



Virtual Academy

DISTANCE LEARNING PLAN

COVID-19 Response Team

WILLISTON PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1 | PO BOX 1407, WILLISTON ND 58802

Executive Summary

In April 2020, we submitted our distance-learning plan to the ND Department of Public Instruction and the Governor's Office for approval. Our district developed this plan with guidance from the Department of Public Instruction and the North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders and in consultation with our school board. We started by surveying our families to determine what level of technology access they would have at home, and then developed a learning plan that could meet the needs of all our students. Our administrators and district leadership strategized on how to effectively leverage the existing technology platforms already in use throughout our district and determined whether any gaps existed. Our administrators met with their teaching staff by grade level to further develop communication plans and implementation of a full continuation of grade level services. Our District Level Emergency Team has also reviewed the CDC guidelines and collaborated with the Covid-19 Coalition Partners Emergency Response Team and our local health department to ensure that the proposed full continuation of education services can be conducted with the safety and well being of our staff, students and community partners. In July 2020, we met again under guidance from the ND Department of Public Instruction and the governor's office to upgrade and revise our plan.

Our district's commitment to providing learning opportunities for our students has provided a strong basis for our teaching staff to prepare our students for the next level during these uncertain times. We evaluated our distance-learning plan, researched best practice methodologies, and have modified our distance-learning plan into our Virtual Academy. We are fortunate that the strong relationship between our school board, community, and district leadership, allowed us in the Fall of 2019 to implement a full 1:1 technology program for K-9 with Chromebooks and made devices available for students in grades 10-12. Because we recognize that students learn in different ways and will have different levels of access to technology and structure throughout their day, we will utilize a blended approach to learning that includes synchronous and asynchronous online learning, online or telephone contact between teaching staff and students, and hard copy learning packets to ensure a full continuation of grade level services. When we restart school, we believe in providing choice between in-person learning and our Virtual Academy. We have evaluated contact-time in a virtual learning environment and professional development will be provided for staff who will be teaching in the Virtual Academy.

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Assumptions & Assurances

WPSD#1 School believes:

- Every student should have the opportunity to engage in learning, regardless of the spread of COVID- 19 in our community.
- Schools have a vital role in providing safe environments for students, focusing on both social- emotional and physical health.
- By working together with educators, staff, health care professionals, parents, students, and community members we can solve most challenges.
- Our district will make decisions based on the most current guidance from local, state, and national health care officials.
- Our School Board will ensure our plan meets the needs of our students, educators, staff and community.

COVID-19 Response Team

The WPSD#1's Return to Learning Plan was designed in accordance with CDC, NDDoH, and DPI guidelines. Members of our planning team include:

- Dr. Jeff Thake, Superintendent
- Lori Olson, Assistant Superintendent
- Wyndy McGinley, Director of Student Services
- Lynn Douglas, School Nurse Coordinator
- Leon Walter, Chief Technology Officer
- Jason Germundson, WHS Principal
- Audrey Larson, Del Easton Principal
- Duane Noeske, WMS Principal
- Jeremy Mehlhoff, Bakken Elementary Principal
- Darla Ratzak, Hagan Elementary Principal
- Meredith Johnson, Lewis & Clark Elementary Principal
- Tonya Brenner, McVay Elementary Principal
- Kevin Klassen, Rickard Elementary Principal
- Jeremy Brenner, Wilkinson Elementary Principal

Ensuring Student Success Through Robust Relationships

Vision

The vision of Williston Public School District #1 is to welcome and celebrate the individuality of the students, staff, parents, and community. We educate with passion in a safe and respectful environment. We strive to educate with the highest level of technology. We pledge to prepare students to graduate and achieve personal success.

Mission

Our mission is to prepare students to be successful at the next level of education, work, and life.

In this unique situation, teachers and administrators are using online communication tools, personal phone calls, and positive notes of encouragement for students and families as frequently as necessary based on the needs of each student.

