

WEST VIRGINIA REMOTE LEARNING

Framework for the COVID-19 Emergency



West Virginia DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTIONS

At the direction of Governor Jim Justice, the West Virginia State Superintendent W. Clayton Burch created a taskforce to provide guidance on how schools can implement continuous learning in the face of the COVID-19 mandatory suspension of in-person instruction. The taskforce has developed the *West Virginia Remote Learning Framework for the COVID-19 Emergency* document for the local school counties to use when considering the types of information, they want to include in the development of a more long-term plan. Superintendent Burch presented the document to Governor Justice who was pleased to have best practices information for West Virginia counties, schools, leaders, teachers, families, and students as the local school districts revise the learning protocols/plans in response to the COVID-19 emergency situation. The taskforce's best practices and overarching recommendations respect that these decisions are made locally and recognizes that each school district will consider which of these best practices meets the unique needs of their student population. This document has been developed by the West Virginia Department of Education in partnership with the local school districts superintendents and school staff.

All information in this document is designed to support school districts in making decisions to address their students' learning needs during the COVID-19 crisis. The information in this document should be reviewed by superintendents and their staff for consideration and/or guidance as they develop, review and or revise their local remote learning plans. Other factors to consider include access to technology, hardware availability, bandwidth availability, the health and well-being of students regarding delivery models of information.

OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations may need to be further refined as districts continue to implement remote learning and build a plan that allows for fluid thinking and unique responses. Below are the Taskforce for Remote Learning's overall recommendations:

- » Work with principals, teachers and other stakeholders to assist you in the of development your county plan
- » Consider the programmatic level best practices around student engagement opportunities, grading, social/emotional, counseling and graduation
- » Assure your plans include special education and services as well as other special populations
- » Consider using summer learning opportunities to prepare students for the upcoming year
- » Create a clear and concise communication plan
- » Expand consideration to include your suggestions for student engagement, family/home contact and counseling
- » Include your next steps into your plan

REMOTE LEARNING: PLANNING AND BEST PRACTICES

The goal of remote learning is to support students as they adjust through a variety of student engagement opportunities both digital and non-digital. While remote learning offers a multitude of resources for consideration, student engagement should not be compromised in the development of a plan and the selection of programs, services, and activities during the mandatory suspension of in-person instruction due to the COVID-19. Plans should:

- » Consider optimal ways to meet our students' educational needs in the broadest of terms in these unprecedented times
- » Focus on continuity of learning
- » Create remote learning environments that are educational, interesting and engaging to students
- » Address concerns regarding where resources can be leveraged and are currently available for local school-district use

While transitioning from classroom-based learning to remote learning the following suggested considerations are divided into early, elementary, middle and secondary learning.

EARLY LEARNING (PRE-K – 2ND GRADE)

Student Engagement Opportunities

It is critical to recognize and honor that the family is the child's first teacher. Therefore, this document reflects the importance of each family member's expertise in determining what works best for their children and other family members during this unprecedented time of crisis and change. While supporting the cognitive learning of all children, it is imperative that children's social and emotional, as well as physical health also receives sufficient attention and support.

General Recommendations/Best Practices: We are seeking to strengthen the already existing partnership between teachers and families and assisting families as they embrace their role as their children's first teacher in a new and evolving way. To do this, families may be asked to, when possible,

- » Spend time with their children
- » Play with their children
- » Share their unique talents and interests
- » Engage in suggested learning opportunities

The goal is that, over time, the family interactions touch on each learning domain of a child's development. The emphasis is on play-based family learning experiences, not on the mastery of a finite list of skills. Educators may consider adding essential components to provide consistency such as

- » Create projects/choice boards that gives students and parents flexibility of engagement activities;
- » Include non-technology-based options;
- » Consider ways to focus on relations and connections and not just activities.

Remote learning resources for Educators and Families can be found under "Resources" on the [WVDE COVID-19 page \(wvde.us/covid19\)](https://www.wvde.us/covid19).

About Screen Time and Young Learners: To assure children in the early grades (pre-k-2 in particular) are engaged in active learning, it is important to review the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidance for families regarding screen time with young children. The AAP recommends limiting screen time to 1 hour per day for children ages 2 to 5 years old (and that parents should co-view media with children). For children 6 and older, the AAP recommends placing “consistent limits on the time spent using media, and the types of media.” While the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limits to screen time for children in the early learning grades, it is important to note that educators and families can utilize online resources that provide tips and other ideas for non-screen related, child-friendly experiences to do with children.

Educators should communicate learning opportunities for families that address the needs of all students. At the same time, it is critical that consistent messages are delivered to families by each educator or staff member who encounters that family. When working with families with children in grades pre-k through 2, educators can provide suggestions and resources to family members to help them support their children. Suggestions for working with young children may include:

- » Create a consistent, but responsive, daily routine and share it with children. Children learn best and are more adaptable to change when they know what to expect and have consistency in their daily life. This is not intended to advise parents to create a regimented daily schedule that mirrors the daily school schedule, but rather, a consistent flow of the day that fits into the family routine. In fact, family members may choose to create a visual schedule for their child.
- » Spend time with their children each day talking about how they are feeling.
- » Spend time with their children each day playing games (invented or purchased), telling stories, and/or reading books in any language.

Considerations for engaging children in grades pre-k through 2 in the learning process include:

- » Young children learn through everyday play, exploration, and consistency in a safe and stimulating environment. The child’s relationships with families, caregivers, and family members are key for their healthy development. Children learn best by having the freedom to actively engage with their environment. Daily physical activity is imperative as well.
- » Children’s play is a highly supportive context for development and learning. Children’s learning and development are multidimensional, so we need to use a holistic approach to cover children’s mind and body needs. Teachers should provide students and their families with ideas to construct an understanding of the world around them, especially supporting and encouraging their communication and social-emotional skills.
- » This is a time for teachers to promote activities and ideas for students and their families to make connections with their background knowledge and to support students’ critical thinking skills.

Grading

Assessment at the pre-k through second grade level should be focused on children’s learning processes and progress, rather than on assignment completion and due dates. The use of artifacts, or evidence, that demonstrate evidence of learning can enable educators to provide relevant feedback for learning. In the early grades, some children can share their learning while others are unable to share or articulate what or how they learned. It is in these circumstances that the family may assist the child with documentation of their learning. In the early grades, developmentally appropriate assessments consist of authentic play-based, observational assessment. In a remote

learning environment, that would focus on regular communication with families. Developmentally appropriate assessments for pre-k through second grade children that demonstrates continuation of learning may include:

- » Photos of artifacts: family members can submit a photo of student work and the educator can provide feedback.
- » Family phone calls: educator interacts with the child to assess identified skills/tasks/ experiences.
- » Video child’s skills: family member takes video of their child completing a task and shares with the teacher utilizing a district-approved platform.

Social Emotional Focus

The social-emotional development of all young children is the key to maximizing the benefits of educational experiences at any time, but especially during this time of crisis. Young children are resilient and take their social-emotional cues from the adults around them. Stability in the forms of adequate sleep and physical activity, including adequate hydration, are essential for children. Physical activity provides opportunities for stress relief (stretching, walking, deep breathing, etc.). A sense of consistency and comfort can also be provided by ensuring children have their own space where they can relax and have access to materials (for drawing, taking a nap, holding a stuffed animal, looking at a book, etc.)

Providing information and explanations to young children in an age-appropriate way will help ease some of their uncertainty. Ensuring all children are supported emotionally during this time of uncertainty is the foundation of any engagement opportunities that are provided.

EARLY & ELEMENTARY LEARNING (3RD – 5TH GRADE)

Student Engagement Opportunities

Learning in the upper elementary grades emphasizes exploring an extended view of the world around the child, versus simply studying the world in the child’s direct proximity. It is important that educators plan and create academic and social engagement activities with a focus on the maintenance of previously covered content. Keep in mind that many families have limited, if any, data or internet and one device that must be shared between multiple people. As a result, ensure that educators make regular contact once a week minimally with individual families and children through a variety of methods that are appropriate to the needs and accessibility of each family and child. Example modes of communication may include:

Handwritten letters	Phones, automated calls, etc.
District website	Email
Social media and other web-based programs	Local news, cable channels, etc.

