

Georgia's Restart Guide for Distance Learning & Professional Learning

Georgia's K-12 Restart: Distance Learning/Professional Learning Working Group members:

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Georgia's K-12 Restart Working Groups provide considerations, recommendations, and best practices to ensure a safe and successful 2020-2021 school year. **This guidance is not mandated or state required.** Local school districts have the authority and flexibility to meet their individual needs and be responsive to their communities.

General Information

Our Working Group used the following design principles in developing this Restart Guide:

- (1) **It is possible that academic learning will be offered in all three instructional models** (full distance/remote, hybrid, and face-to-face) during the 2020-21 school year. If the district opts to implement the traditional (face-to-face) instructional model, it may be necessary to consider procedures to address the individualized needs of students who may require a remote learning option. As district and school leaders create plans, public health will take precedence, and school schedules will fluidly respond to local public health scenarios.
- (2) **Family and community input and partnerships are essential.** District and school leaders should seek feedback on schedules, digital access and connectivity, and shared academic supports. Local libraries, community organizations, and faith-based groups can be essential partners during this time.

Consider creating a task force with diverse representation from the community to plan according to the learning needs of local stakeholders.

Examples:

Baldwin County parent survey ([link](#))

[Student-home-remote learning](#)

[Family-home-remote learning](#)

[Educator-home-remote learning](#)

[Hawaii Public and Charter Schools](#)

See these [additional tools](#) for listening and learning from families and this [thorough planning tool for](#) ensuring that plans are transparent. Inclusive leadership resources may be helpful ([link](#)).

- (3) **Explore equitable solutions.** Explore what the community needs most and how these needs may impact academic learning. Nutrition, health and wellness, digital access, and technical support will be helpful supports for families and students. Work with local community organizations and leaders to identify assets, needs, and strategies for implementation.
- (4) **Amend curricula resources using a [Universal Design for Learning](#) approach** that prioritizes students who are “at the margin.” This design will support all districts to better serve all students. To ensure that all students are offered an equitable opportunity to learn, familiarize yourself with [Special Education rules and laws for the COVID era](#). The Georgia Department of Education offers [Universal Design for Learning](#) resources here and additional special education resources ([link](#))
- (5) **Take time to teach educators** about how to use school platforms and how to digitally connect with students and families. In some instances, schools may need to consider the professional

learning needs and resources for supplemental learning providers in the community. Many school districts have scheduled the first weeks of “back-to-school” to offer professional learning; however, school and district leadership will need to create a comprehensive learning community that has access to ongoing opportunities for professional learning. The Georgia Department of Education offers this quarterly [Professional Learning Catalog](#), which includes courses on getting digital learning up and running.

- (6) **Seize this as an opportunity** to engage and empower learners in deeper, more [personalized learning](#) and include opportunities to explicitly address self-determination skills that are critical as engagement and empowerment strategies ([link](#))

Full Distance/Remote Learning

Topics	District/School Considerations
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<p>Developing the Learning Community</p>	<p>Tech help. Library media specialists can support teachers, families and supplemental learning providers with digital resources. Topics can include effective digital teaching and learning, online safety and best practices, and digital resources for teaching and learning.</p> <p>Technology Staff. The use of school information, media, and instructional technology specialists are “first lines of defense” for ensuring that digital systems are working effectively, and that students and parents are able to access school resources with ease. These specialists can use their existing expertise to ensure digital resources are rostered correctly by class and that students have immediate access. Also, consider setting up a “tech help” team with talented students and family member volunteers who can assist peers with simple technical issues.</p> <p>Setting norms. Establish strategies and norms for student, family, and teacher engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish consistent communications across multiple platforms and across all grade levels so families can access reliable information from multiple places (phone, district website, text messaging, local news and radio, school billboards, etc.) ● Utilize local public libraries, faith-based organizations, and other community organizations as locations for disseminating information, especially where internet access is limited. ● Ensure that messaging is inclusive of language needs, learning needs, and literacy differences. ● Minimize the number of email announcements going to families; communications should be clear, coordinated, succinct, and be sent on a routine basis (e.g., weekly). ● If available, check in with the local special education parent mentor who can assist with targeted strategies to support families of students with disabilities (link to ParentMentors.org).
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Engage families in establishing learning routines and positive learning conditions (See the Parent-Teacher Association’s [Be a Learning Hero](#) guide and CEEDAR [Family Guide to At-Home Learning](#))