Attendance Procedures

School closure has caused us to think creatively as how to ensure that our students are ready for the next grade level. Attendance and accountability for learning are important during the school closure. Our teachers are currently contacting students and parents through personal phone calls and virtual sessions to determine the family needs and how instruction will be facilitated from home. Attendance will be determined in various ways, including: completed work, online contacts through google hangout, google classroom, learning packets, and PowerSchool Unified Classroom. If students are not completing work or participating in learning, teachers will be contacting parents, principals, counselors, and social workers to work with families to develop plans for student engagement based on the needs of each student.

Ensuring Equitable Services for Students and Families During Closure

Preparing for Distance Learning

To provide education in the presence of a pandemic event or other event where students can't come to school is essential. WPSD #1 staff will continue to follow our professional development plan which will include: on-going training for PLCs, Design Thinking, Learning Menus (See Appendix C – Learning Menus), ELA and Math, Daily 5, SEL 1, Science, Social Studies, Music and PE training opportunities. District leaders will mobilize administrators and staff through Microsoft teams to evaluate additional needs. The method of delivery will change from face-to-face to virtual classrooms with the district approved online platform. Because our district has been incorporating innovative learning opportunities for students through online learning modalities and student menus, we will utilize administrators, teacher leaders, instructional coaches, strategists, interventionists, title I services, and digital innovators to facilitate training for all staff.

In addition to this, book studies, continuing education, and other CEU classes will be conducted as planned and designed throughout facilitators in compliance with requirements set forth by the University of North Dakota office of Continuing Education Department. Ultimately, all WPSD #1 teachers and staff will continue to have equitable access to these PD opportunities.

Educational Services

To be successful in preparing our students for the next level, Williston Public School District #1 believes continuation of education is a critical service we can provide to support our families.

Williston Public School District #1 recognizes that students learn in different ways. We will utilize a blended approach to learning that includes online learning, online or telephone contact between teachers and students, and learning packets (reading materials, worksheets, etc.).

Williston Public School District #1 utilizes PowerSchool Unified Classroom and Google Classroom as our learning management systems. Our online learning resources are all accessible through our district single sign on portal, CoyoNet powered by ClassLink. Utilizing these resources allows us to offer online training, instruction, and support to our faculty, staff and students.

Williston Public School District #1 is fortunate to have strong support from our school board and community. This support has enabled us to implement a 1:1 program for grades K-12 utilizing

our learning management system, district approved supplemental learning applications, and the power of Google Chromebooks.

PowerSchool Unified Classroom

PowerSchool Unified Classroom leverages our existing partnership with the PowerSchool Student Information System to create a learning community for student activities. Teachers have access to powerful learning resources enabling stimulating and differentiated instruction. Students can complete lessons, submit assignments, and interact with their instructors and peers. (See Appendix B – Online Learning Resources)

CoyoNet District Portal

Williston Public School District #1 provides single sign on action to a variety of supplemental online resources (i.e. NoRedInk, Hapara, MobyMax, IXL). These resources are easily accessible via our portal, CoyoNet powered by ClassLink. (See Appendix B – Online Learning Resources)

ChromeBooks

Google provides powerful management capabilities to support our 1:1 implementation of Google Chromebook. The Chromebook has quickly become the most popular student device based on their excellent performance, tools, and manageability.

Williston Public School District #1 stresses the importance of augmenting and continuous professional development for our staff. Our teachers have been attending weekly and/or monthly training provided by our Digital Innovators and Technology Integration Specialists since 2016. We have used these opportunities to prepare our teachers to utilize online resources.

Recognizing a pandemic level event requires a new level of dependence on technology, our Digital Innovators and Library Media Specialists are assessing, assisting, and supporting our instructional staff in providing the best learning environment for each student. Training and support options include materials already developed, virtual team training, and one-on-one support for our teachers.

Student Access to Devices

Williston Public School District #1 provides Chromebooks to all students in grades K-10. Grades 11-12 have the option of utilizing their own device or a district provided Chromebook. Devices will be assigned at the start of the year to all students. Students will take devices home as directed by their teachers or building guidelines.

