McHenry Elementary School District #15
Remote Learning Plan During COVID 19

Highlights from ISBE's Remote Learning Document are provided below:

(Use this link to jump for guidelines for District 15.)

What is Remote Learning?
> A remote learning day is defined as an educational program designed to provide continuation of learning for students under conditions that prohibit the learner and instructor from being in the same physical space.

Essential Instructional Recommendations
We strongly encourage:
- Planning for remote learning that respects the needs of all students and staff
- Implementing remote learning that attends to the diversity of each community to ensure that all students have access to equitable educational opportunities
- Meticulously documenting the best efforts possible being made under the current emergency conditions with regard to students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Section 504 Plans
- Structuring active student engagement with learning in accordance with the age appropriate thresholds
- Selecting content for remote learning that is aligned to standards, relevant, and appropriate for each student
- Practicing consistent communication with students, families, and staff to understand how the health emergency is impacting them

Essential Grading Recommendations
- The emphasis for schoolwork assigned, reviewed, and completed during the remote learning period is on learning, not on compliance
- Grading should focus on the continuation of learning and prioritize the connectedness and care for students and staff. All students should have the opportunity to redo, make up, or try again to complete, show progress, or attempt to complete work assigned prior to the remote learning period in that time frame. A focus on keeping children emotionally and physically safe, fed, and engaged in learning should be our first priority during this unprecedented time.

Ultimate Aim
The ultimate goals of these recommendations are to provide direction, information, and resources to ensure that:
- All students have opportunities for continued learning that focuses on critical standards
- Districts work to minimize instructional loss

- Students and families are given routines and structures to ensure they stay connected to schools and learning

To accomplish these goals, we uphold the following principles in this document:
- All students and families should have access to quality educational materials and to the supports needed to successfully access those materials
- Given the reality of the digital divide, most schools may need to provide digital and nondigital access to content
- It is still possible and imperative that students access meaningful/high-quality educational materials that align to state standards
- It is imperative that students and schools/teachers maintain a personal connection that supports necessary, rigorous academic work in a manner that is respectful of students' contexts (their mindset, feelings, responsibilities, etc.)
- Simplicity is best during this time -- simplicity of the framework, of communication structures, of expectations
- Support the whole child -- their mental health, nutritional needs, and safety needs
- Parents will need access to clear information and ample resources
- Teachers may need support, encouragement, and compassion to ensure their success and resilience

Finally, consider:
- All means all. Districts must seek to implement remote learning that addresses the needs of all students and families by taking into consideration language, diverse learning needs, home living situation, legal status, access to technology, access to parental support, and access to transportation. Our most vulnerable student populations still need us most.
- Underpinning these recommendations is the need for resilience, critical and creative thinking, thoughtful responsiveness, and empathy to help ensure that students continue to grow personally, academically, and linguistically.

Communicating with Students
- Maintain classroom customs and norms as much as possible
- Remind students how to best communicate with the teacher and, when appropriate, peers (a social-emotional learning opportunity)
- Ensure all students have access to information through at least one form of communication (mail, packets dropped off by bus driver or picked up, phone, video, email) • Set guidelines for teacher response times
- Maintain regular communication and set a minimum threshold for contact

Communicating with Families
- Avoid educational jargon and define terms to ensure understanding
- Survey families to identify needs and follow through to provide for those needs.
- To the extent possible, communicate with families in the language they are most

comfortable
- Provide recommendations on how to support the whole child
- Solicit actionable feedback
- Provide timely information Communicating with and Among Staff
- Establish norms for communication
- Include all relevant staff members, especially paraprofessionals and related service providers
- Develop and follow a communication plan:
  - Address educational issues
  - Provide professional support

Health and Wellness

The health and wellness of all Illinois staff and students is the fundamental priority at this time. Health and safety concerns are paramount in all work that must be done in person or in a specific place. With remote learning and work schedules for many adjusted, health is an even more important foundation for adults and children to be ready to engage with the world. Below are some recommendations districts can provide to their stakeholders to support the health and safety of district staff members, families, caregivers, and students:

- **Underlying Health Conditions:** Talk with staff and families of children who have medical diagnoses (chronic lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, serious heart conditions, immunocompromised, undergoing cancer treatment, severe obesity, diabetes, kidney failure) to reinforce the importance of checking in with their primary doctor about health maintenance at this time and emphasize the importance of having enough of their prescription medications available.
- **COVID-19:** Encourage parent communication with primary care providers about how COVID-19 may impact their child's health. Should parents suspect a Covid-19 infection, they should review with their provider the signs, symptoms, and treatment for their child, including what constitutes a medical emergency where immediate 911 attention would be warranted.
Primary Care Givers: If the family's child doesn't have a primary care provider, they should contact https://www.illinois.gov/hfs/MedicalPrograms/AllKids/Pages/default.aspx or 1-866-ALL-KIDS (1-866-255-5437).
- **Diet:** Students and staff should eat three healthy meals a day that include fruits, vegetables, and protein. Families that are having difficulty getting sufficient meals should look at possible resources from schools or local governments. Avoid unhealthy snacking to alleviate stress. Teachers should encourage parents to allow their children to participate in meal preparation to encourage healthy eating habits.
- **Sleep Guidelines:** Students aged 3 – 5 years old need 11 to 13 hours of sleep. Students aged 5 – 10 years old need 10 to 11 hours. Students aged 11 – 18 years old need 9 to 10 hours

- **Exercise:** Gross motor movement is more important now than ever but can also be more difficult to achieve with an adjusted schedule and social distancing. Children and adolescents age 6 and older need at least an hour a day of physical activity. Most of the hour should be either moderate or vigorous aerobic activity. Vigorous activity should be included at least three days a week. Parents should keep social distancing in mind when arranging for physical activity, and some may not have access to a safe place to do this. At the very least, a vigorous walk around their neighborhood where active conversation occurs about their immediate environment (houses, trees, animals, neighbors) or a developmentally appropriate conversation about what is going on in the world and why it's so different from the norm. Other examples of moderate activity are sweeping the floor, walking briskly, dancing, vacuuming, washing windows, yardwork. More vigorous activity could involve a bike ride, playing tag with siblings or parents, and taking the family dog for a run.

- **Hydration:** An altered schedule and environment where students aren't walking by a drinking fountain several times a day mean that it is more difficult for them to stay hydrated. An easy rule to follow would be for a child to drink an 8 oz. glass of water for every year they are old, with a maximum of eight glasses of water for ages 8 and up. This is in addition to whatever else they are drinking. It is important to remember that sugary drinks (soft drinks, cans of ice tea, "sport" drinks) should be minimized, as they are not healthy and actually create more thirst.

- **Practicing Good Hygiene:** Routines are out of sort but practicing good hygiene should not go to the wayside. Teachers should encourage parents to promote independence with these activities, so children can set themselves up for a lifetime of healthy hygiene habits. Many dental offices are closed, so brushing your teeth twice a day is even more important. Hand hygiene is important to practice, especially whenever returning from outside -- wash hands for 40 seconds with soap and water. Regular bathing, changing clothes, and involving children in cleaning the house are all good ways to have children make the connection between hygiene and health.

- **Stress Management:** It goes without saying that this is a stressful situation for all of us. Being mindful of the overall heightened stress level is important because the goal of remote learning is not to add stress, but to maintain learning, to the extent that this is possible under current circumstances. Everyone has different tools to manage stress, and it is important to prioritize healthy mechanisms (e.g., exercise, mindful breathing, talking about feelings, adequate sleep) over less healthy ones (e.g., denial of circumstances, stress eating, escapism via excessive video gaming or binge watching shows).

- **Resources:** There are many resources for families to use and explore in terms of health maintenance in this time. They should seek credible information from their primary care provider, local government, Illinois Department of Public Health, or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Content Delivery

ISBE understands that remote content delivery will be a new and challenging endeavor for many districts and their educators, and that it involves more than just printing non-digital materials, uploading files, and sharing links to media content. Delivering remote content is a skill that must be developed, and districts should provide the support, resources, and professional development needed for educators to accomplish remote learning. These recommendations provide support across the continuum from printed instructional materials to fully online curricula.

Content Delivery Best Practices
- Be present and fully engaged as the instructor. Short, daily or weekly videos or phone calls can help the instructor connect with, reassure, and provide students with encouragement.
- Work within grade-level and or content-specific teams to support the development of remote learning. Remote teaching, if not done collaboratively, can become burdensome and tedious. Teachers should be encouraged to leverage the expertise and insight of novice and veteran teachers to fully support the creation of engaging, effective lessons for all learners (e.g., twice-exceptional children, Multilingual Learners, etc.).
- Focus on engaging and accessible learning materials and techniques. Prioritize minilessons and short mini-lectures to keep students engaged. Incorporate mixed media content, such as television clips, newspapers, maps, and political cartoons and interactive web-based, free software tools, etc., to keep students engaged and excited about learning.
- Remain flexible with pacing and student assignments. Students with non-traditional schedules and diverse learning styles can stay engaged, connected, and abreast of learning expectations if all assignments and accompanying resources offer student choice and are posted at the beginning of the week and are due by the end of the week or before the start of the next week.

Non-Digital Remote Learning
- Non-digital learning materials should include information that, when possible, includes multiple modes of representation of content (e.g., text, diagrams, graphic organizers, large print, manipulatives, maps and illustrations), in color and black and white, to help students and parents grasp previous content. There should be multiple ways for children to demonstrate their developing understandings.
- Instructions for projects and activities should be provided in clear language free of jargon to support parents as they support their children at home.
- Remote learning resources and materials, including library books, etc., to the extent possible, should be made available at food pickup sites, delivered by school bus, etc. Another method of distribution of academic materials is the use of drive-thru lines, in which parents and guardians are given learning materials by essential staff members when they drive to the school building.
- If possible, districts should collaborate with internet service providers and local governmental agencies to attempt to provide cellular devices and free Wi-Fi to all households.
- Leverage the district's mass communication resources to text students and families with links to content that is accessible by cellphone, when possible.

Digital Remote Learning
- If digital learning is viable within your district or with specific groups of students, provide the various resources, with explanations on when and how to use those resources.
- Resources should help teachers use a combination of technology and media in the creation and delivery of content. The selection of digital platforms and tools is a local decision dependent on local acceptable use policies. Educators are encouraged to consider ways to use available technologies to increase the number of homogeneous and heterogeneous discussion groups in which students can collaborate and respond to one another's ideas. Teachers can monitor, prompt, and cue the students' work and provide ongoing feedback.

Supporting Student Engagement During Remote Learning
The amount of student engagement districts should aim for is inclusive of digital interaction and assigned work. This is not inclusive of non-graded enrichment opportunities, which ISBE encourages teachers and families to provide. The thresholds in the table below could be inclusive of project time that spans multiple days, independent work, and direct teacher engagement. The thresholds do not represent expectations of engagement with educational products or web-based platforms.

When planning, districts should consider:
- Students may or may not have a consistent caregiver who can work with them every day. Ensure that instructions are written so that the student can understand them independently.
- Using headings, bullet points, appropriate text size, boldness, and color to create a clear workflow for students to follow.
- These questions when designing remote learning experiences:
  - How will a student know where to start?
  - How will a student know what to do next?
  - How will a student know when the work is successfully completed?
  - How will the district know a student completed an activity?

The following recommendations and guidelines are presented as suggested minimum and maximum times of engagement by each student in remote learning activities.

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: 30 minutes/day Total: 180 minutes/day	1 subject area or class

Further, we encourage teachers to give additional optional work, engagement opportunities, and enrichment opportunities (e.g., independent research projects) as long as it is made clear to students and families that the work is optional and will not negatively impact a student's grade. Additional engagement is especially important for primary grades, where it is not developmentally appropriate to expect a student to attend to academic tasks for a long period of time. Instead, students and families should be supported in having access to varied enrichment opportunities. In addition, students and families are encouraged to support academic skills and social-emotional health through activities that extend beyond assigned remote learning work.

Grading
Pass/Incomplete (changed from Pass/Fail)

The recommendations on grading are based upon the principle of no educational harm to any child. This pandemic and the statewide suspension of in-person instruction – the first in modern history – has impacted our entire society. The recommendations on grading during this period of unprecedented crisis offers direction to school leaders for pass/incomplete options (not pass/fail). The advisory group expects that student learning continues during the remote learning period. The group does not want a negative impact on students. In place of an "F," for example, the recommendation is for an "incomplete" that can be made up when the remote learning period ends. Individual student engagement or disengagement will be addressed locally. There are factors outside of the control of the school system with learning being moved off site; therefore, the aim is that student grades are not lowered as a result of remote learning.

ISBE recommends that a student who is not able to be engaged, or who chooses to disengage, in remote learning should receive an incomplete or no grade. Document every attempt made to engage the student; it is very possible the student is experiencing circumstances out of their control. Where possible, the content from remote learning should be made up after the transition back to regular in-person school attendance resumes (summer school, August school, other).

Focus on learning and not on compliance. Grading should be used for coaching.

If students cannot or do not complete the work, there may be an incomplete grade assigned and a return to work incomplete remediation period.