Ensure that members of the learning community (e.g., family members, students, teachers) get to know each other by using multiple strategies:

- Introductory phone calls, video conferences, outdoor/socially distanced gatherings
- Mailed letters
- Social media groups (e.g., Facebook Group)
- Informal surveys or “get to know you” activities
- Parent-centric activities: “Digital dads” or “messaging moms” could be digital equivalents of “classroom helpers” and extensions of the local PTA.

Use a consistent platform for learning (consider a K-12 Learning Management System); provide short videos to familiarize family members and students with the system.

Create teaching teams that include teachers, paraprofessionals, library media specialists and other school staff to build better teacher-student relationships. These teams should provide consistent peer supports, as well as a means to share professional insights about the students served by members of the team. In addition, these small groups of professionals can support the teaching and learning process for each other should someone become ill or require extended leave.

- Consider Co-Teaching teams that have remote/hybrid and/or face-to-face access (See [Quick Takes CEC Tool](#) and [GaDOE Resources](#))
- Consider “looping” staff with classes from the previous school year to maintain family/student/teacher relationships, even if it is only for the first few weeks of school or half the school year (See [ASCD’s summary of research on Looping](#)).
- Work with school library media specialists and technology coaches to establish virtual professional learning sessions for teachers and parents.

Safety. Create a safe and secure digital learning environment. REL West provides simple guidance:

- [What districts and families can do to make sure online learning is safe and secure](#)
- [How can districts and families improve digital citizenship during remote learning?](#)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do we protect students’ privacy when shifting to remote learning? <p>The National Cyber Security Alliance created a library of resources to provide information about avoiding cyber threats and scams and security tips for working remotely: StaySafeOnline COVID-19 Security Resource Library.</p>
<p>Re-establishing expectations, transitions and routines</p>	<p>Screen time. Establish expectations for learning time and “screen time.” Students can expect to spend fewer hours in daily instructional time during remote learning than in face-to-face school days. General guidelines suggest the following as approximate developmentally appropriate timeframes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Elementary may have 1-1.5 hours (not necessarily contiguous) ● Middle and high may have 1-4 hours (not necessarily contiguous) <p>(See American Academy of Pediatrics screentime guidelines for children ages 2-18)</p> <p>During remote lessons, teacher-led lectures should be short (2-15 minutes); interactive lessons may be a bit longer. However, every effort should be made to minimize the amount of seated screen time so that students have time for independent learning, group learning, and activities. Offer short lessons, small group discussions, and allow for multiple breaks.</p> <p>Scheduling. Recognize that families have different needs and contexts; take into account how these variations may affect access and success in remote learning and consider how families might implement routines across all age groups. For example, spread instructional time throughout the day so that families with multiple students in K-12 can ensure that each age group has its own time if devices, internet service, and other resources are shared (e.g., elementary in the morning, middle school in the early afternoon, high school in the late afternoon into the evening). Consider scheduling support staff and administrators flexibly as well so that they can support teachers and learners.</p> <p>Provide families and students with a comprehensive daily/weekly/semester schedule in advance; share all due dates and policies around late work. Many modern learning management systems include a calendar just for this purpose. Be sure to use all the management features of your management system.</p>

	<p>Communicating. Create multiple means for students and teachers to communicate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post regular announcements ● Allow for synchronous discussions (“chats,” phone calls with multiple callers, texting chains, etc.) ● Provide feedback early and often (video, voice, and written feedback are all options) ● Encourage multiple ways of getting in touch (texting, phone calls, “chats,” posts, etc.) ● Consider posting assignments prior to the learning day ● Plan for routine group “check-ins” such as class meetings, individual student-teacher conferences, and peer learning support. ● Plan for communications that address the languages of families. <p>Consider prompts for building the learning community, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What has been a challenge to your learning and how have you responded? ● What have you read or heard someone else say that makes your learning stronger? ● What do you think you have contributed to this learning community and why? <p>Keep track of how students engage. If a student seems to be disengaged, reach out individually to ensure that the student is feeling confident about their learning potential, to offer support, and to troubleshoot any issues.</p>
<p>Statewide system for coherent instructional resources</p>	<p>Set clear expectations to support planning for instruction, delivering high quality instruction, monitoring student progress, and refining the instructional system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● See GaDOE’s summary of resources for high-quality remote instruction here and here ● Review the National Standards for Quality Online Learning; ● Use this System assessment for readiness to launch remote learning from the Center on Innovations in Learning (CIL) for a better understanding of how virtual learning can be successfully implemented ● Use this “teacher assessment of readiness for remote and hybrid learning” to ensure that proper professional learning is offered ● Create a cohesive plan for returning to school (see the School Roadmap for School Operations and Instruction)

- Establish teaching and learning priorities across grade bands and content areas
- Ensure that the arts and physical education are part of a Whole Child learning plan (these have been proven to improve attendance and student engagement – see [Arts Education Partnership](#), [FitnessGram](#), and [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) for resources)

Consider using GaDOE’s instructional resources:

- [Georgia Virtual School](#) (GaVS) offers courses for grades 6-12
- [GAV Learning Resources](#) for over 120 courses in grades 6-12, including modular eSources that can be uploaded into a local LMS
- [Georgia Home Classroom](#) offers GSE-aligned public television schedules and learning activities for grades K-8
- [Georgia Essentials Toolkit](#) for teachers offers sample curriculum maps, scope and sequence documents, and lesson plans for K-12
- Integrated Instructional Supports for All Students ([link](#))
- CTAE has a [Resource Network](#) with a large number of instructional materials available for CTAE teachers, administrators and supervisors. The network requires a login and all CTAE administrators, supervisors and teachers have access with their individual login and password.
- Agricultural Education maintains a site for distance learning resources, [AgEd net](#), that is open-access; no login required.

GALILEO offers online resources and library materials:

- [GALILEO Elementary School](#)
- [GALILEO Middle School](#)
- [GALILEO High School](#)

Additional online resources from the public library:

- [Library Resources You Can Use Everywhere](#)
- [ERead Kids Digital Library](#)

[Georgia Public Broadcasting](#) offers a variety of digital learning resources from video series (e.g. [Physics in Motion](#), [Chemistry Matters](#)) to [virtual field trips](#) to digital collections (e.g. [Georgia studies](#), [financial literacy](#)), as well as free access to [PBS LearningMedia](#) (all subjects, grades).

Other Free Instructional Resources

- [CK12 Resources](#)
- Open Educational Resource Commons [OER Commons](#)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Free K-12 Open Up Resources ● PhET: Interactive Simulations for Science and Math ● Applied Digital Skills ● Common Sense Media’s Wide-Open School <p>When designing instructional materials for remote learning, ensure that instructions are written so the student can understand them independently. Students may not have a caregiver who can work with them consistently every day. Use images, headings, bullet points, appropriate text size, boldness, and color to create a clear workflow for students to follow. See tips for designing ADA-compliant documents (link).</p> <p>Possible questions when designing remote learning experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How will a student know where to start? ● How will a student know what to do next? ● How will a student know when the work is successfully completed? <p>Set clear expectations about how assignments will be accessed, completed, turned in, and when/how teacher feedback will be given.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider asking students to create rubrics that demonstrate the quality of their projects and assignments ● Ensure that graded assignments include feedback ● Consider moving toward a personalized or competency model of standards-based learning (see Readiness Rubric here) <p>Consider taking advantage of the uniqueness of the home environment for learning. Activities and assignments can involve cooking; home maintenance; cleaning; talking with family members about instructional topics (e.g., chemistry and physics of cooking, history, interpretations of artwork, storytelling); or visiting local landmarks, parks, and other community spaces (with social distancing protocols as needed).</p> <p>Library media specialists can provide instructional coaching, curated resources, and professional learning for effective digital teaching and learning.</p>
Addressing individual learner needs	<p>Establish an academic baseline. Conduct teacher team meetings to identify students’ academic abilities and needs. Administer formative assessments toward the start of the school year; GaDOE provides:</p>

- [GKIDS 2.0](#) (kindergarten)
- [Keenville](#) (grades 1 and 2)
- [BEACON](#) (grades 3-8) – Not currently available via remote instruction

Target interventions and supports. Provide additional instructional supports to students...

- at-risk of not graduating on time, using the School Completion Toolkit ([link](#))
- with disabilities, understanding that they can benefit from interventions and supports provided to all students
- who struggled in the prior distance/remote learning environment (i.e. early grades, English Learners, etc.)
- identified as being behind academically by teachers and parents
- identified as demonstrating behavioral challenges by teachers and parents

Special education interventions and supports.

- School and district leadership will need to offer families the opportunity to meet and collaborate with IEP Teams to assess the individual needs, progress, and/or loss of skills and ultimately determine if the IEP should be amended to reflect appropriate changes to services and supports.
- Special education services are determined through the IEP process and documented using the IEP; however, IEP Teams may opt to document remote services using a distance learning plan.
- Free appropriate public education (FAPE) can be provided using distance/remote learning.
- Per OSEP’s memo, during instances by which the student experienced a delay in services or no services at all due to school closures, IEP teams will need to review the student’s current level and consider eligibility for compensatory services.

Identify standards that can be bundled together either within the same content area (fine arts, music, world language, CTAE, computer science, AP/IB, dual enrollment, physical education/play, STEM/STEAM, etc.), or

	<p>better yet, across different content areas to enrich learning. Provide opportunities for enrichment and remediation.</p> <p>Address learning loss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High leverage practices for special education ● Help students catch up/get ahead through the Georgia Virtual School (for grades 6-12) ● Provide extended learning opportunities through before/after school programs, Saturday school, etc. <p>Several free tutoring applications that offer live tutors are available to K12 students, including GoPeer.org, Interns4Good, and TeensTutorTeens.</p> <p>The US Department of Education’s Office of Special Education issued Guidance explaining how IDEA obligations operate in the context of COVID-19.</p>
<p>Digital learning technologies & non-digital alternatives</p>	<p>Consider new possibilities for extending remote access to educators and families (see Devices & Connectivity Restart Guidance)</p> <p>Use ready-made teaching and learning resources for technology platforms.</p> <p>Consider using low-tech solutions for remote learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thumb-drives can be a helpful tool for distributing and collecting assignments. Cellular devices and tablets can also be used when assisted by parents. ● Public Television programming has been aligned to Georgia Standards of Excellence on Georgia Home Classroom. ● Simple websites can be used to organize downloadable apps and grade-level resources (see one school’s example here). ● Print versions of any digital instructional resources can help ensure that families without internet access can still access curriculum.

<p>Professional Learning supports for educators and families</p>	<p>Provide virtual learning-specific professional learning for educators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Georgia Virtual School provides several professional learning online courses for educators on online teaching and learning and on strategies to successfully accommodate students with disabilities in online settings. ● The Center on Online Learning and Students with Disabilities, from OSEP, provides guidance for parents and teachers. ● Common Sense Media’s Best Special Education Apps and Websites offers information on an array of tools that address differentiating learning, foundational skills, boosting social and emotional skills and help students with autism follow a schedule. <p>Provide badging for teachers and students for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Professional learning for substitute teachers/classified staff ● Remote learning that happens outside of the classroom ● Digital learning tools ● Best practices for providing remote instruction/pedagogy
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