Assistive Technology

Williston Public School District #1 in partnership with Wilmac Special Education Unit will contact families with students who may require assistive technology to ensure continued access to quality education and services during any prolonged closure.

Internet Access

High speed internet service within the geographical boundaries of Williston Public School District #1 is available from the following vendors: Nemont, Midcontinent, Northwest Communications Cooperative, Verizon Wireless, ATT Wireless, and Hughes Net.

Ensuring Access

Williston Public School District #1, in partnership with our area vendors, will work to provide internet access to all students. The district was able to provide internet access to all students needing it during the spring closure.

Virtual Academy

The Virtual Academy is designed to meet the needs of students who are uncomfortable or unable to attend school in person due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the student's physical presence may/may not occur within the school building, they are still part of the WPSD#1 family whose mission is to "prepare students to be successful at the next level of education, work, and life."

To Enroll in Virtual Academy:

- Students and parents will be required to fill out the online registration stating their desire to be in the virtual academy.
- Students and parents may be required to meet with building staff to discuss the curriculum options, and requirements for online learning.
- Students who choose the virtual academy will be enrolled for a full semester.

Virtual Academy Student Expectations:

- Students will be enrolled in classes in a district-approved, standards-based curriculum.
- Students will be required to meet weekly goals set by their instructor. This will ensure that students will complete the courses and earn required credits.
- Students will be required to meet with their instructor regularly on an online platform for attendance and learning check-ins. A student's absence from the online meetings will be reported to school administrators to determine a plan of action.
 - K-8 Students will meet with their instructor daily.
 - 9-12 Students will meet with their instructor twice per week.
- K-8 Students will be required to participate in an online, homeroom class on a weekly basis.
- 9-12 Students will be required to participate in an online, credit-bearing advisory class on a weekly basis.
- Students must check their school e-mail account and school notification system for messages on a daily basis M-F.
- K-8 Students must use Odysseyware, HMH, Google Classroom and other learning platforms requested by the VA instructors.
- 9-12 Students must use Odysseyware, PowerSchool Learning, Microsoft Teams and other learning platforms requested by the VA instructors.
- Students must complete school mandated tests during the same time periods as on-campus students.

Virtual Academy Parent Expectations:

- Parents will be required to check the school's messaging system/email for messages from the VA Instructor and engage in discussion as necessary.
- Parents are asked to communicate with the instructor about changes in the student's needs and justify absence from required meetings with the instructor.
- Parents will be required to check-out a WPSD#1 device or provide their child with a workable device for online learning.
- Parents will be required to provide internet access and/or request assistance for internet

access during enrollment in the VA.

Virtual Academy Instructor Expectations:

- VA Instructors will be present and accessible online for students Monday-Friday during regular set times to assist students with online learning needs. These times will follow mandated contract hours; however, the administrator and instructor may set varied hours to promote greater communication with students and parents.
- VA Instructors will work with students, parents, counselors, and administrators to personalize instructional needs whenever possible for post-secondary readiness.
- VA Instructors will meet online with students during a supportive Understanding By Design (UbD), project-based, or inquiry based designed advisory class to promote 21st Century skills in communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity in order to prepare students for post-secondary education, job readiness, and/or citizenship. The WPSD Social Emotional Learning curriculum will guide, but not limit, learning topics to engage students.
- VA instructors will seek to build positive family relationships by contacting parents with continual communication about student progress and/or needs for parent/instructor intervention measures.

Virtual Academy Students Services Access:

Students enrolled in the VA will have the same access to student services as students enrolled in the on-campus school:

- IEP/504 Accommodations
- School meals
- Student ID Cards to access extra-curricular activities
- Library books and research assistance
- School counseling and career counseling
- School nurse accessibility
- School clubs, Coyote Academy, and extracurricular activities, if physically possible and eligible under the appropriate Student Handbook.