

## **ATTACHMENT B: Recommendations for Distance Learning**

Districts proceeding with in-person instruction must be prepared to transition back to distance learning, this time with improved supports, especially if a school is forced to do so after a positive COVID-19 test in their community. The following recommendations are based on challenges that some students experienced during distance learning in the spring, and should be implemented in either blended learning or full remote learning situations.

### **Recommendation No. 1: Instructional changes**

- 1. Longer and more frequent instruction time:** Many teachers spent limited time providing direct instruction during distance learning. Some students were instead provided with homework packets, which placed a disproportionate burden on parents to provide instruction and on students to self-educate. We recommend that teachers provide instruction more frequently and for more minutes to provide students guidance, routine, and stability.
- 2. Collaborative learning:** Students' social skills and engagement with schoolwork can deteriorate without interaction with their peers. We recommend that teachers provide students with more opportunities for collaborative and project-based learning to increase exposure to other students.
- 3. Concrete lesson plans:** Families often felt overwhelmed by homework and instructional packets because they were not provided in advance with schedules for lectures, homework, and special education services, which made it difficult for families to plan around their work schedules. We recommend that teachers develop concrete and comprehensive lesson plans before the Fall semester to help families plan for the semester.
- 4. Diverse schedules to meet family needs:** Some families have the need for flexible class schedules to accommodate their jobs while others need routine and stability. We recommend school districts provide students the option to participate in fixed and flexible class schedules with live instructions and pre-recorded lessons.
- 5. Better tracking of student progress:** There were reports that districts did not track their students' progress toward IEP goals and grade-level curriculum. This made it difficult for some families to track their students' regression and provide support. We recommend that districts resume tracking students' progress and communicate that progress more frequently with families.

### **Recommendation No. 2: Individual support and communication**

- 1. More individual support and check-ins:** Some students who require one-on-one instruction and guidance experienced a lack of individual supports during distance learning. We recommend that teachers and other educational providers schedule more frequent check-ins with both parents and students, especially during lessons.

- 2. Use of instructional aides:** In some instances, the absence or severely limited interaction with 1:1 aides and para-educators during distance learning destabilized students who relied on their services. We recommend that instructional aides and para-educators provide individual support virtually and in-person, especially during instructional time.

### **Recommendation No. 3: Technological support**

- 1. Better internet connectivity:** Many families have poor internet connections, which made receiving special education services impractical. We recommend school districts contract with internet providers if they have not already done so to ensure all families can access services.
- 2. More accessible technology:** Some students found it difficult to use certain technology or technology at all because of their disability. We recommend districts conduct assistive technology assessments on all students with IEPs to provide them with technology or alternatives to technology that meets their disability-related needs.
- 3. Consistent online platforms:** Families felt overwhelmed by having to navigate multiple online platforms to access lectures, homework, and special education services. We recommend districts limit the number of platforms to deliver services and ensure that there are proper safeguards in place to protect student and family privacy on the platforms and devices.
- 4. Training:** Families experienced difficulty navigating technology and unfamiliar online platforms. We recommend districts provide trainings tailored to students' disability-related needs directly or through third-party providers such as the Center for Assistive Technology, and computer programs such as Computing Without Tears for parents and students to improve computer literacy skills.