

# Distance Learning Plan Template

This template is intended to support Minnesota school districts and charters in ensuring they have meaningful, relevant, and equitable learning plans in place to address the needs of all students. Districts are not required to use this template and can use whatever formats support their distance learning programming. Districts are not asked to submit their distance learning plans to MDE.

Distance Learning Defined: Students engaging in distance learning have access to appropriate educational materials and receive daily interaction with their licensed teacher(s).

It is important to note that distance learning does not always mean e-learning or online learning. It is critical to provide this learning in a format that can be equitably accessed by all students.

School districts and charters can find additional planning resources at the [MDE COVID-19 Updates page](https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/health/covid19/).

## Overall Equity Considerations

* Who are the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other marginalized groups that are affected by the distance learning plan? What are the potential impacts on these groups?
* Does the distance learning plan ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences? Who does the distance learning plan benefit?
* How have we intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected by the distance learning plan? How have stakeholders and community members validated or invalidated our conclusions to questions 1 and 2?
* List all the potential barriers (structural, human, financial, community, etc.) to more equitable outcomes related to the distance learning plan.
* How will we mitigate the negative impacts and address the barriers identified above?
* Once the distance learning plan has been implemented, how will we gather and use the input from those impacted?
* What qualitative and quantitative evidence will we gather and analyze to determine the effects of the distance learning plan?

## Template

### How are we ensuring students have access to appropriate educational materials, including technology?

#### Additional considerations

* If we are using an online learning system, how are we ensuring it can effectively support the district’s unique learning and teaching needs, including the ability to provide differentiated instruction as well as one-on-one support for students who need it?
* If we are using an online learning system, what additional options are being made for students and families who will not have access to this system? How will we ensure that the options are of the same, if not better, quality than the system students and families cannot access?
* If we are delivering materials or asking families to pick up materials, who are the families that will have barriers to getting materials? How will we address those barriers?
* How are we ensuring that a variety of educational resources that reflect multiple and silenced perspectives are being identified and used?
* How are we ensuring that our distance learning model is secure and will not allow for the release of protected student or staff information?
* [Additional student instruction resources.](https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/health/covid19/AcademicStandardsCOVID-19Resources/)

Our plan:

### How are we ensuring students receive daily interaction with their licensed teacher(s)?

#### Additional considerations

* How are we defining engagement and student-teacher interactions? What are our expectations?
* How are families’ perspectives and experiences centered in our efforts to engage students in learning and interactions with their teachers?
* How will we determine and support the various modes by which teachers can interact and engage with students?
* How will teachers be culturally responsive and relevant during their distant learning interactions with students?
* How will we utilize support staff to engage with students and families?
* How will we differentiate instruction for various levels of learning?
* What are we doing differently for students in daycare settings, both on and off school grounds?

Our plan:

### How will we support the mental health needs of students?

#### Additional considerations

* What information will we share with families regarding mental health services and supports?
* What community resources and partnerships can be used or leveraged to help support students and families?
* How can online resources and resources that don’t require internet access be used to support students and families?
* How will we support students who are not connected to a mental health provider?
* How will we assist families in obtaining medical assistance benefits?
* How will we assist students who are participating in telehealth options via school linked mental health providers?
* What information will we provide to help staff and families talk with students about COVID-19 and its impact?
* How will we proactively address bullying?

Our plan:

### How will the needs of students with IEPs be met?

#### Additional considerations

* How will lessons be delivered to accommodate students with 504 plans?
* How will students receive support from their teachers and support staff?
* What online and non-internet mandatory resources are available to help support students with IEPs?
* How will we measure IEP goals? How will data be collected?
* How will we ensure we meet evaluation requirements within legal timelines?
* [Additional special education resources.](https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/health/covid19/spedcovid19/)

Our plan:

### How will we ensure students have internet access as needed?

#### Additional considerations

* How can we work with local internet providers to obtain internet access for students and families?
* Keeping in mind that all areas will not have the capacity to offer internet access to students and families, what additional options can be used to get students and families the materials, resources and support that they need?

