

**Lay Faculty Association
Local 1261
Newsletter**

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**Pandemic Planning for Distance Learning: Scenarios and Considerations
for PreK–12 Education Leaders**

This scenario requires all educators, support staff, students, parents, and caregivers to remain nimble in the likelihood that there are quick changes in the way learning is accessed.

Scenario A: Brick to Click Learning

In scenario A, the ABC school district has decided to resume traditional in-person classes with the flexibility to quickly pivot to distance education in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak. The superintendent of ABC worked closely with county government and health officials to monitor the CDC guidance and state education agency guidelines to reopen in phases.

Over the course of the summer, all teachers and support staff will receive professional development in online learning, ideally spread out over weeks so that they are not asked to digest and process a whole new way of working in a compressed time frame. While the goal is to return to traditional in-person classes, the expectation of all teachers will be to mirror their classrooms in online learning environments. The likelihood of another rise in infections is relatively high, so this model will allow for a quick pivot to online learning. For example, if the number of cases jumps quickly mid-week, the district would send home instructional materials within 48 hours and then continue learning online the following week.

This scenario requires all educators, support staff, students, parents, and caregivers to remain nimble in the likelihood that there are quick changes in the way learning is accessed.

Scenario B: Click to Brick Learning

In scenario B, the EFG school district has decided to start with online learning and plans to resume traditional in-person classes on a modified basis when safe to do so. The superintendent of EFG worked closely with county government and health officials to assess the situation, but deemed it best to start online and continue monitoring public health before resuming school in-person.

Over the course of the summer, all teachers and support staff will receive professional development, ideally spread out over the summer, in how to teach using online learning environments, and professional learning will be ongoing throughout the school year.¹⁸ All academic instruction will be conducted online for the duration of the school year, while plans for in-person learning (when safe to resume) will focus on advising and building teacher-student relationships. In-person schedules will allow teachers, support staff, and students to rotate through the buildings following a half-day schedule every day or full-days one to two times per week. In-person classes may not be fully attended, since it will be up to parental and caregiver choice, so teachers and support staff will be expected to maximize their limited time to support students with technology troubleshooting, mental health, social-emotional learning, relationship-building, and special services that are difficult to provide over the internet.

This scenario requires all educators, support staff, students, parents, and caregivers to consider online learning the primary method of working towards competency in a grade level and/or content area, while in-person learning is focused on relationship-building and developing non-academic skills.

Scenario C: Blended Learning

In scenario C, the LMN school district has decided to institute a blended learning model across all schools. Blended learning is a combination of learning that takes place in a school building and in an online environment that can include both synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities. The leaders of LMN decided on this model because they wanted to offer as regular a school calendar as possible.

Over the course of the summer, all teachers and support staff will receive additional professional learning on how to teach using blended learning methods. The LMN school district will work to ensure some uniformity in schedules across the buildings. Schools may consider one of the seven blended learning models (see Instructional Strategy section below), or any combination thereof. Younger learners may benefit from more in-person instruction if possible, whereas older students may be able work more independently in an online setting. For example, students may have one in-person learning day with the rest of the week's learning completed online. Schools that already work in a blended environment have the capability to quickly move to full online mode if there is an outbreak of COVID-19, because the coursework already lives online within a learning management system (LMS). Brick-and-mortar activities, such as direct instruction, can be moved to video conferencing, and other face-to-face activities can be adapted for an online experience.

This scenario requires all educators, support staff, students, parents, and caregivers to consistently approach teaching and learning in two delivery formats—in-person and online.

Scenario D: Online Learning

In scenario D, the XYZ school district has decided to move all learning experiences and services online through a proactive, purposeful, and systems-based approach. The superintendent of XYZ chose this delivery model to provide flexibility for all stakeholders through both synchronous and asynchronous modalities and to limit any health and safety risks potentially posed by having students and staff reenter school buildings.

Professional development is needed to prepare for a structured approach for the 2020–21 academic school year. Over the course of the summer, all teachers and support staff will receive at least two weeks (80 additional hours) of professional learning in online learning. In addition to professional development workshops and training on online pedagogy and the technology tools, the XYZ school district recognizes the value and the power in developing mentoring relationships and learning communities for ongoing continuous knowledge and improvement. Furthermore, the technical infrastructure needs to take an “all-hands-on-deck” approach to provide scalable, secure, and intuitive solutions that support state and federal policies.

Because this scenario means that teachers never see their students in person, it requires all educators, support staff, students, parents, and caregivers to find ways to use communication technologies (even phone calls) to pay close attention to the development of each child and ensure that appropriate grade-level growth is happening while learning takes place at a distance. In addition, it may be a scenario that is most appropriate for high schools and middle schools only; requiring younger students to do all work online at home would require an adult to be at home with them, which puts a large burden on working parents.

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