

Date: March 9, 2020

To: Dr. Kevin Jauch, NCISC

From: Barry Rodgers, Director of Innovation, Teaching & Learning
Maureen Miller, Director of Technology

RE: eLearning Approval Documents for Distance Learning Plan

This memo contains the steps to enact a distance learning plan in Winnetka District 36; a historical context for implementing Distance Learning days in Winnetka District 36; the eLearning plan for consideration; the general structure for implementation; general education expectations; and special education/related services expectations, classified expectations.

Required Steps to Enact D36 Distance Learning Plan:

- March 4, 2020 - Central office met regarding the proposal of an e-learning application and distance learning plan to the North Cook ROE
- March 5, 2020 - Met with Principals to discuss Distance Learning.
- March 5 & 6 - Met with the WEA to discuss the Distance Learning plans and state requirements.
- March 7, 2020 - Posted a notice of public hearing and published the notice in the newspaper. Meeting
- March 9- Met with all staff to discuss Distance learning including an implementation overview, guidelines, and support.
- March 17, 2020 - School Board hearing on eLearning. Winnetka D36 School Board considers the adoption of the resolution to utilize eLearning as part of its Distance Learning Plan for emergency days for the 2019-2020 school year.

Historical context:

Four years ago, the State of Illinois allowed three districts to pilot eLearning days as a trial for potential expansion throughout the state. Then, in November 2018 the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) issued a letter with new guidelines regarding the school day. The outcome of the letter allowed districts to begin using eLearning because the districts were able to define learning and the school day unilaterally. Recently the challenge by the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) and Illinois Education Association (IEA) was successful in legislating the 5 hour school day, but the caveat is that districts will be able to utilize distance and eLearning for the purposes of emergency days.

In May of 2019, the State Board of Education further refined the guidelines for emergency days indicating that they need to be made up on the day of the weather/emergency event. While the administration considered three different options for making up emergency days, the guidance from the State Board of Education makes the

choice to exercise makeup days on the date of the event or at the end of the year the only option to exercise.

At the beginning of the 2019-20 school year, D36 and New Trier Township Schools chose not to propose e-learning days. In light of the possibility of extended school closings and additional capacity to administer a distance learning plan. At this time, Winnetka D36 should move forward with a plan to have the option to implement eLearning for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. The Winnetka 36 School District will maintain the option to make up inclement weather/emergency days at the end of the year, and/or implement an eLearning day to make up the attendance day.

Recent information from ISBE and the North Cook Intermediate Service Center (NCISC) requires districts to approve an eLearning plan per the statute set forth in Public Act 101-0012 of the 101st Illinois General Assembly. In order to move forward with a distance learning plan for emergency days, Winnetka D36 school district must approve eLearning days and submit the plan to the NCISC for final approval. Following approval from the NCISC, the D36 school board will need to formally adopt a resolution to utilize eLearning for emergency days.

The adoption of an eLearning plan permits Winnetka Public Schools District 36 to utilize eLearning for 3 years and is a necessary step to implementing the formal plan for distance learning on emergency days. Currently, there is no plan to utilize eLearning days for any days other than emergency days. If this was ever considered for anything other than emergency circumstances, it would go through the normal calendar adoption procedures in the district and with the Board of Education.

The eLearning Plan below outlines the manner in which administration will address the ISBE requirements, which are outlined in the attached eLearning Program Verification Form (PVF). The PVF is a stock form from ISBE and NCISC. Approving this form permits Winnetka Public Schools to move forward with the eLearning Resolution for Emergency Days.

Request

The request is that the State Board of Education adopts the eLearning Verification Form to move the Winnetka Public Schools Distance Learning Plan for emergency days forward.

Rationale

The rationale for this request is that it will provide Winnetka Public Schools further flexibility in its learning environment, and it will further codify the school year without adding emergency days to the end of the year.

Recommendation

The recommendation is that the Winnetka Public Schools Board of Education approves the eLearning Verification Form for a period of three school years to expire at the end of the 2021-2022 school year.

Introduction:

Winnetka D36 eLEARNING PLAN 2019-2020

Public Act 101-0012 of the 101st Illinois General Assembly permits local school districts to establish an eLearning plan to address student learning in a remote environment. The Winnetka Public Schools District 36 will utilize eLearning as a part of the plan to utilize Distance Learning on emergency days. Since students in The Winnetka Public Schools District 36 are used to digital learning experiences in the classroom, this enables our teachers to take educational experiences beyond the walls of the classroom and comply with the statutory requirements.

Due to the recent state legislation and our current technology infrastructure, District 36 can meet the statutory stipulations to use e-learning days in a manner that permits students to use digital tools to access learning opportunities from remote locations. The approval of the **eLearning Verification Form** along with the **Resolution to Adopt eLearning for Emergency Days** allows District 36 to move forward with the overarching plan for distance learning for emergency days.

Teaching & Learning and Curricular Connections

Student learning activities will be tied to the existing curriculum of The Winnetka Public Schools. Learning objectives align with the content and skills students must master to be successful in each course. Teachers will collaborate on their course and grade-level teams to develop activities in line with the expected curriculum. Suggested activities include formative assessment, student collaboration, and/or activities that provide an extension of learning. It is the expectation that the eLearning will account for 5 hours of activity each day.

Student & Staff Access and Connectivity

Student learning will be implemented utilizing a Learning Management System such as Google Classroom, Schoology or See-Saw, and can be completed on any device, including a district-issued iPad or a home device. Learning experiences may be non-digital in nature if that makes educational sense for the unit and/or grade level. Teachers will be available to interact with their students digitally during contract time on the eLearning Day, and students may also have the opportunity to engage with their peers via digital tools.

Student Attendance

Student attendance and monitoring will take place through the PowerSchool portal along with the Learning Management Systems of Google Classroom, Schoology and See-Saw, and will be based on work or learning activities performed on these days.

IEP and ELL Students

Students will be afforded all reasonable accommodations and modifications outlined in their IEP, 504, and/or support plan(s). Teachers and aides will be available during the hours of instruction to provide additional assistance to students. Students with other needs will have minutes made up over the course of the school year.

Notice to Bargaining Unit

Discussions with the Winnetka Education Association (WEA) began in the Fall of 2019 related to an interest in forgoing eLearning; however, given the possibility of a prolonged school closure, discussion resumed in March 2020. At that time the Distance Learning plan was drafted by Administration followed by a review with the WEA.

Staff Training

Continual professional learning on technology use occurs throughout the year for all staff in The Winnetka Public Schools District 36. Similarly, the staff understands how to use age-appropriate digital resources for student work and collaboration. Technology integration specialists (TIS), content area facilitators, interventionists, RC Directors (Librarians) and district technology support will be available to support staff in the implementation of eLearning and on eLearning days.

Benefits of Distance Learning for Emergency Days:

- Allows for the end of the school year to be predictable and constant, regulates the number of emergency days.
- As structured, it allows educators to advance learning more effectively, given the ability to plan within the normal school year.
- It supports educators with families while maintaining the long-term fidelity of course/class scope and sequence, in that, educators will have a reasonable amount of time to post assignments and are not expected to be available at all times, yet they can still provide meaningful educational experiences.
- Promotes flexible learning and operations in the digital age.
- Promotes learning beyond the school walls.

Distance Learning Structures & Rationale:

There are a number of different ways to implement eLearning within any school district. The proposal for The Winnetka Public Schools seeks to offer a legitimate learning experience for all students that advances learning within each class/course. Students in kindergarten will participate in distance learning, with information being pushed out to parents via See-Saw, and/or take homework, and/or email, and the experiences will not require a device unless adequate notice is given in preparation for the emergency day. The Distance Learning day shall be made up on the day of the emergency day. This plan will maintain a truer end to the school year while ensuring that educational time is compensated for with fidelity.

The procedure for making up school after an emergency day will be to alert parents, students, and staff that the emergency day is commencing and that assignments and/or activities will be

posted by no later than 9:00 a.m. This will allow parents, students, and educators to make Distance Learning plans that advance their classes/courses. It allows for the process of developing and implementing lessons for the day to be collaborative, via educator devices, so that students have a higher degree of continuity.

It is important to note that attendance on the make up day will be counted in PowerSchool as an assignment and that students will have up to 5 days to complete the requisite work. This allows educators and families the flexibility to demonstrate the learning on their timeline with little disruption to the general nor special education programming. Student attendance on the Distance Learning day will count as a regular attendance day for all students.

Communication will be a critical piece in implementing Distance Learning on emergency days. To begin with, the district will develop a communication plan prior to March 30, 2020 that introduces families to the concept of Distance Learning on emergency days, and provides some infrastructure to what this experience will look like for their children at different levels. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document will be developed, based on the feedback from stakeholder groups, to support parents, students and staff with the implementation of the final plan. Administrators and teachers will have support in implementing this plan, prior to any potential weather events. Finally, families can have access to supports and FAQs well in advance of any weather events/emergencies.

Please see the proposed Distance Learning structures for General Education, Special Education/Related Services personnel, and classified personnel:

GENERAL EDUCATOR EXPECTATIONS

Purpose-

To define the expectations of a Distance Learning (Distance Learning) day for general education teachers so that they can adequately plan and implement lesson plans within the District 36 framework.

Definition-

If the Distance Learning option is exercised, the day shall be made up on the date of the emergency event.

Communication-

- It is expected that educators are notified of the emergency day per the usual District 36 communication protocols.
- Educators will post their learning experiences by no later than 9:00 a.m. on the emergency event, and they will base their attendance on the successful completion of this experience within the next 5 days.

Learning Experience Expectations:

- Learning target(s) and experiences are posted by 9:00 a.m. on the Distance Learning day.
- Teachers will respond in a timely manner during the normal work hours on the actual Distance Learning day.
- Students shall have 5 school days to complete the learning experience (see above example for clarification).
 - Attendance shall be tied directly to successful completion/demonstration of the learning experience.
 - This will be entered on the **sixth school day** following the weather event (district office will send a reminder to complete this via PowerSchool)
- Expectations by level of instruction shall be:
 - Grades 5-8 - every class shall have a reasonable plan posted.
 - Elementary - 2 Core learning experiences shall be developed; and each special should post an experience for the students to choose from. Elementary students will complete an experience in 2 Core subjects, and 2 specials of their choice.
- Must be authentic learning directly connected to the curriculum.
- Must have the ability to demonstrate or provide evidence that learning occurred.
- A product is not required for evidence of learning to occur, nor for attendance purposes.

SPECIAL EDUCATOR EXPECTATIONS

General IEP Procedures:

1. The IEP team must determine whether and what level of Distance Learning (Distance Learning) supports will provide an individual student Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
2. The IEP team should discuss these plans at the annual review each year. The provision of special education and related services on Distance Learning days should be pre-established in the IEP.
3. The Department of Student Services is working to create a form that will be added to PowerSchool and ultimately to students' IEPs delineating the discussion surrounding plans for individual students along with the actual plans. THIS WILL BE INPUT ONCE CREATED

District Responsibilities:

1. If the Distance Learning Day option is exercised, it is the District's responsibility to make sure the students and parents can access the Distance Learning activities/assignments

and understand the expectations on a date prior to the actual Distance Learning day.

2. Provide special training for parents and students. They will likely need special training days outside of the actual work day to learn about the Distance Learning days.
3. It is also the District's responsibility to ensure that students have the relevant assistive technology available when a Distance Learning day is implemented.

Special Education Teacher/Student Services Staff Responsibilities:

A teacher should create activities/assignments with individual students in mind. These activities/assignments may include PDFs, podcasts, presentations, multimedia, Google Docs, and any combination of the above.

If the student typically receives intensive support throughout the school day or one-on-one adult support, the same level of support should be available through direct and indirect special education services, including telephone contact, synchronous classrooms, instant messenger, Google docs, or through contracted providers.

Our plan is to ask for individuals to be available on Distance Learning days, via email, to answer student and parent questions regarding the modules.

Related Service Responsibilities:

The occupational therapists, speech therapists, and other related services providers, should operate as consultants when the teachers are putting together the modules for students who receive student services. Although the services may not be replicated through an online platform, there should be plans for the parents to implement some of the services at home under the guidance of the related service provider. If the student does not have access to the related service over multiple days due to inclement weather, or other emergency closing, it may be necessary for the District to provide services at an alternate time upon return to school.

Non-certified EXPECTATIONS

Purpose-

To define the expectations of a Distance Learning (Distance Learning) day for non-certified personnel so that they can adequately plan and make proper use of their work time and professional development within the D36 framework.

Definition-

If the Distance Learning option is exercised, the day shall be made up on the date of the emergency event, and it will count as a day of work for non-certified personnel.

There are many different and essential roles that non-certified personnel serve within District 36, and depending on the role, the experience will be differentiated to better meet the needs of these employees.

Work Plan(s)-

There will be different expectations for non-certified employees depending on the nature and timing of their work. It is important that supervisors communicate the expectations on these days clearly to their employees. The supervisor expectations will be the most important piece in defining the workday for non-certified D36 employees. In general, employees will have four different plans for work on these days, and again, the supervisors will communicate and approve work plans on the actual Distance Learning day. The four general work plans for Distance Learning days are as follows:

1. Employees who are required to be on site due to maintenance, technology, and potential snow removal will have timing and expectations communicated to them via normal channels before and on the date of the emergency event. Standard operating procedures will remain in place for this group of employees.
2. Employees who require student presence (such as classroom associates) will either have clearly defined responsibilities during the work day, as prescribed by the students' IEPs, or they will have a professional development opportunity that will be pushed out via Human Resources (HR).
3. Employees that will not have a clear work role on the Distance Learning day will be required to participate in 2-3 professional development modules that will be pushed out to them from HR. They will have some choice in the professional development modules, and they will be aligned to improving skills related to their jobs. This will ensure that the days are meaningful for the employees while not being overly burdensome.
4. Employees that can effectively work from home on their traditional tasks will have the option to exercise this on a Distance Learning day, and it will only be pending supervisor approval.