

Distance Learning Plan

To meet the intent of the ND Department of Public Instruction's interim guidance, West Fargo Public Schools (WFPS) has developed a distance learning plan to educate and graduate the students of North Dakota through the end of the academic year while maintaining the health and safety of students, staff, and community. The WFPS plan will utilize a combination of synchronous and asynchronous online learning to meet the needs of our students. The plan is to implement online distance learning on Wednesday, April 1, 2020.

Our educators will post daily virtual office hours when synchronous conversations can occur through Teams, Schoology, Seesaw, and Zoom. Our educators will provide asynchronous educational videos and activities for our students each week; allowing students and families flexibility when determining an educational schedule that is appropriate and feasible. Our primary platforms for this will be Seesaw at the elementary level and Schoology at the secondary level. While both systems have internal messaging capabilities, students and families may also use district-provided email addresses. Students will be asked to learn, practice, and share evidence of their learning using these platforms. Students will utilize their devices to create evidence of their learning through a wide variety of platforms, from simple Word processing, to Excel spreadsheets, to video creation.

West Fargo Public Schools has provided a district device for each student in grades 6-12. Our elementary students have shared devices in the classroom, which have been distributed to families who self-reported through a survey that they do not have an adequate device at home. We have surveyed all staff and families regarding access to reliable, high-speed internet in order to work with those who do not have it in place to get it secured in time for our first day of online learning on Wednesday, April 1. We have secured several mobile internet devices for immediate deployment, and we are working to secure in-home access through a multitude of free options and/or more mobile devices as needed. Survey results indicate that nearly 98% of our families already have internet access.

We plan to continue to provide assistive technology services for our students that require these devices and will adjust as necessary to meet the assistive technology needs for students through our distance learning plan.

We have a strong coordinator team in the department of curriculum and instruction that provides professional development on a continuous basis with the strong support of our technology integration and instructional coaching staff. These leaders are well versed in offering courses to our teaching staff in a variety of ways and are prepared to provide training for our teachers to meet the needs of our students online.

- At the elementary level, teachers will review their guiding documents and then complete a survey to self-select the level of support needed in order to learn the tools needed for online instruction. Our coordinator and coaching team, along

with our building level Dean of Students team, will support our teachers across this continuum.

- At the secondary level, all department teams will meet to discuss necessary curriculum changes and share ideas for delivery with the curriculum coordinators; the coaching team at each building will support learning the tools needed for online instruction.

West Fargo has put a strong effort toward engaging instruction. We have worked with experts like Kevin Feldman, Steve Dunn, and Kim Marshall. Our teachers are well-versed in connecting with students to engage them in the educational process. While the online platform will be new for most, those who have worked with “flipped classrooms,” “hybrid,” or “personalized learning” are willing to help guide and support others in this process. We strongly believe in building relationships with students in order to facilitate learning; that will not change as we shift to distance education.

West Fargo Public Schools has a strong guaranteed and viable curriculum (GVC) that is outlined to meet the rigorous North Dakota state standards. Our performance on state assessments has been steadily climbing with the implementation of our GVC and we will rely on that structure as the backbone for this process. Each course in K-8 has clearly articulated proficiency scales that identify what students need to know and be able to do to meet the state standards. The instruction and assessment will remain aligned to those proficiency scales, reducing only those objectives that the team can determine may be met through other methods in these circumstances. For our 9-12 courses, we have designed scope and sequenced courses with defined learning objectives aligned to the state standards. Every course has a clear description of what students need to know and be able to do to meet the state standards. Teachers have developed common assessments and work weekly in Professional Learning Communities to calibrate expectations. This collaborative work will continue, albeit in a different format, in order for teachers to provide the best educational experience possible for our students. Prior to the implementation of online learning, each course team will meet to determine any necessary changes to the current GVC in order to adjust to the new reality of what is viable for our teachers and students.

Attendance Procedures - Educational Staff Expectations - Ensuring Equitable Services

All teachers will have two synchronous virtual office hours daily. While the primary purpose is time for student connections, teachers will keep a log of all interactions.

Elementary students will have a staggered learning focus along with a suggested daily routine to help guide the distance learning experience. Each student will be required to make a connection with their grade level teacher through direct interaction or by submitting learning evidence no fewer than three times each week; allowing for connections with specialists and interventionists on the other days. Teachers will keep a log of student interactions to document student attendance.

While our 6-12 students will not be required to work in every course every day, we will have expectations that they connect with every course, including advisory, twice every week through direct interaction with the teacher and/or the submission of learning

evidence. Teachers will keep a log of student interactions to document student attendance.

