

Reading Public Schools Remote Learning Plan-Phase 3

Since March 16, 2020, the way that we have conducted school has completely changed. Over a span of six weeks, we have transformed the concept of school to a remote learning environment. In our first few weeks of remote learning or Phase 1, we focused on student and staff safety, meals, technology access, and other basic needs. Due to the efforts of our food service and technology staff, we are feeding over forty students per week and have distributed 100 laptops to those students that did not have access to technology. In early April, we began Phase 2 which was engaging students in a variety of remote learning activities. Using Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams, our teachers and students are doing some amazing learning activities and reconnecting in a virtual environment. This has been a challenging transition and our thanks goes out to our teachers, administrators, and support staff who have worked tirelessly to make this transition.

With Governor Baker's announcement on April 21st that school will be closed for the rest of the year, our focus is now on Phase 3 of remote learning. In Phase 3 we will continue to follow the [initial guidance](#) released on March 26th from Commissioner Riley and the [Reading Public Schools Phase 2 remote learning plan](#) with a deeper focus on two areas:

- **Further defining the recommended elements of a quality remote learning program, including a focus on teaching the content standards most critical for student success in the next grade level.**
- **Encouraging schools to move all students towards successful engagement in remote learning, with a focus on addressing fundamental needs.**

On April 24, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released essential standards for [elementary](#) and [secondary](#) schools. These prerequisite standards are most critical to student success as they complete this unique year of learning and move into the next school year. These are the standards that our teachers will focus on moving forward for the last several weeks of school. In addition, we will continue to create learning opportunities and address fundamental needs to successfully engage all students in remote learning.

Reading Public Schools Goals and Actions for Phase 3 Remote Learning

Introduction

For Phase 3 of remote learning our overall goal is the following:

To move all students toward consistent engagement in remote learning, with a focus on connectedness and on the content standards most critical for success in the next grade.

To do this, we will take the following steps:

- **Strengthen the remote learning program for all students** by doing the following:
 1. Prioritize meaningful connections with Reading Public School Teachers and peers
 2. Provide engaging core instruction focused on the prerequisite content standards that are most critical for student success in the next grade.
 3. Offer opportunities for enrichment, exercise, and play
 4. Ensure programming is accessible and secure and communication is streamlined for students and their families.
- **The Reading Public Schools will develop a system for identifying and supporting students not effectively engaged in remote learning** by doing the following:
 1. Collect information to understand each student's level of engagement in remote learning.
 2. Provide supports to further engage all students, with a focus on meeting foundational student needs.

I. **Strengthen the remote learning program for all students**

a. Prioritize meaningful connections with Reading Public School Teachers and peers

Our remote learning plan will ensure that opportunities for connection are woven throughout core instruction and enrichment opportunities. Separate group or individual check-ins focused on students' social-emotional health and well-being are all critical for all students.

Our remote learning plan will focus on the following strategies to make these connections. Because two way communication and connections between teachers and students is critical for remote learning, teachers will have regular and consistent connections with students using the strategies below.

- **Synchronous “live” connections**-Reading Public School Classroom Teachers and Specialists will be expected to offer synchronous opportunities with their students on a weekly basis. The content and frequency will look different for each level and for each position. Teachers will use an approved district videoconferencing tool to interact with students. These blocks may focus on social-emotional learning and could take the form of a class meeting, open circle activity, an SEL activity, advisory group, a share, interest-based groups, peer-support groups, or some other engagement strategy. Teachers also may use these times for full classes special interest and/or small group focused classes.
- **Regular teacher “office hours”**-Reading Public School Teachers will offer office hours (minimum of 2 times per week at elementary and 3 times per week at secondary) when students can drop in via computer or phone to get help with assignments and/or check in with their teacher.
- **Individual calls to students from Reading Public School Teachers and staff**-Building principals will continue to implement a system to check in on student’s well-being. Teachers will check in on students who may be struggling, may not be engaged or intermittently engaged in remote learning or to review feedback on student work.
- **Opt-in, interest based peer groups**-Reading Public School Teachers, paraprofessionals or other staff could have clubs and activities such as book clubs, drawing workshops, sing alongs, etc.
- **Counselor-facilitated peer support groups**-will be developed by our counseling staff organized around a common student need.

b. **Provide engaging core instruction focused on the content standards most critical for student success in the next grade**

