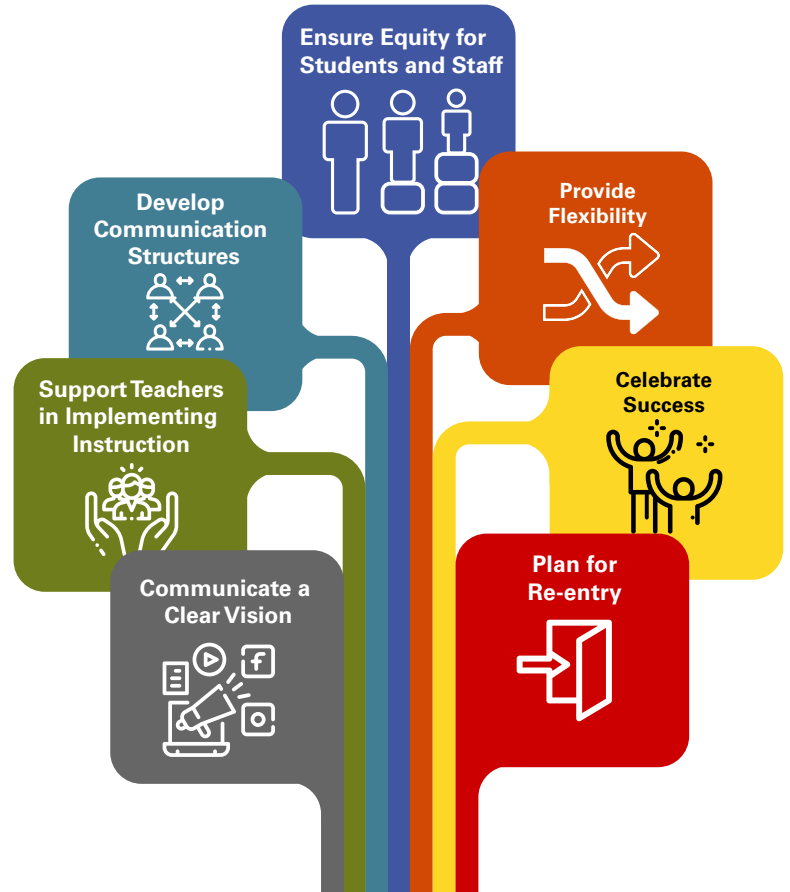


# Recommendations for Instructional Leaders

The *Recommendations for Instructional Leaders* are designed to provide action steps and guidance for principals, coaches, counselors, social workers, library media specialists and others who support educators and staff in their transition to remote learning.

## RATIONALE

During the COVID-19 crisis, communities across the world are adjusting to a new way of life, “Stay Home, Save Lives” that impacts all facets of their lives, including education. School leadership is essential to help teachers, students and families adjust to learning from home. Teachers and school staff are used to face-to-face interactions with students every day. Now, they must rely on remote learning to educate and connect with their students. Families are looking to schools for academic and emotional supports to help their children during this unprecedented time in our lives. School leaders have the opportunity to provide clarity and guidance as they embark on the journey of remote learning. As we ask educators to quickly shift teaching practices, we must provide teachers with the skills they need to succeed. Now more than ever, school staff are looking to instructional leaders for guidance.



## [The Knoster Model for Managing Complex Change](#)

is a valuable tool to use for managing complex change in a successful way. The model provides a framework to help leaders think through the process and explains that for any initiative to be successful five things must be present: Vision, Skills, Incentives, Resources, and Action Plan. The Knoster Model can also help leaders diagnose what may be missing if stakeholders are not successful.

Model for Managing Complex Change

Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	=	Success
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Missing	=	False Starts
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Missing	Action Plan	=	Frustration
Vision	Skills	Missing	Resources	Action Plan	=	Resistance
Vision	Missing	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	=	Anxiety
Missing	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	=	Confusion

Adapted from Knoster, T. (1991) Presentation in TASH Conference, Washington, D.C. Adapted by Knoster from Enterprise Group, Ltd.

While keeping the Knoster Model in mind, the following guiding principles will help school leaders navigate the new world of remote learning.



## Communicate a Clear Vision

In this time of constant change in our personal and professional lives, school leaders should communicate a clear vision for teaching and learning remotely. [\*The Instructional Design Principles for Remote Learning\*](#) provides a common language for lesson design and reflection that school leaders can share with instructional leaders. Instructional leaders should provide guidance for teachers, including model lessons, sample schedules and best practices for remote learning. Recommendations for communicating a clear vision for remote learning, including expectations and challenges are:

- Hold virtual faculty meetings, where teachers can ask questions and seek advice.
- Provide opportunities for reflection, including what is working and what is not.
- Designate a dynamic location to share lesson plans and video exemplars.
- Ensure teachers have the academic and technological support they need.



## Support Educators and Staff in Implementing Instruction

Teachers need support from school and instructional leaders to develop effective remote learning lesson plans to meet the needs of all students. This includes, but is not limited to: guidance counselors, social workers, instructional technology facilitators, district office specialists, Exceptional Children teachers, Academically & Intellectually Gifted (AIG) specialists, coaches, library media specialists, and teacher assistants. To facilitate collaboration and support, school leaders should consider the following strategies:

- Encourage regular, at least once or twice per week, virtual PLC meetings that also include virtual supports.
- Include instructional technology facilitators in the process to help adapt lesson plans to utilize technology.
- Offer opportunities to share successes and brainstorm trouble spots.
- Recommend specialists, counselors, and other staff offer office hours to provide another resource for students.
- Encourage teachers and teacher assistants to reach out to students on a regular basis to ensure students feel connected and supported.



## Develop Communication Structures

Focusing on communication structures that will sustain your school community and reinforce a sense of belonging across distances helps everyone. When developing communication structures, it is important to think about the entire school community, including teachers, staff, students and parents. Communication with these groups is always important, but is especially vital in time of crisis. Schools should leverage technology and utilize existing communication tools, when possible. It is important for leaders to first consider how we communicate with each group under *normal* circumstances and then prioritize which communications are the most important. Teachers and families do not need to be inundated with communication that is not directly relevant to remote learning. School leaders should create new communication structures to meet the needs of teachers, students and families during this time of crisis. Recommendations for new communication structures include:

- Share remote learning expectations and clarify any points of confusion around plans for grading, instructional time, and class meeting times.
- Share weekly messages to check in with families and to let them know what to expect for upcoming learning opportunities.
- Establish predictable channels for staff members to communicate with each other through virtual faculty meetings and other convenings.



### Ensure Equity for Students and Staff

Crises have a way of exposing the inequities in our society. Whether the school building is closed due to an unexpected hurricane or an unforeseen pandemic, the most vulnerable communities tend to suffer the most. During these times, it is vital that instructional leaders provide the necessary structures that allow themselves and all other members of their staff to continue to “deliver equitable opportunities for every student...bearing in mind that ‘fair’ is not always ‘equal’, and equal is not always equitable” as defined in the [NC Equity Plan](#). It is important that instructional leaders practice equity through grace not just with students, but with staff as well. The professional and personal lives of every educator has drastically changed and it is important to recognize that many staff members are facing social and economic challenges. Teachers may not be able to work “normal” hours as they are taking care of children or others during the day. The traditional school day and the roles of instructional leaders and staff members will need to be redefined to adapt to remote learning. By extending equitable practices to the school staff, all educators will be in a better position to support student learning. Suggestions include:

- Utilize the school as a hub for food and other supplies for local families.
- Provide devices and hotspots to staff and families.
- Allocate resources to other schools that have a higher demand.
- Encourage teachers to connect individually with students with special needs.
- Develop additional educational resources to meet the needs of students with special needs and EC students.



### Provide Flexibility

Everyone is adjusting to new schedules, a new way of life and full-time remote learning is definitely new for everyone. It is important that leaders provide ample time and support for educators to adjust to this method of teaching. At the same time we must recognize that the shift to remote learning is difficult for families, as they are now asked to provide a home learning environment for their children. Encouraging administrators, teachers, students and families to be flexible is essential as we are all figuring out remote learning together. Normal school schedules and content delivery will be much different than before and everyone will need to adapt. Recommendations for providing flexible supports include:

- Include a member of the administrative team at teachers weekly PLC meetings.
- Encourage teachers to ask questions and provide a feedback loop on what’s working and what’s not.
- Partner with other schools in your district to share lesson ideas and strategies.
- Offer options for staff to work asynchronously with students during hours that work best for their situation.
- Gracefully allow flexibility in how and when staff members work for those who need the extra support.



### Celebrate and Appreciate Efforts

Because everything is changing so quickly, it is easy to focus on the challenges and the daily obstacles, rather than the successes. Teachers are trying to meet the needs of their students and looking for affirmation from leaders to help them navigate the new landscape. Celebrating the small victories and highlighting what is working well will go a long way with staff members. Some examples of how schools can celebrate and appreciate efforts of staff during this time include:

- Implement staff meeting “shout outs” recognizing hard work and flexibility.
- Send thank you notes to teachers and staff.
- Connect with teachers on an individual basis and ask what they need.



### **Plan for Re-entry**

While the focus right now is clearly on transitioning to remote instruction, it is important to start making plans for the transition back to face-to-face instruction. This is important for instructional elements, as well as extra-curricular and end of year events and processes. The timeline may be nebulous, but having some key components in place to welcome students back and support educators and families in the transition will accelerate and ease the transition to face-to-face learning. To begin this process, instructional leaders can:

- Create a re-entry team.
- Document the key areas to address for re-entry.
- Consider additional safety precautions.

### **Applying the Recommendations for Instructional Leaders**

The *Recommendations for Instructional Leaders* are intended to serve as guideposts for supporting educators and staff in implementing remote learning. They are also a reminder that educators and staff will need frequent and clear communication and check-ins to ensure their well-being. Everyone in our communities need flexibility in adapting to remote learning and in being open to learning as the weeks progress. Instructional leaders who support our educators and staff play a critical role in ensuring that our schools continue to function and thrive as the hubs of our communities.