District #15 Guidelines

- During remote learning, teachers must provide students/families an email (Pre K to 5) or post in Google Classroom (6-8) by 9:00 AM daily that equate to no more than 5 hours of participation. Staff members will document all attempts to communicate with the student/family in the event that the student is not completing the work or participating in the learning. Focus should be on student learning and not assignment completion or due dates.
- If a family does not have email, school administration and the staff member will work together to facilitate communication.
- Staff should gather authentic student artifacts from students to enable educators to provide relevant feedback for student learning.
- It is recommended to not introduce new content during remote learning days for elementary students. In middle school, new instruction can take place. However, the guidelines are suggesting that instructors take into account the needs of middle schoolers and their ability to learn independently.
- To optimize learning, it is recommended to provide cross-curricular activities that include multiple subject areas for elementary students. Middle Schools students will work with each subject area through a Google Classroom.
- It is suggested all teachers will be available from home from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM to support student learning and answer any questions. However, we understand the need to be flexible with this time frame. Please communicate with your families the times you are available.
- Elementary and Middle School certified staff work-day:
    - 8:30 to 9:00 - planning and preparations, teacher check-in with building admin, etc.
    - 9:00 - Learning activities are emailed to Pre K - 5 students/parents; or posted in Google Classroom for 6 - 8
    - 9:00 to 2:00 - 5-hour block of student engagement, instruction, supervision, monitoring as needed. Learning activities will follow the guidance from ISBE

- ○ 2:00 to 3:30 - assessment of student work, collaboration with staff, professional responsibilities
- School Psychologists, OTs, PTs, ESL staff, Reading Teachers, Social Workers, SPED Resource, SPED Instructional Teachers, Speech Pathologists, and School Nurses will be available to teachers, parents and students on the remote learning days and may be issued an assignment from their building administrator or District administrator in lieu of planning a lesson. More detailed information will come from the EL and SPED departments.
- Elementary specials teachers will be available to classroom teachers, send the equivalent amount of activities to classroom teachers based on the amount of times normally spent in that special during the week, and may be issued an assignment from their building administrator in lieu of monitoring student activity
- Middle School specials teachers will use Google Classroom to communicate with the students that would be in that special during the remote closure day(s).
- Specialists or Case Managers are expected to reach-out, individually, to families of students on their case-load to share activities that coincide with related services.

Access to Technology
- Through our District's distribution plan, a little less than 2,000 devices have been sent home with our McHenry D15 students.
- Teachers must recognize that some students will be using a device besides a Chromebook to complete digital work.
- Teachers will utilize Gmail, Google Classroom, Seesaw, etc. to monitor and track student work.
- It is suggested all teachers will be available from home from 9:00 to 2:00 to support student learning and answer any questions. However, we understand the need to be flexible with this time frame. Please communicate with your families the times you are available.
- Email and video chats will be available as needed for communication between teachers and students or between staff members.

Ensure that non-electronic materials are made available for students participating in the program who do not have access to the required technology or to participating teachers or students who are prevented from accessing the required technology.
- The school staff will work with individual families to accommodate as needed (e.g. access to free Internet, provide paper copies of work, etc.).
- If there is a power outage or another issue out of the family's control; staff will work with the student/parent to make arrangements for an opportunity for learning to take place.

Ensure appropriate learning opportunities for students with special needs
- Students with special needs will have assignments modified or provided based on their IEP goals from their special education teacher or related service provider.

Monitor and verify each student's participation in learning

Pre K - 2 (recommendations for **suggested** activities from ISBE to demonstrate continuation of learning)

- Photos of artifacts - Parent/caregiver submit a photo of student work and the teacher provides standards-based feedback.
- Collected physical artifacts - These can be collected periodically or at conclusion of the remote learning period.
- Parent phone calls - Teacher interacts with the child to assess identified skills/tasks.
- Video student skills - Parent/caregiver takes video of student completing tasks and shares with the teacher utilizing a district-approved platform like Seesaw, Google Classroom, email, etc.
- District-supported web-based programs, like Seesaw, Book Creator, Pearson Realize, etc.
- Or other means as you see fit

3-5: (In addition to the Pre K- 2, these are additional **suggestions** from ISBE to demonstrate continuation of learning)

- teacher/student collaboration through Gmail, Google Classroom, Seesaw posts, video chats, etc
- performance based assessments
- portfolios
- journals
- discussion posts
- video responses
- audio recordings
- projects
- choice boards
- or other means as you see fit

6-8: (In addition to the 3-5, these are additional **suggestions** from ISBE to demonstrate continuation of learning)

- student created videos
- problem based learning projects
- self-reflections
- self-evaluations of learning
- the goal is to focus on ensuring core standards are being met for success in the next grade level
- or other means as you see fit

It is not the intention of remote learning for parents to become the sole provider of educational content, but schools will rely on their support. With a strong partnership between homes and schools, we can keep students progressing forward during an unprecedented time. We recognize

that we are asking middle school students to become independent learners and while some are ready, others are not and may require support.

Staff Development
- Staff development for remote instruction will be provided throughout the closure.
- Further information will come from your building admin as well as the Learning Services department.
- It is important to remember to keep it simple and start with the tools you and your students are familiar with using.

Special Education and EL
- The District SPED and EL departments will provide additional details for those respective programs.

District 15's Remote Learning Plan will be reviewed periodically to enhance our learning plans for students, staff and parents.