As described above, our team has designed a robust plan for professional development to meet the needs of our diverse teaching staff of nearly 1,200 educators. This will be led by our coordinators, technology integrationists, instructional coaches, and deans of students. Support will begin the week of March 23-27 with learning sessions throughout the week in a wide variety of formats. Assistance will continue throughout the implementation of our distance learning plan to ensure teachers feel supported and prepared to interact with their students through online distance learning formats.

In the event that an educator becomes ill and is unable to post educational objectives, learning opportunities, and activities, the educator's PLC team will share their coursework with the students so that learning can continue to occur. Educators will continue to utilize their personal and sick leave as needed.

Other than the designated virtual office hours designed to provide a synchronous engagement opportunity for students, teachers will have the autonomy to complete their preparation, planning, and student assessments when it works best for them and their families, as long as students are receiving regular learning experiences and feedback on their evidence of learning. Teams will be required to work collaboratively for a minimum of one hour a week utilizing TEAMS or other e-meeting tools as needed.

Our elementary teachers will focus on modeling online learning processes through their first educational videos for students. Elementary teachers will break things down into smaller components and start with the review of concepts in order to facilitate the online learning process. The first week will focus on literacy along with an interaction with each specialist– art, music, health and physical education, counseling, and library media. Student social emotional needs will be an ongoing focus throughout this time away from school. During the second week (April 6-9), we will add mathematics along with more interactions from music and health and physical education. The week of April 13-17 will see the addition of science and social studies, so that we are ready for “new learning” to start (if needed) the week of April 20. While we aren't pushing forward quickly with new academic learning, we are reinforcing skills with a strong focus on literacy and math, as well as focusing on building the dispositions from our Profile of a Graduate (see additional information [WFPS Elementary Distance Learning Plan](#)).

Our secondary teachers will begin their instruction with guidance for students on the online learning process. These instructional videos will be posted for students to review as necessary. Since students are already in a 1:1 environment, they do have experience with utilizing technology to communicate, follow classroom assignments and expectations, and submit evidence of learning. Secondary teachers will post weekly objectives for each course and take attendance documenting regular student interaction. While students will have flexibility with the schedule for what is done when, they will have clear guidelines and expectations for the work that they need to produce (see additional information [WFPS Secondary Distance Learning Plan](#)).

Instruction in our high school courses will provide learning experiences in order to meet the standards that are articulated in quarter four of each course. Our students

will demonstrate evidence of learning through a wide variety of formats in order to complete the course requirements.

CTE teachers will identify essential learning outcomes for career and technical curriculums. A variety of choice-based activities will be offered to learners to meet learning targets, while providing flexibility to complete activities due to resource access. Simulations and/or alternate online resources will be used to replace lab scenarios. Specialized software will be substituted with online supporting learning targets. Content will be front-loaded for skill-based courses, with labs and capstone projects to be completed in the event school resumes. Efforts will be made to deploy laptops to students with specialized programs to resume activities.

Special Education Considerations - Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) and 504s

In order to meet the needs of all students, including students with special needs ages 3 through 21, West Fargo Public Schools has developed a contingency learning plan protocol. A contingency learning plan is established to support continued work towards IEP goals in the event of school closure where distance learning is in place for all students. Our case managers and service providers are meeting (virtually or by phone) to collaborate with parents/guardians on a contingency learning plan for their child. The parents/guardians, case managers, and service providers collaborate on each IEP goal and how best to meet these goals through distance learning. Teams will take into consideration the student's preferred learning method, ability for independent work, access to adult support, adaptations/accommodations, assistive technology needs, how progress will be monitored, and where services will take place.

The West Fargo Public Schools Special Education Plan will be implemented at the full continuation level on April 1, 2020. Special education staff and parents/guardians are encouraged to have a gradual implementation of work towards IEP goals. They should consider providing work that is at the student's independent level and think about what is reasonable for the student at this time given their individual circumstances.

Monitoring student progress on contingency learning plans is imperative, which is why staff will be asked to use both synchronous and asynchronous methods when communicating with all students and families on their caseload/service load on a weekly basis when monitoring CLPs, determining materials, and aligning instructional methods.

Teams have flexibility in how the IEP goals and services are met. Some examples include:

- Educational phone calls with parents and/or students (Synchronous Online Learning)
- Virtual services/programming (Synchronous Online Learning)
- Paper packets or worksheets, which could be distributed daily by bus route or collected several times a week at a central location
- Textbooks
- Online resources (Asynchronous Online Learning)

West Fargo Public Schools is committed to:

- Developing an individualized Contingency Learning Plan for every student who receives special education.
- Establishing guiding protocols to provide a common understanding of high expectations for teachers to benefit individual student programming.
- Providing professional development, ongoing coaching/support, and guiding documents to teachers, parents, and students.
- As changes occur given guidance at national, state, and local levels, we are committed to supporting staff, parents, and students with continued focus on individualized student programming.

