

Williams County School District #8

Distance Learning Plan

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**In Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic
2020-2021**

Introduction

With a fierce dedication to the well-being of our students, we submit this plan to continue learning at Williams County School District #8. We are confident that our overall plan for instruction provides the foundation for making modifications from face-to-face classroom settings to remote settings. Our foundations and core beliefs of respect, responsibility, honesty, accountability, teamwork, and empathy have guided us to develop a way to continue education during the time of this pandemic crisis.

Our mission, to prepare minds for the future has come to life as administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, kitchen, custodial staff, and community members have come together to ensure that there is a solid plan in place to continue to provide engaging, relevant, standards-based learning opportunities as well as daily meals and technology support for all students in our district.

The staff at the schools have collaborated to ensure that while some methods of instruction might be a bit different, there is consistency and collaboration that spans from Kindergarten to grade 8. There are plans in place to meet the needs of all students and to continue to provide the identified support and services for students with Individualized Education and 504 Plans. There are also plans in place to continue counseling services for all students.

Our plan includes weekly staff meetings that will allow us to monitor progress and make adjustments as needed. We have plans for communication with students, staff, parents, and the community. We have also allowed for professional development opportunities that will not only allow teachers to continue teaching in this new platform but also enhance teaching practices in ways that will be useful in years to come.

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OUR BELIEFS

Our plan will allow teachers and students to build bridges between current traditional learning model and our distance learning model. The statements below show how the district beliefs have guided our plan.

- We **respect** and acknowledge that our students are experiencing many different emotions, responsibilities, and disruptions in their lives. We know that school is a stabilizing and important component of their lives, and we will work tirelessly to ensure that our instructional strategies for distance learning allow for flexibility, compassion, and creativity.
- We rely on and value the **responsibility** that all stakeholders hold dear as they work diligently to meet the needs of all Williams County School District #8 students. We will also provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their **responsibility** as learners during this unprecedented time.
- We will find the balance between **accountability** and flexibility as we develop plans for teaching and learning. We know that even in times of crisis and change, accountability measures that are reasonable and meaningful can bring direction that can calm fears and increase purpose.
- We rely heavily on **teamwork** between all stakeholders to carry out our educational plan and we value the way that community members, students, and staff work effectively in countless ways to ensure the wellbeing of the students in our district.
- We have used **empathy** as a critical guide in the development of this plan to balance our desire to provide meaningful instruction with the strong awareness that our students and their families may be experiencing a variety of stressful situations that we must account for and address through counseling services, teacher-student interactions, and more.

DEFINITIONS

Asynchronous Learning: Learning opportunities that do not take place at the same time, but do allow for instruction, feedback, assessment, exploration, communication, collaboration, and more. Methods for asynchronous learning can include the use of instructional videos, discussion boards, work that is distributed to students and handed back in to teachers, interactive reading assignments, and many other methods.

Traditional Learning: All instruction is delivered in-person with some building and group modifications. Teachers and students maintain a normal daily schedule. Safety precautions are implemented to enhance staff and student safety. Student who elected Distance Learning option during Traditional Learning, students will attend all classes through Google Classroom during regularly scheduled class times.

Hybrid Learning: Students report to school on a modified schedule. A hybrid model of instructional delivery will be delivered through a combination of Traditional and Distance Learning. Students who elected Distance Learning option during Hybrid Learning, students will attend all classes through Google Classroom during regularly scheduled class times.

Distance Learning: based on the description provided by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (ND DPI), distance learning “includes virtual, online, ITV, alternate locations, instructional telephone calls, and all learning that is offered through alternate means rather than on-campus, face to face (NDDPI, Division of Student Support and Innovation, March 19, 2020). All classes will need to be attended through Google Classroom during regularly scheduled class times.

Equitable Learning Opportunities: Providing supports, removing barriers, and implementing solutions so that all students have the access and resources needed to participate and be successful in all learning opportunities.

Office Hours: All teachers are available during their individual teacher prep time. These hours will be between the regular school day of 8 AM to 4 PM. Each teacher will list their available prep times on their Google Classroom page. Distance Learning students are asked to send an email to the teacher to schedule virtual meetings as needed.

Synchronous Learning: Learning opportunities that occur at the same time between teacher and student(s). This will take place with the use of Google Classroom. Synchronous learning may occur between a teacher and one student, between a teacher and a group of students, or between a teacher and the class. We will also use synchronous learning for staff meetings and professional development.

