



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**TO:** Superintendents of Schools

**FROM:** Desi D. Nesmith, Deputy Commissioner of Academics and Innovation

**DATE:** September 4, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Hybrid and Remote Instruction

As a new school year commences and you return to the critical mission of providing students across the state with equitable learning opportunities, we understand that teaching as you have always known it has changed. We also recognize and appreciate the immense amount of work that has gone into planning for high-quality instruction that reaches all students in Connecticut, whether they are learning in-person, in a hybrid or remote model. Furthermore, we commend you for the efforts that took place in March, when at a moment's notice, with limited guidance and resources, you had to pivot to provide online and distanced learning opportunities for your students in ways unlike any that you, or they, had ever experienced.

We are sensitive to the work you are engaged in to reopen schools in an energizing and safe way, which is why we are releasing this guidance later than expected. Having said all that, despite our best efforts, we know that we did not reach all students in our state last spring. We also know that school closures as a result of the pandemic did not create new disparities within our system, it exacerbated disparities that were already there. As a result, it is our responsibility to lead with a laser-like focus on closing the achievement gaps that exist in our state and remove barriers to educating our most vulnerable students. We need to help level the playing field by advancing equity to eliminate the "haves" and the "have nots" culture that has become the status quo in our state.

With that goal in mind, the attached document, Addendum 12: Reimagining CT Classrooms: Planning for Hybrid and Remote Instruction, seeks to assist with just that, and serves as an opportunity for all of us to raise the bar on remote learning. By setting reasonable, yet rigorous expectations, we have the opportunity to elevate expectations, ensure that all of our students are receiving high quality tier 1 instruction, and stay focused on closing the achievement gap in Connecticut.

As an additional part of this work, the Department will be rolling out two new data collections to evaluate and support student engagement. (Attached you will find a memo from Ajit Gopalakrishnan our Chief Performance Officer). These additional data collections are not intended to overburden districts with unnecessary additional work. They will serve as a critical component to guaranteeing that all of our students are being engaged, and that no student is falling through the cracks.

As your partner in the critical effort to close gaps and address real, longstanding disparities within our educational system, we recognize that you cannot be expected to do this work alone. As such, the Department stands ready to continue providing you with supports through our Academic and Performance Offices, in an effort to provide you with the tools necessary to carry out this work.

CSDE has two upcoming webinars scheduled.

- Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. to walk through the data collection form. Interested parties should register at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6569126087998376719>
- Thursday, September 10, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. to walk through Addendum 12. Interested parties should register at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/548021193907601676>

For attendance and tracking questions and support, please contact Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer at [Ajit.Gopalakrishnan@ct.gov](mailto:Ajit.Gopalakrishnan@ct.gov).

For hybrid and remote instructional guidance, please contact Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer at [Irene.Parisi@ct.gov](mailto:Irene.Parisi@ct.gov).

DDN:cg

cc: Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer, CSDE  
Irene E. Parisi, Chief Academic Officer, CSDE

Attachments