Our plan:

### How will meal delivery or distribution occur?

#### Additional considerations

* If we are delivering meals or asking families to pick up meals, who are the families that will have barriers to getting materials? How will we address those barriers?
* If we are delivering or asking families to pick up meals for multiple days, how will we ensure homeless students can refrigerate and store food?
* [Additional food and nutrition resources.](https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/health/covid19/fnscovid19/)

Our plan:

### How will we support our English Learners?

#### Additional considerations

* How will we provide legally required English language development instruction for English learners?
* How will mainstream teachers provide supports for English learners within their distance learning instruction?
* How will we communicate distance learning plans to multilingual, multicultural families including translation and interpretation needs? How will we build collaborative networks with community elders, bilingual staff, and cultural organizations to help with outreach and communication?
* [Additional English learner programming guidance.](https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=MDE032164&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary)

Our plan:

### How will the needs of students experiencing homelessness be met?

#### Additional considerations

* Do we know which students are experiencing homelessness?
* Do we have methods in place to maintain communication with students experiencing homelessness?
* How can we ensure families have access to needed supports?
* How are we utilizing our liaisons, school counselors, school social workers, and other relevant personnel to conduct outreach?
* How are we working with our community to ensure access to virtual or distance learning opportunities?

Our plan:

### How will Early Learning occur?

#### Additional considerations

* Since preschool learners are not as independent as older learners, how will learning be embedded in routines so families are not overwhelmed?
* How will we support families of our youngest learners in using screen time as a support to, and not instead of, adult-child interaction?
* How will activities accommodate hands-on experiences when families may not have a variety of materials? How will materials be provided, delivered and returned?
* How will all learning areas be addressed such as creative play, real-life exploration, physical activity, language development, and social interactions?
* How might family members like grandparents and older siblings support the young child’s learning?
* [Additional prekindergarten distance learning guidance.](https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=MDE032071&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary)

Our plan:

### How will we assess our students?

#### Additional considerations

* What do we believe about assessments and what they are meant to do?
* What are the various ways by which students will be assessed for proficiency?
* How will we report students’ progress?

Our plan:

### How will we regularly communicate with families?

#### Additional considerations

* How are families’ perspectives and experiences centered in our communication plan?
* How are we communicating with families who speak a language other than English?
* How are we ensuring families understand our distance learning model? Use of the model? Student expectations?
* What are the platforms or apps that adults, students, and families utilize the most? How can these be leveraged to get information to students and families?

Our plan:

### How will we address the needs of our tribal communities?

#### Additional considerations

* How are we ensuring our plan is not dependent on students having internet access?
* Who will be our consistent Indian Education point person to communicate with and advocate for students and their families?
* What is our plan to regularly communicate with American Indian families?
* How are we partnering and coordinating our services with local tribes, community organizations, and/or MDE Indian Education personnel to support students and their families?

Our plan:

### How will we utilize partnerships to meet the needs of vulnerable students?

#### Additional considerations

* How are we utilizing programming options for school nurses, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, paraprofessionals, and other school specialists and cultural liaisons?
* Who are our community partners and how are we collaborating to meet students’ needs?
* [Additional resources and guidance on supporting students.](https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/health/covid19/supstucovid19/)

Our plan:

### How will we meet the needs of staff?

#### Additional considerations

* How will we ensure consistent, clear communications exist across all staff?
* How are we providing initial and ongoing training to our staff on our distance learning model and expectations? How will we address problems of practice as they occur?
* How will we regularly observe distance learning and provide feedback to teachers and staff?
* How will teachers continue to collaborate in professional learning communities, grade-level teams, subject-area teams, etc.?
* How are we supporting the social, emotional, and mental health needs of our staff?
* How will we ensure the resources and professional development available to staff include instruction and guidance on culturally responsive and relevant distant instruction?

Our plan:

### How are we tracking attendance of students and staff?

#### Additional considerations

* How is attendance being defined? Are there additional ways by which attendance can be defined or achieved?
* How are we communicating attendance procedures and expectations to students and families?
* How are our practices for tracking attendance equitable? What considerations are we making for students and families that cannot connect via the internet?

Our plan:

### How will we assess and adjust our distance learning plan during implementation?

#### Additional considerations

* What data and information will we collect to assess the implementation and impacts of our distance learning plan?
* Who will monitor impacts? How frequently?
* How will impacts be communicated to appropriate stakeholders, including families?
* How will we monitor whether our distance learning plan is benefitting some students and presenting learning barriers to others?

Our plan: