



Distance Learning Considerations

Delivery Systems for Distance Learning

Schools should try to provide materials for students to continue their learning during school shutdowns using a differentiated approach based on the accessibility of technology and communications. Each school will determine the most appropriate way to communicate and provide instruction for each student. Districts will need to provide equitable opportunities for learning by utilizing alternative methods of delivery for students who do not have internet accessibility.

Considerations for building infrastructure

- Complete a distance learning assets assessment mapping with leadership team
- Determine your instructional model and plan for implementation
- Clarify roles and responsibilities among all staff members

Guidance on learning assets assessment mapping

Make every effort to ensure all necessary stakeholders are at the table for this unique situation, including your early care and education, Tribal, and Community Education partners.

Examples of guiding questions for this team to consider when completing an asset assessment map for distance learning:

- To what extent do our staff and students have access to the internet and devices?
 - What is our current inventory of devices as a district?
 - What equipment, distribution systems, communications methods, and other resources are available?
 - What are our options for providing access to devices and services for those that do not have them?
 - To what level should our instructional plans incorporate internet and devices based on our community's current level of access?
 - What additional training or communication is required to prepare students, families, and educators?
- How will students who do not have digital devices or internet access have an equitable opportunity for learning and instruction?
- What do we need to communicate to staff, parents and students?
- How will we communicate our plan to families?
- What are our current means of communication with families?

- Are these means effective?
- Do we need to look into alternative forms of communication?
- What will our ongoing communication look like during distance learning?
- How can families be involved in students' learning?

Guidance on planning for implementation of multiple distance learning models

For most schools and districts a blended model using analog and available digital tools will be implemented. A blended model will include tools from both lists. Districts should consider what tools are available to their teachers and what additional training, and/or resources are required to support the work? What structures need to be in place (e.g., bus routes for material drop-off, LMS support)?

Examples of analog tools include, but are not limited to:

- Hard copy resources such as, textbook, articles, manipulatives, materials, or activity directions
- Watching televised instructions, podcasts, outdoor observations, and other delivery methods
- Teachers check in with all students individually or in groups, including those not able to join digitally (i.e. phone calls, Facetime etc.) to review assignments, provide instruction, check in on progress, keep connections
- Work is submitted at a central location at regular intervals and returned

Examples of digital tools include, but are not limited to:

- Students log on to learning management system (LMS) and access each of their courses
- Teachers will provide instruction via LMS using a combination of real-time audio or visual calls, pre-recorded lessons or tasks needed to be completed.
- Students complete tasks and submit electronically through a variety of digital methods
- Teachers provide feedback through the LMS or telephone call.

Clarify roles and responsibilities among staff members:

The following examples of questions can guide the leadership team as they work to decide how all staff members can be involved during distance learning.

- What are the roles and responsibilities for leaders, teachers (classroom, specialists, special education, para-professionals, prekindergarten, community education and support staff) and non-instructional staff in supporting distance learning?
- How will teachers work together? What will they collaborate on, and how? (Consider planning, communication with families, tracking special circumstances of families, logistics, etc.)
- At the elementary level, how often will specialist teachers interact with students, and how will they coordinate with classroom teachers?
- Who is responsible for supporting each teacher?
- What are the parent/guardian roles and responsibilities for supporting distance learning (and how will this vary at different grade bands)?
- If technology is involved in distance learning, what is the plan for technology support separate from online instruction (so that teachers are not also providing technology support)?

The following are examples of considerations for teachers (see also assessment and meeting needs for all learners)

- What materials and assessments are available for our use for each subject/grade band?
- How do we incorporate social/emotional learning?
- How can we build in regular ways to support connections, both between teacher and student, and between students?
- How do we differentiate for our students?
- How does our planning stay the same, and what needs to change?
- What are our upcoming learning targets?
- How can learning experiences be modified for distance learning?
- How can assessments be modified for distance learning? Consider both formative and summative.
- What learning experiences and assessments can we develop to get students away from screens or worksheets and learning in their environments?
- How will assignments, check-ins, and other communication be communicated in a streamlined, organized way?
 - Consider creating a week-at-a-glance schedule with links (where technology is involved) for elementary
 - Consider supporting secondary students with tools for organizing assignments, due dates, etc.
- A few additional tips regarding resources:
 - Look at resources available for home schooling and how they can be used or modified
 - Look at materials you currently have access to both printed and digital that support students' distance learning
 - If looking at supplementary programs or materials consider level of rigor and alignment with Minnesota State Standards

Resources:

Instruction Partners. (2020). Determine Your Instructional Model. Retrieved 3/17/2020 from <https://instructionpartners.org/covid-19-resource-hub-instructional-models>

Instruction Partners. (2020). *COVID-19 School Closures: Key Actions, Guiding Questions, and Resources to Prepare for Continued Student Learning*. Retrieved 3/17/2020 from https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aaJebxX_d5upViwPb1uF0YCg_uRRx3_Mn/view

Assessment (student learning)

What are important considerations in developing assessments for distance learning?

When transforming assessments for a distance learning model, educators should keep the following questions in mind:

- How well do the assessments measure mastery of the standards and benchmarks, including both knowledge and skills?

- Do the assessments provide information about the progress that students are making in the learning progression toward mastery of the standards and benchmarks?
- How do the assessment results inform teachers about student learning, equity, and the effectiveness of distance teaching practices?
- How do the assessment practices and tools support a feedback loop that informs instruction and study? Could self and peer assessment play a role in the feedback loop?
- Is the assessment equitable and accessible for all students?

A guiding question: How can we transform current assessment plans for a distance learning model?

Assessment, even in this distance learning period, should measure progress towards meeting academic standards. Formative assessment will be particularly helpful in evaluating student learning, equity, and the effectiveness of distance teaching practices. Equitable grading practices should focus on knowledge, skills and understanding of the learning goals.

There are many different types of assessments including, but not limited to those in the chart below.

Type of Assessment	Examples	Purpose
Pre-assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretest or quiz • Questionnaire • Concept map • Diagnostic 	Screening activity for determining instructional readiness or prior knowledge.
Formative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quizzes • Daily work • Journaling or keeping a learning log • Diagnostic – progress monitoring • Conversations with students 	Get an understanding of students' progress to inform instruction.
Summative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End-of-unit or chapter test • Portfolio of student work • Final project • Project assessment • Discuss/interview/conversation with teachers 	Measure whether or not the student has achieved the learning goal.

There are many resources and tools available about each of these types of assessment. Each type of assessment can be administered in a variety of modes during distance learning (phone, online, paper/pencil, photograph, video, audio). Using a variety of assessment modes can give students the opportunity to demonstrate learning in creative ways. The following chart provides a list of some of the modes for different assessment types and the benefits and challenges of each.

Assessment Mode	Types of Assessment	Tools	Benefits	Challenges
Analog (paper/pencil)	Pre-assessment, formative, summative	Worksheets, journal, quiz, unit test, written work	Accessible to most students.	Requires delivery time. Limits the options for interactions and diversity of responses. Authenticity of student work may be difficult to verify.
Phone calls and/or video conferencing	Pre-assessment, formative, summative	Skype or Facetime, mobile phone and landlines	Likely accessible to students with connectivity issues or who struggle with written assessment. Opportunities for student creativity. Authenticity of student work can be verified with this mode.	Teacher privacy issues if using personal mobile phone.
Digital (online)	Pre-assessment, formative, summative	District or school's learning management system (LMS), online quiz tools (such as: Kahoot, Quizlet, Quizziz, Sli.do), online presentation tools, written work	Quick information on student learning and can be engaging for students.	Unequal access for students who don't have internet and/or devices. Authenticity of student work may be difficult to verify.

Assessment Mode	Types of Assessment	Tools	Benefits	Challenges
Digital (photo/audio/video upload)	Pre-assessment, formative, summative	Social learning platform (such as Flipgrid), mobile phone or tablet cameras	Likely accessible for students who struggle with written assessment. Opportunities for student creativity.	Requires an LMS or email account to connect with the teacher. Teacher privacy issues if using personal mobile phone.

Questions regarding teaching and instruction can be sent to Doug Paulson, Director of Academic Standards and Instruction at MDE.Academic-Standards@state.mn.us.