THE THREE AREAS OF DISTANCE LEARNING INFRASTRUCTURE

If we think about these three areas of infrastructure as a three-legged stool, we visualize the equal and important components that we considered as we developed this plan. We will briefly outline how each of these areas are described throughout this distance learning plan that will outline how we will provide full continuation of services through the time of school closure due to COVID-19.

Technology

Technology will serve as a means for communication, delivery of content, professional communication, social-emotional learning, counseling services, assessment, data collection, and grading. Our first priority was to ensure that each family in our district

had the necessary device and Internet service to participate in all learning opportunities. These details are outlined in several sections of this plan.

Instruction

The teachers at Williams County School District #8 have worked to ensure that instruction delivered in accordance with this plan will be aligned with the state standards, appropriate for the grade level, and modified appropriately to meet the needs of all students in the district. These details are highlighted in this document and are integral to each teachers' instruction plans.

Engagement

While we would never choose to be in this situation of needing to teach remotely during a pandemic, the situation has inspired teachers to creatively plan lessons that are feasible and engaging to students when they are learning at home. We are confident that some of the things we learn while implementing this plan will strengthen teaching and learning even when we are back in the classroom. Information about how teachers will design engaging lessons are included in this plan.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

As we developed our plan, we worked to ensure that each student could access all information in a way and time that will remain consistent. Because each teacher is using Google Classroom, they will be able to monitor participation by seeing each student in the daily video classroom chat and through the completion of an accompanying assignment. Attendance for all students, Traditional or Distance Learning Models will follow the districts normal attendance policy. Please refer to the Parent/Student Handbook. If a student has missed class two times or more, the teacher will be informing the principal immediately following the class. The principal will then be in contact with the parents of that child.

Measuring attendance

All teachers, as indicated above will record attendance by PowerSchool as outlined in the Staff Handbook. Teachers will notify the building principal if a student misses more than two classes in a row. The principal will monitor PowerSchool and follow up according to our regular attendance procedures. If sick, the student or parent will need to call the school secretary as soon as possible.

Resource and English Learner (EL) teachers will check in with the students on their caseload and will schedule individual times. Resource and EL teachers will follow the same attendance procedures as classroom teachers.

Measuring participation

The staff will keep in touch with their building principal regarding any students who are not keeping up with the assigned work or who are not participating in the other learning activities. The first step will be for the teacher to reach out to the student or parent, and if nothing changes the principal will contact parents.

Students will submit assignments that are age appropriate each day they attend class. These assignments will be used to assess and evaluate student progress.

For students receiving additional services, the resource and/or EL teachers have developed plans to ensure that each student is receiving appropriate services according to their individualized plan(s). Paraprofessionals will continue to assist our teachers to give additional supports to our students being served.

Ensuring that all students have access to an educator

Teachers will continue with their scheduled classes for the 2020-2021 school year or until the Governor's Executive order is lifted. Each teacher has set up a Google Classroom for their classes. Students have been assigned to their classes, and teachers will make sure all students have joined the class. If students have not joined the class after the first official day that the distance learning plan is implemented, the teacher and/or principal will contact the student and/or parents to resolve any issues preventing the student from joining and/or signing into Google and ensure that all students are accounted for in the roster. The students will attend the appropriately scheduled class for the day to receive their instruction and receive guidance on their assignments. Students will turn in assignments through Google Classroom, or email according to the teacher recommendation for the assignment.

Students experiencing homelessness

Currently, we do not have any students experiencing homelessness.

Ongoing communication via telephone will encourage students and parents to reach out if their living situation changes and to access additional support to promote every student's ability to participate in distance learning to include obtaining a computer and internet access.

Students and parents will be given the phone numbers of the Homeless Liaison to report difficulties participating in distance learning to use in connecting with school personnel who can help troubleshoot or identify options.

The district will maintain regular contact with the local social service agencies regarding ongoing or emerging needs and to connect to resources that can assist students and families experiencing homelessness.

Students experiencing sickness

Student and parent will contact the school secretary and follow the guidelines outlined in the Parent/Student Handbook.

Nursing Services

Williams County School District #8 currently coordinates with Upper Missouri Health for major health concerns. Williams County School District #8 will rely on parents through the COVID-19 pandemic to determine if their kids are sick.