To optimize learning during a crisis, cross-curricular experiences that include multiple subject areas are encouraged. Physical education, music, art, social studies, and science are content areas best used to support English language arts and mathematics development. Cross-curricular experiences can highlight mathematics during physical activity, science as part of English language arts, or music

as part of a social studies activity, for example. It is also important that educators and families understand that the home environment can likely include both indoor and outdoor opportunities for learning. Following are selected types of learning experiences.

- » Journals (could include open-ended questions or journaling about what students have learned, writing prompts, collection of activities completed, etc. Topics should not generally focus on the current emergency.)
- » Academic Activities (specific assignments, scavenger hunt, non-digital resources, pen-pals, software applications, read to parents or siblings, books study, manipulatives, count money, etc.)
- » Social Engagement Activities (group video chats, written communication/emails to teachers and/or classmates, family board games, etc.)
- » Hands-on Activities (art, physical education, music, create your own board game, cooking, gardening, etc.)

General recommendations for engaging children in grades 3 through 5 in the learning process include:

- » Establish office hours: educators should have availability/check-ins. (Be flexible with office hours. Children and educator availability could fluctuate.)
- » Be flexible. Keep in mind that children may have other familial responsibilities to prioritize or may have limited access to resources.
- » Use tools the educators are already familiar with to communicate with children. Use common platforms across a county school district to alleviate any confusion for families or children.
- » Focus on children's progress and learning, not assignment completion and due dates.
- » Create cross-curricular work when possible to maximize efficiency. Read a science or history article or use English language arts-based questions for comprehension, discussion, and/or writing, for example.

Remote learning resources for Educators and Families can be found under "Resources" on the [WVDE COVID-19 page \(wvde.us/covid19\)](https://www.wvde.us/covid19).

Grading

In grades 3 through 5, the grading process should focus on the continuation of learning. Districts may offer support for learning goals. This may include documentation of learning and giving feedback rather than assigning grades. Examples of this may include teacher/student collaboration, performance-based assessments, portfolios, journals, discussion posts, video responses, audio recordings, projects, choice boards, and other artifacts.

It is recommended that children's grades must not be lowered as a result of remote learning but enhanced. Assessment should be ongoing to promote equitable environments. The mode at which a student provides evidence of learning should be differentiated based upon student circumstances. The decision to provide summative grades or report cards during the remote learning period will remain local.

Assignments should be provided that allow children to work independently or with the limited help of a family member. Rather than assigning one task for all learners, it is important to give children choices that have limits. Potential examples include dioramas, foldables, maps, building maps, sharing information through reports, and other forms of self-expression. All possible efforts should be made in planning to provide an equitable academic learning experience for all students.

Should a district provide report cards or summative grades, these should be reflective of the totality of evidence of learning submitted by each student. This body of evidence may differ based on what is submitted by each individual student and can be influenced by the level of connectivity, support, and other factors.

Social Emotional Focus

Social connections are important; encourage children to communicate with their friends however possible to help with the transition when we do return to school. It is recommended that the information found in the pre-k through grade 2 social emotional focus section that addresses children's basic social and emotional needs also be considered for children in the upper elementary grades.

The priority for families during the remote learning period is safety, health, and well-being. Schools and families can partner to keep children emotionally and physically safe, fed, and engaged in learning. Ideas to further engage upper elementary aged children include having virtual spirit week or announcing special days to celebrate virtually to connect children socially and emotionally.

MIDDLE SCHOOL (6TH – 8TH GRADE)

Student Engagement Opportunities

The focus of remote learning should be on the continuity of learning and creating learning environments that are inclusive of all learners. Educators must be careful not to allow the lack of traditional, face-to-face classroom instruction amplify existing inequities for the students they serve.

All students need to have access to content and material. Keep in mind that many families have limited, if any, data or internet and one device that must be shared among multiple people. To ensure equal access, educators can provide activities that do not require internet access, make sure that IEP accommodations are met, and reach out to all families to help them support their children as much as possible. If some students are learning online while others are not, then offline activities should be educationally comparable to online activities and mirror the desired content, skills, and rigor.

Best practice for student engagement recommends that the combined daily instructional task(s) for students in grades 6-12 not exceed 2-3 hours a day in total. When making content decisions, teachers should consider reviewing content and skills that are prerequisite for the next course in the learning sequence. Remote learning resources for Educators and Families can be found under "Resources" on the [WVDE COVID-19 page \(wvde.us/covid19\)](http://wvde.us/covid19). Some examples of approaches that West Virginia districts are implementing to help students stay engaged without becoming overwhelmed include:

- » Content Area Days – Dedicate certain days to specific subjects such as Math Monday and ELA Tuesday, thus asking students to sharpen their skills and knowledge in one content area per day.
- » Virtual Collaborative Planning – Meet virtually as a grade level team of educators prior to assigning instructional tasks to ensure that, with all courses combined, the amount of time for instructional tasks for students does not exceed 2-3 hours each day.
- » Review and Reteach Activities – Engage students in a review or re-teaching of concepts and content addressed earlier in the year to ensure that the time spent on tasks is active learning time.

More now than ever, schools should make an effort to support parents and families with reliable channels of communication and resources that may help to facilitate remote learning. Some examples of approaches that West Virginia districts are implementing to support students and families with reliable communication include:

- » Designated “Office” Hours – Educators set specific times to be available for student and family support such as ELA teachers being available on Tuesdays or setting specific hours each day for calls, emails, or video meetings. Remember to keep times flexible as educators and students have changing needs daily.
- » Connecting with Students in Multiple Ways – Increase students’ and families’ access to timely communication using email, making phone calls, writing letters, creating YouTube videos and sharing via the school’s social media pages, utilizing learning management systems, Office365 tools, and/or sharing learning activities in the local newspaper.

Grading

It is recommended that the final grade a student had on March 13, 2020, be the lowest grade the student would receive. From this point forward, grades could be value-added through review, reteach, enrichment, and focused instruction on content and skills prerequisite to the next course in the learning sequence.

Social Emotional Focus

The priority for families during the remote learning period is safety, health, and well-being. Schools and families can partner to keep children emotionally and physically safe, fed, and engaged in learning.

Accommodations and modifications can and should be done when appropriate for students and their mental health.

Social connections are important; school staff should make every effort to contact all families/ students on a regular basis and open lines of communication for families/students to contact them. These contacts can be done using email, phone calls, and social media. If teachers are not able to utilize school phones, personal phone numbers can be hidden through the use of a phone number provided by web-based apps.

HIGH SCHOOL (9TH – 12TH GRADE)

Student Engagement Opportunities

The focus of remote learning should be on the continuity of learning and creating learning environments that are inclusive of all learners. Educators must be careful not to allow the lack of traditional, face-to-face classroom instruction amplify existing inequities for the students they serve.

All students need to have access to content and material. Keep in mind that many families have limited, if any, data or internet and one device that must be shared among multiple people. To ensure equal access, educators can provide activities that do not require internet access, make

sure that IEP accommodations are met, and reach out to all families to help them support their children as much as possible. If some students are learning online while others are not, then offline activities should be educationally comparable to online activities and mirror the desired content, skills, and rigor.

Best practice for student engagement recommends that the combined daily instructional task(s) for students in grades 6-12 not exceed 2-3 hours a day in total. Teachers should also consider reviewing content and skills that are prerequisite for the next course in the learning sequence. Remote learning resources for Educators and Families can be found under “Resources” on the [WVDE COVID-19 page \(wvde.us/covid19\)](https://wvde.us/covid19). Some examples of approaches that West Virginia districts are implementing to help students stay engaged without becoming overwhelmed include:

- » Content Area Days – Dedicate certain days to specific subjects such as Math Monday and ELA Tuesday, thus asking students to sharpen their skills and knowledge in one content area per day.
- » Virtual Collaborative Planning – Work across disciplines prior to assigning instructional tasks to ensure that, with all courses combined, the amount of time for instructional tasks for students does not exceed 2-3 hours each day. Keep in mind that some students may also have instructional time dedicated to dual credit and/or CTE coursework.
- » Review and Reteach Activities – Engage students in a review or re-teaching of concepts and content addressed earlier in the year to ensure that the time spent on tasks is active learning time.

More now than ever, schools should make an effort to support parents and families with reliable channels of communication and resources that may help to facilitate remote learning. Some examples of approaches that West Virginia districts are implementing to support students and families with reliable communication include:

- » Designated “Office” Hours – Teachers set specific times to be available for student and family support such as ELA teachers being available on Tuesdays or setting specific hours each day for calls, emails, or video meetings. Remember to keep times flexible as educators and students have changing needs daily.
- » Connecting with Students in Multiple Ways– Increase students’ and families’ access to timely communication using email, making phone calls, writing letters, creating YouTube videos and sharing via the school’s social media pages, utilizing learning management systems, Office365 tools, and/or sharing learning activities in the local newspaper.

Grading and Credit

It is recommended that the final grade a student had on March 13, 2020, should be the lowest grade the student would receive. From this point forward grades could be value-added through review, reteach, enrichment, and prioritized instruction.

Based on grades as of March 13, students in danger of not receiving a high school diploma with their May cohort could “rescue” the failing grade or retake a course they failed by taking credit recovery classes.

Social Emotional Focus

The priority for families during the remote learning period is safety, health, and well-being. Schools and families can partner to keep children emotionally and physically safe, fed, and engaged in learning.

Accommodations and modifications can and should be made when appropriate for students and their mental health.

Social connections are important; school staff should make every effort to contact all families/ students on a regular basis and open lines of communication for families/students to contact them. These contacts can be done using email, phone calls, and social media. If teachers are not able to utilize school phones, personal phone numbers can be hidden through the use of a phone number provided by web-based apps.

Graduation

Some graduation ceremonies will likely be postponed until it is safe to resume mass gatherings. Many counties have already committed to hosting an event, even if the ceremony needs to be postponed for a few months, while other counties have chosen to host a virtual graduation ceremony on designated graduation dates. Counties and schools should determine the approach to graduation that works best for their students and communities.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES

Student Engagement Opportunities

Districts and schools are encouraged to provide student engagement opportunities to all students in formats that each district finds best serves their local communities. As we deliver remote learning to our students with disabilities, we ask everyone to employ thoughtful approaches, conduct responsive and caring interactions, and perform critical and creative thinking to ensure that all students continue to grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

Districts and schools need to be flexible and consider using a variety of delivery options as they make reasonable efforts to provide services to students with disabilities. These options should also offer consistency and structure. The principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) are particularly important as we address the needs of all students, especially students with disabilities. Communication and collaboration with families is of paramount importance in identifying the most appropriate methods of delivery.

While remote learning that utilizes technology may be the preferred choice, it cannot be assumed that every family or every student has access to the necessary devices and internet connections in their home. In many cases, students with disabilities are the ones without these available. Therefore, plans should include approaches that utilize non-digital remote learning to deliver content.

Students with disabilities have a wide range of abilities and needs. Remote learning delivery options need to encompass this range. While some students with disabilities require a unique curriculum, the majority are educated in the general education classroom. Therefore, collaboration and teaming between special educators and general educators is essential. From lesson development to assessment, the individual needs of students must be considered and accommodated to the extent practical.

While some flexibility is required during these extraordinary times, the rights of students with disabilities have not been waived. The U.S. Department of Education has released guidance for implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Act during the COVID-19 outbreak. All state and local decisions must comply with this guidance. *Supplemental Fact Sheet* (wvde.us/usde-fact-sheet)

Family Support

Since homes will be the new classrooms, it is critical that remote learning works in a multitude of family and home contexts. For example, students may be home alone while adults are working, they may be caretakers for siblings, coping with the illness or loss of a family member or struggling with their own anxiety and depression. Families may be struggling to adjust to and handle these challenges. Therefore, it is important to be empathetic to this circumstance and provide guidance and encouragement to not only students but their families as well.

Families and caregivers may need extra support as they take on the role of a learning facilitator for their children. This can be particularly challenging for the families of students with disabilities. They may need suggestions regarding how to differentiate their children's learning techniques and be provided guidance on how to modify and accommodate learning within the home. Communicating with families and getting feedback is very important. They may need assistance in planning and organizing their child's day so that it includes time for learning, sufficient breaks for other activities, exercise, etc. Beyond the content delivered through remote learning, families can also be encouraged to have mathematical conversations with their children and be taught how to engage in critical thinking through conversations during cooking, cleaning or planting a garden.

Grading

Districts and IEP teams should exercise flexibility to ensure students with disabilities continue to make progress towards their goals on the IEP. Progress reports rather than grades should be considered for students with disabilities during this unprecedented time. When grading/assessing student effort, it is important to note the priority is to assess in a manner that supports motivation, participation, and enhances growth during remote learning. Assessment should be ongoing, related to student's mastery of content, and supportive of their efforts. Where possible and practical, student learning during this pandemic should be formatively assessed. Grading is feedback and communication with an emphasis on learning not on compliance and should not have a negative impact because of remote learning. Only enhancement of grades should be considered.

Every effort should be made for collaboration between special educators, related service providers and general educators when determining progress. Assessments should be as inclusive as possible. Suggestions for assessments and grading practices that most benefit students with disabilities include rubrics, performance-based assessments, portfolios, video responses, audio recordings, projects, choice boards, and other artifacts. The mode at which a student provides evidence of learning should be differentiated based upon student circumstances. The decision to provide summative grades or report cards during the remote learning period will remain local.

Social Emotional Considerations

It is imperative during this time that districts and schools create remote learning that attends to student's social and emotional needs. Students may be anxious and look to their parents and teachers for guidance about their concerns related to COVID-19. Teaching student's positive

preventive measures, talking with them about their fears, and giving them a sense of some control over their risk of infection can help reduce anxiety. Being honest and accurate while remaining calm can help to ease fears and reassure students. This should be done while acknowledging that students' situations and contexts may vary greatly. Utilize trauma-informed practices when appropriate and provide linkages to school and community resources to provide mental health supports. Understanding the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), helps enable school officials to act quickly and with certainty when confronting challenges that affect the health or safety of students or other individuals. Refer to the document here: [Student Privacy Policy Office \(wvde.us/usde-student-privacy\)](https://wvde.us/usde-student-privacy) (US Department of Education).

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, in their Talking with Children: Tips for Caregivers, Parents and Teachers during Infectious Disease Outbreaks (wvde.us/mental-health), recommends that we pay attention and be good listeners. "Parents, teachers, and other caregivers can help children express their emotions through conversation, writing, drawing, playing, and singing. Most children want to talk about things that make them anxious and because they stress – so let them."

Most students will manage well with the support of their parents and other family members even if showing some signs of anxiety or concerns, such as difficulty sleeping or concentrating. Other students, particularly students with disabilities, may have more risk factors that contribute to more intense reactions, including severe anxiety, acting out, depression, and suicidal behaviors. Parents and caregivers should be encouraged to contact a professional if their children exhibit significant changes in their behavior. For these students, this may mean the involvement of your school's counselor(s) or your district's school psychologist(s).

For additional information and resources, please visit *Special Education and Student Support Resources for Families and Educators (wvde.us/student-support-resources)* on the WVDE COVID-19 website at <https://wvde.us/covid19/>.

OTHER STUDENT ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

These recommendations may need further refinement as districts begin to implement remote learning and build a plan that allows for fluid thinking and unique responses.

Based on research-based best practices, the following recommendations and guidelines are presented as suggestions for counties to consider regarding minimum and maximum times of engagement by each student in remote learning activities.

Student Engagement Timeline Considerations

Grade Level	Minimum	Maximum	Recommended Length of Sustained Attention
PreK	20 minutes/day	60 minutes/day	3-5 minutes
K	30 minutes/ day	90 minutes/day	3-5 minutes
1-2	45 minutes/day	90 minutes/day	5-10 minutes
3-5	60 minutes/day	120 minutes/day	10-15 minutes
6-8	Class: 15 minutes/day Total: 90 minutes/day	Class: 25 minutes/day Total: 150 minutes/day	1 subject area or class*
9-12	Class: 20 minutes/day Total: 120 minutes/day	Class: 30 minutes/day Total: 180 minutes/day	1 subject area or class*

*In grades 6-12, rather than dividing daily minutes between courses or subjects, consider dedicating the minutes to a specific subject area or class per day such as mathematics on Mondays or social studies on Thursdays.

Offer consideration to how to best access to technology, hardware availability and bandwidth, and the health of the student and contagion issues in terms of the county's selection of delivery models.

Consider Family/Home Context

Since home will be the new classroom, it is critical that remote learning must work in a multitude of family and home contexts. It is not only access to technology that must be considered. In this time of rapidly changing public health and economic uncertainty, districts must also ensure that their method of remote learning accounts for:

- » Students who are home alone while adults are working
- » Students who are caretakers for siblings or ill family members
- » Students who work to help support their family
- » Students who have special education needs (e.g., children with an IEP, twice- exceptional students)
- » Students who are coping with the illness or loss of a family member
- » Students who are struggling with anxiety or depression
- » Staff who are working remotely and simultaneously planning and delivering remote instruction while also providing care for their families and, in many cases, their own children

Counseling

It is important to provide social and emotional support to students during the most challenging times because it directly impacts their learning and how they view themselves and navigate their world. The health and mental well-being of students should be a priority over learning. Provide information to parents about the most appropriate ways to communicate with and support their children during the shutdown. Additionally, a list of available outside mental health services, social-emotional and physical well-being support should be developed and shared with parents and families in effective ways that meet the needs and accessibility of all families. Potential examples of modes of communication may include handwritten letters, phone calls, automated calls, etc.

School counselors should continue to be available to students and provide social-emotional supports and resources. Prioritize the most critical social-emotional lessons while continuing to provide the school counseling curriculum as much as possible through school/district online platforms. Review the *WV College- and Career-Readiness Dispositions and Standards for Student Success* and focus on standards aligned with student needs and related to heightened stress students may be experiencing. Please refer to the section on Student Engagement Opportunities at each programmatic level for best practices in engaging students of this grade band.

To ensure the needs of at-risk students are being met, develop a plan to check on them on a regular basis. In the case where at-risk students have been provided therapy services in the school setting by a local mental health agency/provider, contact the provider and create a plan to ensure student needs are being continually monitored and addressed. Remind other school personnel of the continued responsibility as mandated reporters and the responsibility to students who may be more at-risk during this stressful time. If abuse or neglect is suspected, contact child protective services immediately.

During this period of mandatory suspension of in-person instruction, school counselors must adhere to the same legal and ethical guidelines as when they are working face-to-face with students. Emergency protocols must be in place to deal with students who may be in serious and foreseeable harm to themselves or others. These protocols may differ according to school and context, but they should always involve informing parents as soon as possible, unless abuse or neglect is suspected, in which case contact child protective services. If you can't reach the student or parent by phone, text or e-mail, you can contact the local law enforcement to request a welfare check. Please refer to the helpline numbers provided in this message.

For additional information and resources, please visit *Special Education and Student Support Resources for Families and Educators* (wvde.us/student-support-resources) on the WVDE COVID-19 website at <https://wvde.us/covid19/>.

SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES

Free Summer Reading for pre-k - 2 Students

The WVDE will provide counties competitive grants to reduce summer learning loss. The process will:

- » Utilize evidence-based research and build on the success of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program
- » Allow counties to apply for competitive grants
- » Ensure each kindergarten and first grade child with high needs can self-select \$50 worth of high-quality children's books for summer reading

Please see the website for the brief of the effectiveness of this process at <http://www.joanwink.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Allingtons-research-1-1.pdf>.

