



Home Learning Plan Part II: Continuity of Learning

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Questions & Answers

Purpose

This document is intended to provide guidelines for new learning and is a continuation of the [Home Learning Guide](#) published on March 16th 2020. These guidelines are not meant to dictate a one size fits all approach to teaching. Teachers know what their students need and should continue to individualize for students who are ready for more. These guidelines are written to provide points of commonality. They will provide a common starting point and a common understanding.

North Star

These are the guiding principles and beliefs will we use to make decisions about student learning for the rest of this year.

- We have to think of the next two and a half months as a process not an event. Not everything will go as we want. We have to forgive ourselves, our students and our families.
- “Less is more.” Focus on sound pedagogy and what is critical for learning right now or what is essential for graduation.
- Measure only what matters most. For the remaining weeks of school assess only the [Critical Indicators](#).
- Focus on your Social Emotional Well Being and that of your students.
- Focus on reducing stress. If you find assignments and schedules are stressing out students and families then reduce and simplify -- high stress impedes learning.

The Work Day

- We expect that you will spend a MAXIMUM of five hours each day on teaching duties. This is inclusive of video meetings of all types, checking emails, monitoring progress, communicating with parents and students, providing feedback, planning and office hours.
- Work with your building principal and set your daily parameters.



- Each school should clearly communicate teacher schedules with families both through direct communication and a posting on the school website.

Planning

- Less is more.
- Each grade-level k-6 and content area class 7-12 will identify critical indicators on which they will gather evidence, report status and set goals on.
- These indicators will be the only ones on which we all report.
 - [Suggested Elementary Critical Indicators](#): In consultation with the Director of Curriculum and building principals grade-level teams may identify different indicators.
 - Middle and high school teachers, limit yourself to a maximum of 2 indicators per class. [GM 7-12 Critical Indicators](#)
 - Art, Music and PE should identify one critical indicator to teach and assess for the remainder of the year.
- Art, Music and PE should plan one engagement per week per class.
- Interventionists should coordinate with classroom teachers to support students in the critical indicators.
- This does not preclude teachers from individualizing for students who are ready and want to do more.
- Elementary teachers you may plan and “assign” activities that promote practice or exploration that you do not assess. Students can share these on your classroom’s platform and put them in their PLP/portfolio.

Instruction

- Our recommended guidelines for MAXIMUM student commitment each day are as follows:
 - Pre-K : 30 minutes
 - Grades K-1: 45 minutes
 - Grades 2-3: 60 minutes
 - Grades 4-6: 90 minutes



- Grades 7-8: 3 content areas a day (3 hours max in a day)
- Grades 9-10: 3 content areas (3 hours max in a day)
- Grades 11-12: 3 content areas (3 hours max in a day)
- The guidelines above are meant to cover total engagement in school directed learning **and** time in video meetings. This time limit includes times with specials.
 - For example if a 60 minute class 9th grade student has a 10-minute zoom meeting with their math teacher, then their independent math work should be limited to 50 minutes.
- These limits do not preclude all teachers from individualizing for students who need or want to do more. Any decisions about asking students to do more must take into consideration the capacity of the student and their family.
- You can still give kids engaging low stress, low floor, high ceiling challenges outside of this prescribed time that you will not collect or assess, for example “Build a fort and then take or draw a picture of it ,” or write a poem that includes the word peacock,” and share it on our class platform or at our next class meeting.
- You may plan and encourage activities that promote practice or exploration. These options could be part of a menu in which students choose to engage. They may even put the results in a PLP/portfolio tagged to specific Essential Skills & Dispositions.
- Scale back what you are doing. Do a little bit each day. Give yourself and students plenty of grace during this time. Everyone is adjusting and many have multiple roles at home.

Assessment

Your goal is to gather evidence on only the indicators identified as critical. This may be in the form a teacher designed assignment or evidence may come from student proposed work. The gathering of evidence does not need to be a formal or complex process.