Supporting Documents:

- [WFPS Special Education Contingency Plan Expectations](#)
- [WFPS Special Education Contingency Plan](#)

English Learner Considerations – Individualized Language Plans (ILPs)

Our English Learner team will work with our students through both synchronous and asynchronous methods in order to provide scaffolded instruction, not only for language development, but to support our English learners with their online distance education across subject areas. All teachers of English learners will support access to content by following the Individual Learning Plans (ILP's) developed by each EL students' caseload manager. EL teachers will utilize the WIDA Can-Do Descriptors to provide guidance on scaffolding supports based on proficiency level and the four language domains of Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing.

The English Learner team has put plans in place to partner with trusted interpreters as needed to ensure our EL families are understanding the plans and expectations of the students. Staff and families can contact the English Learner team for supporting EL students with distance learning.

School Counseling Services

In periods of emergency shutdown and uncertainty, services focusing on social emotional learning become a priority. School counselors will continue to provide all students with social and emotional lessons, continue counseling and advising students, and serve as a resource to staff in managing anxiety and stress. All students in West Fargo Public Schools will continue to receive access to school counseling services within the guidelines set forth by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). In the development of our plan, the ASCA document for "Planning Virtual School Counseling During an Emergency Shutdown" became our primary resource. Therefore, our plan for continuing access to school counseling services focuses on maintaining the ASCA ethical standards, mitigating risks involved in virtual counseling, providing direct student services online, and providing indirect services through virtual consultation.

In order to mitigate risks in virtual school counseling and maintain the ASCA ethical standards, the West Fargo counseling team is developing notifications and protocols to

inform parents and guardians. Counselors are creating an informed consent that will provide all families and students with information about confidentiality, the limits of confidentiality, and the risks and benefits of virtual counseling. The counseling team has also developed a protocol for accessing emergency mental health services and ongoing mental health services through community resources. The West Fargo counseling team will work to continue services for our most at-risk students through ongoing community relationships. West Fargo middle and high school students have had access to on-site clinical counseling services with a community partner. The counseling and social worker teams are working to re-establish those services through telehealth. The telehealth program requires an active consent process that also explains requirements and recommendations for virtual therapy.

In addition, our counselors will be providing synchronous virtual counseling sessions with students through an online platform. Our students who had been receiving regular counseling services individually or in small groups will be contacted by their counselor to set up regular opportunities to connect through an online platform. This service will also be available to any other student who may have the need to receive academic, career, or social emotional supports. Counselor contact information and a process for contacting counselors has been established. The counseling team is outlining office hours which will allow them to be more readily available for 1:1 virtual counseling session, as well as consultation with internal and external partners. This includes a scheduling process and procedures for students to follow during emergency and nonemergency situations.

Lastly, counselors are developing strategies and sharing resources to maintain mental wellness for parents, staff, and students. These strategies are aligned with needs and related to coping during periods of heightened stress. Ideas include self-care menus, building and maintaining relationships in a virtual world, virtual book clubs, mindfulness strategies, and stress management techniques. For parent supports, resources for talking to your child about COVID-19 are being shared. These strategies include maintaining consistency, monitoring television and social media, and being calm and available to children.

High-Quality, Effective, Standards-Based Education

West Fargo Public Schools has a strong guaranteed and viable curriculum (GVC) that is outlined to meet the rigorous North Dakota state standards. At the K-12 levels, all curriculum department teams met to discuss necessary curriculum changes and share ideas for delivery. Coaching teams at each building will support educators with learning tools needed for online instruction. The district GVC was described in more detail above.

Elementary School

Each course in K-5 has articulated proficiency scales that identify what students need to know and be able to do to meet the state standards. The instruction and assessment will remain aligned to those proficiency scales, reducing only those objectives that the team can determine may be met through other methods in these circumstances. Grading policy and practices will continue to be based on the standards-based grading model, with adjustments to the new delivery model for instruction and the collection of evidence.

Middle School

Each course in 6-8 has articulated proficiency scales that identify what students need to know and be able to do to meet the state standards. The instruction and assessment will remain aligned to those proficiency scales, reducing only those objectives that the team can determine may be met through other methods in these circumstances. Grading policy and practices will continue to be based on the standards-based grading model, with adjustments to the new delivery model for instruction and the collection of evidence.

High School

Each course has a clear course description of what students need to know and be able to do to meet the state standards through previously designed learning objectives or learning targets. Grading policy and practices will remain as letter grades, percentages, and GPA.