CTEDTECH
Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology

55 Farmington Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105
(860) 622-2224
www.ct.gov/ctedtech

Guidance and Resources for Remote Learning

Districts facing the possibility of school closings may develop plans that leverage technology to support educational continuity. While tools, approaches, and levels of connectivity may vary by community, digital learning holds great promise in keeping students engaged and learning outside of school. In developing continuity plans, districts should take into several key considerations:

- Staff Preparedness: How ready are educators to support online learning using current and possibly new tools to communicate and collaborate with students? Do educators have the devices, broadband connections, and skills needed to do so effectively outside of school? Consider that many teachers and administrators have families of their own who may be affected by school closures. What central office staff supports are available to assist educators before and during school closings?

- Student Preparedness: While survey data indicates that nearly three-quarters of high schools and more than half of middle schools in Connecticut run 1:1 computer programs, with devices dedicated to individual students, an estimated eight percent of K – 12 learners in our state do not have Internet connections at home. And many students — whether connected or not — have individualized education plans (IEPs), varying levels of language proficiency, and other situations that may make it difficult to shift to an online-only learning experience. How will schools support learners who need more intensive accommodations, with the goal of providing equal opportunities for all students? School leaders should consider a mix of online and analog (e.g., print) resources that students can leverage in both facilitated (if possible) as well as self-paced instruction.

Taking these and other factors into account, public school leaders may find the following resources helpful in considering plans for remote learning:

- Your Technology Toolset: Districts already have a set of tools they use to organize, facilitate, and assess learning. Typically these fall into "stacks," such as Google Chromebooks paired with Google Classroom and the G Suite of collaboration apps. Other districts may use Microsoft, Apple, or other combinations of technologies, along with collections of digital books and apps that support specific learning objectives. Teachers may leverage general-purpose applications to record and share instructional videos with students. Work with your district's technology and instructional leadership teams to identify the tools your staff and students are familiar with, and avoid introducing new tools at the last minute, if possible.

- eLearning Days: This compendium of state policies offers a useful implementation checklist on pages 10 – 12, addressing issues from teacher preparation and supports to accommodations for students with special needs: https://www.digitallearningcollab.com/s/DLC_eLearning2019.pdf

- Extended Closure Digital Learning Compendium: Developed from members of the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) user form, with

excellent tools, resources, and considerations to help ensure equitable opportunities to learn outside of school for extended periods of time: https://docs.google.com/document/d/13y172-dmlv1boxzyZ7Dsw24J-r-LX9WP7p_buoGpBOs/edit

- Alternative School Sessions: This plan comes from Jonathan Costa of EdAdvance with input from the Technology Committee of the Connecticut Association for Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), intended to foster conversations about alternative learning sessions. While not finalized or endorsed by any State agency, it may provide assistance in planning for remote learning. Some Connecticut districts have used the document to plan for alternative learning opportunities in the event of extended school closings: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DAS/CTEdTech/documents/CAPSS_ProposedALDPlanVersion4.pdf

- Resources for Teaching Online Due to School Closures: This lengthy post from primary school teacher Kathleen Morris provides a sweeping overview of distance-learning considerations: balancing online and offline time, providing realistic goals for students and their families, and lots of checklists and templates for use in planning: https://www.theedublogger.com/teaching-online-school-closures/

- Continuity Considerations: This excellent overview provides guiding questions that take into account existing practices and tools in the context of your district's culture and resources: www.nextvista.org/advice/continuity/index.phtml

- Plans and Lessons Learned: This crowdsourced drive of digital learning plans reflects the lessons learned from leaders in international schools, including many in Asia, that have been closed for weeks but are still delivering instruction remotely: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1VipbmytyUVINjIQ2VsxS5zezVgsfUFJb

  Another set of resources that derive heavily from overseas communities that have experienced extended school closings comes from Enduro Learning: https://edurolearning.com/emergency-school-closures/