Free Virtual Summer School for Students

The West Virginia Virtual School will waive all fees for middle and high school 2020 summer school options.

- » Students currently in original-credit courses and unable to finish by the end of the school year may continue until July 31, 2020, at no charge.
- » Registration for new courses will begin May 1, 2020.
- » All summer school courses should be completed by July 31, 2020.

For more information regarding WVVS summer school opportunities, contact Gloria Burdette at gkburdet@k12.wv.us.

Free Credit Recovery for Students

The West Virginia Virtual School will offer free credit recovery through the *onTargetWV* program for students who have failed credits.

- » For this year only, available to students who were failing courses as of March 13, 2020
- » Counties may register students for summer school courses beginning May 1, 2020.
- » All credit recovery courses will end on July 31, 2020.

For more information regarding WVVS summer school credit recovery opportunities, contact Gloria Burdette at gkburdet@k12.wv.us.

Free Summer Professional Learning for Teachers

Teachers will have access to several professional learning options leading up to the beginning of the 2020-21 school year. These include, but may not be limited to:

- » *math4Life* online coursework available at no cost to West Virginia educators during Summer 2020 specific to elementary math modules, Algebra I and Geometry math modules
 - *Algebra I and Geometry study guides will also be open for Praxis test preparation.*
 - Visit <https://wvde.state.wv.us/elearning/> for additional details.

- » WVLearns three-credit hour no-cost online courses will be provided during the Summer I course session for West Virginia educators working toward 2020 and beyond certificate renewal and/or salary reclassification.
 - *Registration for the Summer I 2020 session will open April 1, 2020.*
 - *Registration for the Summer II 1-hour courses will open on June 1, 2020.*
 - *Visit <https://wvde.state.wv.us/elearning/> for additional details.*

COMMUNICATION

The plan should prioritize that each student has the benefit of one adult to work with during the remote process. Family and community access to the county plan and direction is essential in a remote learning environment. Suggested guidelines include:

- » Clearly communicate expectations including timelines and expectations with families, students and staff
 - *Be clear, consistent, and concise*
 - *Define words, acronyms, terms, and ideas to avoid miscommunication*
 - *Clearly define communication with students, families, and staff*
 - *Encourage and maintain ongoing two-way communication with all stakeholders*
- » It is important to note all staff communication with students in the remote learning environments should be in accordance with local and state policies and agreements

NEXT STEPS

If the mandatory suspension of in-person instruction extends beyond May 1st, county school districts will be required to create a remote learning contingency plan unique to their county needs. Considerations include the following:

- » Develop a remote contingency learning plan for the remainder of the school year and address if and how summer months will prepare students for the upcoming year.
- » Consider best approaches to honor student work, adoption of pass/no-credit grading, competency-based credit, or other grading methods determined by the county.
- » Prepare to interact with students digitally and non-digitally.
- » Continue social and emotional supports.
- » Review and consider summer learning opportunities to further prepare students for upcoming year.
- » Assure that Special Education students' needs and IEPs are being met
- » Consider "re-entry" which might include additional mental health care, physical health care, blended learning, and county-wide digital remote learning at the county-level in emergency situations.
- » Assess county-level strengths and weaknesses during the COVID-19 crisis to identify address gaps.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have further questions, please contact the WVDE Division of Teaching and Learning
304-558-8098

- » Assistant Superintendent Jan Barth, Ed.D., at Jan.Barth@k12.wv.us
- » Executive Director of the Office of Middle and Secondary Learning Joey Wiseman at rjwisema@k12.wv.us
- » Executive Director of the Office Early and Elementary Learning Monica DellaMae at mdellamea@k12.wv.us
- » Executive Director of the Office of Special Education and Student Service Susan Beck, at sbeck@k12.wv.us



W. Clayton Burch
West Virginia Superintendent of Schools