

March 23, 2020

District Distance Learning Expectations

In accordance with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction interim guidance and the Governor's Executive Order, which will be released during the week of March 23, 2020, all plans must be submitted to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction by March 27, 2020.

Intent: To educate and graduate the students of North Dakota through the end of the academic year while maintaining the health and safety of students, staff, and community.

Equity is a critical consideration. If educational services are being delivered to students in any form, for plans to be approved, those services must be provided to all students.

For the purposes of this guidance, **distance learning** includes virtual, online, ITV, alternate locations, instructional telephone calls, and all learning that is offered through alternate means rather than on-campus, face to face. More specific subject-matter could be provided through content download (e.g., using laptops and smart phones) and communication by phone (e.g., conference calls and one-on-one calls). Depending on grade level, materials used might include books, textbooks, workbooks, worksheets, email, television (e.g., DVD, cable, streaming), and Internet content (e.g., websites, games).

In addition, instructional methods used might include the following:

- Synchronous online learning (e.g., chat, streaming, video, instant messaging, web conferences).
- Asynchronous online learning with capability for remote communication and assessment (e.g., email or learning management systems that deliver, track, and manage classes or projects).

Local school leaders have decision-making authority regarding curriculum and instruction. A school must show that it can provide adequate infrastructure in three areas: technology, instruction, and student engagement. These factors must be considered as distance learning plans are created and will be assessed based on the ability to provide quality instruction. There are several options when providing distance learning. **Only a plan that outlines a full continuation of services will be considered as replacing instructional time.**

- **Exposure to Content:** Students will be able to view content that broadly relates to content areas, such as literacy and numeracy. Focused skill development is not expected.
- **Supplemental Content:** Students will be able to view and participate in activities that are directly related to grade-level skills, but there is no capacity for assessment or evaluation of work. Limited progress is expected.
- **Partial Continuation:** Students will be able to access grade-level and subject-matter content. If instructional support (including assessment and evaluation of work) is provided through another medium, continued learning is possible. Measurable student progress is possible.
- **Full Continuation:** Students will be able to access grade-level and subject-matter content. Instructional support is provided, including assessment and evaluation of work.

Measurable student progress is expected. Materials and instructional methods used might include all those listed above.

Approval Process:

A plan will be approved by the Governor in conjunction with the Superintendent of Public Instruction if it is determined that the plan meets the below expectations. **Plan must be submitted by March 27, 2020 to [Amanda Peterson](#).**

Attendance Procedures:

The plan must describe the following:

- The process for determining assurance and adherence to Department of Health guidelines
 - Address how the school district will manage being moved into a higher threshold or risk level, as determined by the Department of Health.
- How the school district will ensure that all students have access to an educator
- How educators will measure participation and attendance. Consider all subgroups: students with disabilities, English learners, students experiencing homelessness, students experiencing sickness, etc.

Educational Staff Expectations:

The plan must describe the following:

- How the school district plans to provide professional development to educators to prepare them for the transition into a distance learning environment
- The school districts' process to revisit human resources policies and procedures to provide adequate flexibility and guidance regarding sick leave, personal leave, and leave without pay

Ensuring Equitable Services

The plan must describe the following:

- How the school district has assured that all students have access to a device, if necessary
- How the school district has assured that all students have access to reliable, high-speed internet, if necessary
- How students who require assistive technology have access to appropriate device(s) to meet needs
- How a school will transition all students into a distance learning environment
 - This should include areas of social emotional learning and scaffolding for operation in a distance learning model.
- Provisions for addressing the unique needs of all grade levels, classes, and courses
 - Address processes for ensuring both equity and access to high-quality, age-appropriate instruction at each level including:
 - Pre-K (if applicable),
 - Elementary,

- Middle School, and
- High School (Credit-Bearing Courses)
- CTE/Science/lab courses should be addressed in a separate section of the high school plan.

Special Education Considerations - Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) and 504s:

All educational decisions for students with IEPs must be made on an individual basis and be consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the North Dakota Department of Instruction's Office of Special Education guidelines. For information regarding Special Education refer to the [Questions and Answers on Providing Services to Children with Disabilities During the Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)

The plan must describe the following:

- Procedures for ensuring each student on an IEP or a 504 plan will receive individual consideration
- *Additional guidance will continue to be updated and shared as available.*

English Learner Considerations – Individualized Language Plans (ILPs)

The plan must describe the following:

- Process for appropriate scaffolding of instruction for English learners to ensure accessibility to content

Federal Title Considerations

The plan must describe the following:

- Process for appropriate instruction to ensure accessibility to content, dependent on federal title designation
- A new document outlining how to use [Federal Title Funds to Support a District's Distance Learning Plan](#)
 - *Schoolwide*- this is addressed in the school's overall plan as staff funded with Schoolwide funds can serve all students
 - *Targeted*- this needs to be specifically addressed in how Title I teachers will be providing instruction to identified Title I students
 - *Private*- districts will need to reach out to private schools and include in their plan how Title I teachers will provide instruction to identified students

Paying Federally Funded Staff During School Closure Guidance:

A state, district, or other recipient may use federal funds to pay its federally funded staff during a closure if it uses state or local funds to pay state and locally funded staff during the closure. For example, if state funds will pay state-funded staff during a closure, then Title I funds can pay Title I-funded staff, Title II funds can pay Title II-funded staff, IDEA funds can pay IDEA-funded staff, etc. It is important for districts to continue to pay paraprofessionals and other ancillary staff with state funds so federal funds can continue to pay federally funded paraprofessionals and ancillary staff.

School Counseling Services

Schools must continue to provide school counseling services, even if this is done electronically. 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. Please reference the guidance from the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) relating to [virtual school counseling during an emergency shutdown](#). School counselors must still follow all [ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors](#) and to see their [ASCA's position statement on virtual school counseling](#).

The plan must describe the following:

- How school counseling services will be provided

High-Quality, Effective, Standards-Based Education

The plan will be approved based on the following:

- Quality of the distance learning experience
 - *Exposure to standards-based skills and content*
 - *Full continuity of the regular school experience, in which students will be able to access grade-level and age-appropriate subject-matter content*
 - *Academic progress monitoring*
 - Describe what educators will do if a student is not making adequate progress.
- Provisions for instructional support (including assessment and evaluation of work)
 - Describe the mechanism in place for assessing students and assigning grades in continuation of your school district's grading policies.

If you have any questions, contact [Amanda Peterson](#), Academic Support at (701) 328-3545 or [Joe Kolosky](#), School Approval and Opportunity at (701) 328-2755.