- **Focus on prerequisite content standards**-Remote learning lessons should focus on the prerequisite [elementary](#) and [secondary](#) content standards that were released by DESE on April 24th. These standards have been identified by DESE as critical for success in the next grade for math, English language arts, science, and history/social studies. The Reading Public Schools will give further guidance on these standards in the near future.
- **Emphasize student engagement in core instruction**-In a virtual world, making core instruction engaging for students is critical to encourage and increase participation. Some examples of maximizing student engagement could include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Curriculum that provides real world applications for learning
 - Gamified, self-paced learning platforms that provide frequent feedback
 - Frequent feedback on student work, with celebration of progress
 - Project-based learning on an engaging, socially relevant topic
- **Ensure supports and scaffolds for students with disabilities and English learners**-General education teachers, special education teachers, and ESL teachers should be working together to ensure supports are in place for students with disabilities and English learners. DESE guidance on English learners is located [here](#). DESE guidance on special education is located [here](#). In addition, our special education department has created information for families located [here](#).
- **Provide a manageable number of lessons and assignments**-As stated in the March 26th guidance from DESE, the overall student remote learning day is expected to last approximately half as long as a normal school day. However, academic time on task will vary by grade level with enrichment opportunities filling in the remaining remote learning time.

c. **Offer opportunities for enrichment, exercise, and play**

- The Reading Public Schools remote learning plan will provide students with access to enrichment, exercise, and play based activities that support their mental and physical health.

d. **Ensure programming is accessible and secure and communication is streamlined**-To support students and families, we will focus on the following:

- Plan and communicate remote learning in weekly doses by planning and organizing assignments, lessons, and meetings one week at a time, instead of day by day. Because teachers and families are juggling multiple responsibilities, this will allow everyone time to plan accordingly within their own daily routines and needs.
- Send out one communication with assignments and meeting times before the week begins.
- Schools will provide sample daily schedules to suggest ways for students to organize their time.

- Differentiate between required and optional assignments and meetings.
- Coordinate efforts on school and district communication to ensure families are receiving a manageable number of emails and/or calls.
- We will continue to streamline our platforms so that we are using district approved platforms (i.e. google classroom, Microsoft Teams and the portal).
- Teachers may deliver their instructional lessons (not office hours or morning meetings) in an asynchronous format (i.e. record a video of the lesson as opposed to asking students to tune in at a specific time to watch it live). This will free up educator time during the day to provide synchronous (live) support to students who may need extra support and engage students in small group or other class settings. It will also provide accessibility for all students and families who have conflicting commitments or responsibilities.

II. Developing a system for identifying and supporting students not effectively engaged in remote learning

There are a population of students in each school who are not being reached in remote learning or are only intermittently engaged. These are students who may have other foundational needs (food, technology, mental health support). The purpose of this section is to continue to identify and address the specific barriers students are facing. We have a moral obligation to do all we can to reach out and engage all students in the Reading Public Schools.

a. Collect information to understand each student's level of engagement in remote learning

- Each school will continue to implement an outreach team that will consist of a variety of staff as designated by the principal. This outreach team will focus on students who are not engaged or who are intermittently engaged in the remote learning. The outreach is for support, not compliance. The purpose of the outreach is to understand the needs that are preventing the student from engaging in schoolwork, with the goal of ultimately providing support to meet those needs.
- The process should look as follows:
 - Gather existing information from teachers to understand current student engagement and potential student needs.
 - Identify students who are not engaging regularly and flag the need for additional information to find out why.
 - Assign staff members to each student/family. This could include the principal, assistant principal, secretary, paraeducators, teachers, counselors, and/or other staff.
 - Connect with families to identify barriers to engagement.
 - Determine next steps to support each student.
 - Follow up with each student/family over the next few days/week.

b. Provide supports to further engage all students, with a focus on meeting foundational student needs

- Identify trends as to why students are not engaging by looking at foundational needs (food, technology access, mental health supports), academic skill gaps, communication challenges, social emotional connection needs, etc.)
- Identify additional supports that should be built into the core program.
- Look to see if specific student groups (gender, age, race/ethnicity, etc.) are disproportionately engaged.
- Focus on foundational wellness and readiness for all students by doing the following:
 - Direct 1:1 support provided by a school counselor (mental health challenges), paraprofessional, technician or teacher (hands-on technology support)
 - Referral to Director of School Nutrition for food insecurity
 - Referral to Network Manager to access help to obtain technology