EDUCATIONAL STAFF EXPECTATIONS

Professional Development

Professional development will be specifically targeted to what teachers need to know to successfully implement Distance Teaching and enhance learning for all students. Training for Google Classroom and supplemental curriculum materials. The School Board granted three additional days for professional development. Moving forward, we will meet as a whole staff on a regular basis to share successes, challenges, and ideas for improvement.

The ability to implement this plan rests heavily on professional learning and curriculum planning by our staff. All teachers have received training on how to effectively integrate technology into instruction and how to use Google Classroom. This is to increase communication and engagement as well as to build relevance and opportunities for global learning into instruction.

Topics that we will address for future Professional Development:

- Assessing student learning in a distance learning setting
- Using Google Classroom in creative and effective ways
- Increasing student engagement through innovative practices in a distance learning setting

In addition to the topics listed above, we will invite teachers and administration to suggest topics that will improve teaching and learning in the distance learning format.

Human resources procedures

Administration has informed staff that the same procedures remain in place for requesting professional leave, sick leave, personal leave, and leave without pay. Staff members will notify administration and the administration will monitor as they have done previously.

ENSURING EQUITABLE SERVICES

Ensuring that all students have access to devices to facilitate distance learning

Williams County School District #8 assigns a school owned Chromebook to every student in the first week of school. The parents of student who elect Distance Learning as their planform to start school will need to pick up their Chromebook at Missouri Ridge School. The pickup time will be coordinated with the parent during school hours.

Ensuring that all students have access to reliable, high-speed Internet

Williams County School District #8 families were asked to contact the school if they do not have reliable, high speed internet. Families that could not obtain internet were given a district owned hotspot.

Our district has the infrastructure and professional capacity in place to support eLearning days as an emergency measure in the event of our health emergency that necessitates extended school closure. If there is a power outage or another issue out of the family's control; staff will work with the student/parent to make arrangements for the work to be completed. Parents have received information to call the school at any time during distance learning.

Students who require assistive technology

Students who require assistive technology have been contacted by their resource teacher and provided the equipment that is needed to fulfill their needs as indicated by their individualized plan.

Social Emotional Learning during this time

- The counselor will be working with the students through the teachers.
- The School counselor will be in contact with all teachers to assist with social-emotional learning.
- This will be a time for teachers to maintain and strengthen relationships with and among students.

Ensuring that all classes/courses have the ability to provide instruction for distance learning

When considering processes for ensuring both equity and access to high-quality, age appropriate instruction at each level, we reviewed teacher readiness and accessibility of resources to all students.

Teacher Readiness: Through our Google Account, every teacher and student had access to Google Classroom. All staff members will work to make sure that all classes have a Google Classroom for each class they teach. During this same time, all the teachers will collaborate with each other to make themselves more knowledgeable with Google Classroom. All teachers will be able to teach face to face using Google Meet through Google Classroom.

The teachers will collaborate to provide training and share areas of expertise to ensure each teacher has the skills to post lessons, monitor comments, upload resources, utilize all features in Google Classroom. In addition, teachers received training to record videos to share with students.

By the end of our training and collaboration, each teacher developed a plan that will allow teaching and learning to continue in each content area. Lessons will build on previous learning continuing to grow the knowledge and skills that are identified in the content standards. The emphasis on learning will be to focus on crucial learning objectives in rich and engaging ways that will not overwhelm the students.

Accessibility of resources to all students

Williams County School District #8 plan includes:

1. Daily postings from the teacher with tips and tricks, depending upon grade level. These postings may include readings, assignments, virtual discussions, links, and videos for learning.
2. There will be daily grades taken each week for all grades. These may be through a paper copy where a picture has been taken, a quiz on Accelerated Reader, Curriculum resources, Moby Max, SeeSaw, or through participation during video chats.
3. Teachers will be available to their students during school hours through Google Classroom platform. Teachers have office hours where they are available for Virtual Chat, text messaging, phone calls, and emails where response times are close to instant. Teachers and Paraprofessionals are also available to students for individual Google chats for students that need extra assistance. There will be time set aside daily for asynchronous video sessions and synchronous discussions and lessons through Google Classroom. This has been

communicated to parents through email, parent letter sent home to each family, and through personal phone calls from teachers.

ADDITIONAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS

Ensuring that students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), English Learner (EL) and 504 plans receive continued services. All educational decisions for students with individualized learning plans will be made on an individual basis and consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the North Dakota Department of Instruction's Office of Special Education guidelines.

Our Resource and EL teachers work with WilMac to ensure that all students with individual learning plans will be provided the same accommodations and modifications outlined in their plan. Resource and EL teachers will work with regular education teachers to determine appropriate modifications for any electronic/home-based learning materials. For students that have a majority of individualized education minutes, they will have synchronous and asynchronous meetings with their Resource/EL teacher and paraprofessionals. These assignments may include General Education teacher assignment, or it could be something completely different related to one of the students' goals. All teachers and co-teachers will be available during their prep time throughout the regular school day to support student learning and answer any questions Google Meet, email, or telephone.

In addition, the English Language (EL) teacher at Williams County School District #8 will provide support to EL students by maintaining contact with the classroom teachers regarding what content is being taught. The EL teacher will also support teachers, students and parents with modifying assignments or tests, using an online platform, emails, phone calls, or using interpreting assistance. These supports, regarding content, will reflect the EL student's Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

FEDERAL TITLE CONSIDERATIONS

Williams County School District #8 does not receive Title I dollars. There is currently no Title I program at Williams County School District #8. This will not change during the 2020-2021 school year.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Williams County School District #8 is still working to fill the counselor position. When we do hire a counselor, the counselor will develop a plan for students and families to reach them through Google Classroom, email, or phone calls. Students will have the opportunity to set up individual counseling sessions. The counselor will use a

HIPAA/FERPA approved format for online counseling sessions. Information for students in emergency and nonemergency situations will be available in the Counselor's Google Classroom. In order to make sure that the students can find this information, the counselor will contact all students through the teachers.

The counselor will also provide a variety of social-emotional learning activities and resources that will change frequently. This work will be promoted through the classroom teachers.

PROVIDING HIGH-QUALITY, EFFECTIVE, STANDARDS-BASED EDUCATION

Providing experiences of high-quality distance learning experiences in all grades

- The focus of instruction will be on content that relates to content standards with an emphasis on relevance, engagement, and connections to 21st Century Skills. There will be minimal stress on focused skills and an emphasis on opportunities to put information into action or to find connections between content and real-world applications. While textbooks and online books will be used, instructional videos, simulations, games, short videos, and opportunities for collaboration will also be used. Example: For a math problem, the kids will measure how much milk/water they are feeding their bottle calves. Students measure in increments of $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, and full cups as they pour into the bottle. Thus, showing them how to work with fractions. Another example would be for science class. The student might be working with chemical reactions that take place through cooking, such as the fermentation in bread.
- The learning experiences in each content area will be a continuation of the regular school experience, in which students will be able to access grade-level and subject-matter content. In some cases, students will be able to continue to work on projects and content areas. In other cases, teachers have made logical and reasonable modifications to allow students to continue to build proficiency and understanding in the content area. Instructional support through synchronous meetings, recorded explanations, and guided learning experiences will allow students to continue learning in a way that can be monitored and assessed.
- Instructional materials used will vary with each content area. Some teachers send home manipulatives such as books, learning packets, art supplies, and items to be used in science experiments. Students will also have access to online books and other materials. In many instances, the online resources are

the same as what students use in the classroom. When new materials are used, the teachers will provide clear instruction and support. Teachers will also seek to include opportunities for students to learn content off-screen by getting outside, doing simple investigations, interviewing family members, and other activities that will provide a variety of learning experiences.

- The content that teachers use to build their lessons aligns with North Dakota Content Standards. Teachers have been focusing on the content standards, updating unit plans, and collaborating to determine how to strengthen current lessons. The opportunity to modify these lessons and units for online instruction will continue to connect to the standards in new and creative ways that will likely be used in years to come.
- In addition to North Dakota Content Standards, our teachers will be looking to tie material being learned to real life situations. This could be as simple as relating a book to current events and/or other life skills.
- The technology platform we will use will be Google Classroom and PowerSchool to allow everyone access to educators. Teachers are able to not only design, monitor, and assess learning, they can also participate with the students and provide consistent support.
- Each teacher has developed a plan to assess student learning. Grades will be used to show evidence of learning that is linked to content standards and will be posted in PowerSchool. Parents can review grades through the PowerSchool Parent Portal.

Procedure for when students are not making adequate progress

The Williams County School District #8 staff will take grades weekly for each subject being taught. They will be doing virtual and face-to-face discussions and instruction. If a teacher notes that students are not keeping up with assignments or are struggling with daily work and quizzes they will reach out to parents to make them aware. They will also make a plan to meet one-on-one with those students to determine next steps for those individuals. Possibilities may include reteaching; check-ins for assignments; or possible tutoring. Principals will be informed about any struggling students.

Provisions for instructional support, including assessment and evaluation of work

Teachers are using curriculum materials and online supplemental materials for instruction. Teachers will be teaching in person and presenting through Google

Classroom at the same time. Some programs that teachers will be using assess student work as it is completed, other assignments will be turned in through Google Classroom, email, or by taking a picture and sending it to their teacher. Teachers have the equipment to assess student work virtually and to provide feedback to students after it is completed. The grading policies will follow the current grading policy as outlined in the Parent/Student Handbook.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Synchronous Learning Opportunities through Google Classroom and Schedule

Synchronous learning will follow the assigned schedule, provided by the homeroom teacher, for each student. Students who opt in to start the year in Distance Learning must contact the individual school to determine who the child's homeroom teacher is. Sessions will be recorded and placed in Google Classroom for students unable to attend at the scheduled time.

Traditional Learning Phase (Blue, Green, and Yellow): Students who are in Distance Learning during **Blue, Green, and Yellow Phase** will need to attend all classes through the Google Classroom platform. Teachers will be teaching face to face while being connected to the students on Google Classroom. Instruction on new material will last no longer than 45 minutes and will include at least 15 minutes of question and answer time/independent practice. Students attending through Google Classroom will have this time to ask questions and take a break from the computer screen. Music, Physical Education, AG, and Library classes will be attended at the regular scheduled times. Teachers may assign alternate assignments, which will be posted in Google Classroom, in the event that physical participation is required. Students who are learning at home will not be participating in lunch and recess during Blue, Green, and Yellow Phase.

Hybrid Learning Phase (Orange): Students who are in Distance Learning during **Orange Phase** will need to attend all classes through the Google Classroom platform. Teachers will be teaching face to face while being connected to the students on Google Classroom. Instruction on new material will last no longer than 45 minutes and will include at least 25 minutes of question and answer time/independent practice. Students attending through Google Classroom will have this time to ask questions and take a break from the computer screen. Music, Physical Education, AG, and Library classes will be attended at the regular scheduled times. Teachers may assign alternate assignments, which will be posted in Google Classroom, in the event that physical participation is required. Students who are learning at home will not be participating in lunch and recess activities during Orange Phase.

Distance Learning Phase (Red): Students who are in Distance Learning in **Red Phase** will need to attend all classes through the Google Classroom platform. Teachers will be connected to the students on Google Classroom. Instruction on new material will last no longer than 20 minutes and will include at least 10 minutes of question and answer time/independent practice. Students attending through Google Classroom will have this time to ask questions and take a break from the computer screen. Music, Physical Education, AG, and Library classes will be attended at the regular scheduled times. Teachers may assign alternate assignments, which will be posted in Google Classroom, in the event that physical participation is required. All students will not be participating in lunch and recess activities during Red Phase.

Communication Plans

Families:

For families of students in Distance Learning, we developed a letter and instructional videos that includes general information about online instruction. Any changes to our Distance Learning Plan will be communicated to students and parents. This information is posted on our website and Facebook page.

Students:

Teachers have developed specific plans for how they will interact with students each day. All teachers will check their email messages frequently throughout the day. In addition, teachers can use Google Classroom when face-to-face meetings are not preferable.

Staff:

We will use email/O365 and Zoom to keep in touch with staff as determined by administration. All staff will meet as the building principal determines needed. All teachers are required to add principals to their Google Classrooms.

Meals

The Williams County School District #8 will serve breakfast and lunch in person while in Blue, Green, Yellow, and Orange phases. When the district moves to Orange or Red phase, the district will designate meal drop-off points for students not served face to face. If a parent would like their child to receive the meals, the parent will need to contact the school secretary by noon one (1) school day prior to needing the meal. The school will deliver meals Monday through Friday to the common drop-off point for those requesting a meal. All meals served in-house will be charged as normal.