- You have the professional autonomy to assign whatever work you think is in the best interest of your students. However your assessment of student work, and consequently your reporting will be limited to the critical indicators. 3
 - [Elementary Critical Indicators](#)
 - 7/8 Critical Indicators



- High School Critical Indicators
- Focus on quality of evidence not on assigning a level
 - K-6 You will provide only descriptive feedback aligned to the critical indicators for your class or grade. (Further explanation and examples will come by mid April)
 - 7-12 will use verification criteria and proficiency scales already in place related to the critical indicators identified for each class.
 - It may be more helpful to think about gathering evidence related to the critical indicators instead of giving assessments.
 - Determine what evidence you would trust that shows what a student, knows, understands and can do well.
 - However if you want to design assessments keep in mind:
 - assessments should resonate with kids.
 - Student choice should be central
 - projects should be relevant to their lives.
 - Assessments should provide options to be hands on and active
 - For example a student may record themselves measuring and explaining how they calculated the area of a room.

Holding Students Accountable

- Assess only the critical indicators needed for your content area. Keep in mind that many families have limited access to the internet.
- Families will also have limited capacity to replace the teaching that normally happens in school.
- Accountability should take the form of descriptive statements about where the student is at the progress report time and final report card time, and a set of clear goals for that student.
 - For example "Jane has demonstrated that she can organize her information following a "this-then-that" linear progression. Next I want her to work on organizing her information by categories.



Reporting

- Assessment is necessary “grading” is not.
- As a system we are going to limit our reporting to parents to only critical learning.
 - K-6: any reporting should be narrative and only aligned to the [critical indicators](#).
 - 7-12 the reporting will be emerging, approaching proficient, proficient, proficient with distinction
- Plan to send home a progress report by May 1 (covering learning after April 7th) and a final report card in June.
 - A specific format for reporting k-6 will come out before mid-April
 - Seniors should make a final “declaration of learning” and then defend that by conferring with teachers using the Verification Criteria.

Graduation Requirements

Do 12th grade students still have to meet all graduation requirements in order to receive a high school diploma?. How will our local board take action to amend our graduation policy? Any change must still be in agreement with the Vermont Education Quality Standards . End of semester final grades should be calculated, reported and transcribed in the school's student information system. Remember to have grace and patience as both student and teacher learn how to adapt in the new platform.

Addressing Students without connectivity

- Teachers in conjunction with their principals should develop a schedule for sending assignments home.. Practice assignments should meet the time limits in the planning section.
- Schools should develop a protocol for collecting physical work or for converting physical work to digital and handing it in.
- For families who may drive to a wifi hotspot have weekly assignments easily accessible and downloadable.



- Any student without connectivity should receive a phone call from a teacher or counselor once weekly.

Addressing Equity Issues (access and beyond)

- Keep in mind this extended closure “is likely to intensify existing inequalities. Families with the time and resources can nurture their children’s capabilities, but families with less of everything will have less to give to their kids (Cole),” and we are unprepared to address all these inequities.
- Our best strategy at this point is to narrowly focus our expectations and then bring as many resources as possible to bear on these expectations. For students who cannot or will not meet our critical indicators schools should be as clear and direct about where the student stands and how the school will address a student’s needs when regular education services resume.

Supporting Families as Co-teachers

- Consider office hours for parents to help them understand and support their child’s learning.
- Connect them to resources they can use with their children (virtual tours, online books, podcasts, streamed performances).

Providing Special Education and Title Support

- Special Education and Intervention Teachers should continue to consult with classroom teachers on adapted assignments. This could mean accommodating specific assignments or it could mean targeted practice instead of classroom assignments.
 - Decisions about adaptations should be handled on a case-by-case basis.
- Close your eyes. Answer this question: If the student could only do _____ it would change their life.
- Focus on what matters most.
- Home is now the Least Restrictive Environment.
- What kinds of resources are available to students and parents?



Video Meeting Protocols

- Schools should consider getting permission for continued use of video meetings here is an [example from after school](#).
- Teachers, you should manage their Zoom settings to protect you and your students from any unwanted access.
 - [How to Keep the Party Crashers from Crashing Your Zoom Event](#)
 - [Scheduling Meetings In Zoom](#)
 - [Manage Participants](#)
- Recommended settings:
 - Establish a Waiting Room for all class meetings.
 - Have all participants enter the meeting muted.
 - Turn on the option of “removing participants.”
 - Turn on the option of “putting participants on hold”
 - Limit screen sharing to host only. (You can allow people to once you are in the meeting.)
 - Set a password for meetings with older students.

End of Year Events

We are working on what these look like and will post updates as we learn more.

- Graduation
- Prom
- 8th Grade Celebration
- 6th grade Celebrations
- Senior Awards
- Junior Awards

Additional Resources

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