Planning Guide for Short-Term Distance Learning:

A Resource for Schools & Districts Operating In-Person

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Short-Term Distance Learning: **Purpose & Anchor Ideas**

Purpose

This guide is intended to support schools and districts in preparing for **sustained learning** regardless of circumstances (e.g., floods, wildfires, earthquakes, building damage, inclement weather, or public health events). When in-person instruction is not possible, Short-Term Distance Learning can mitigate the impact on student learning.
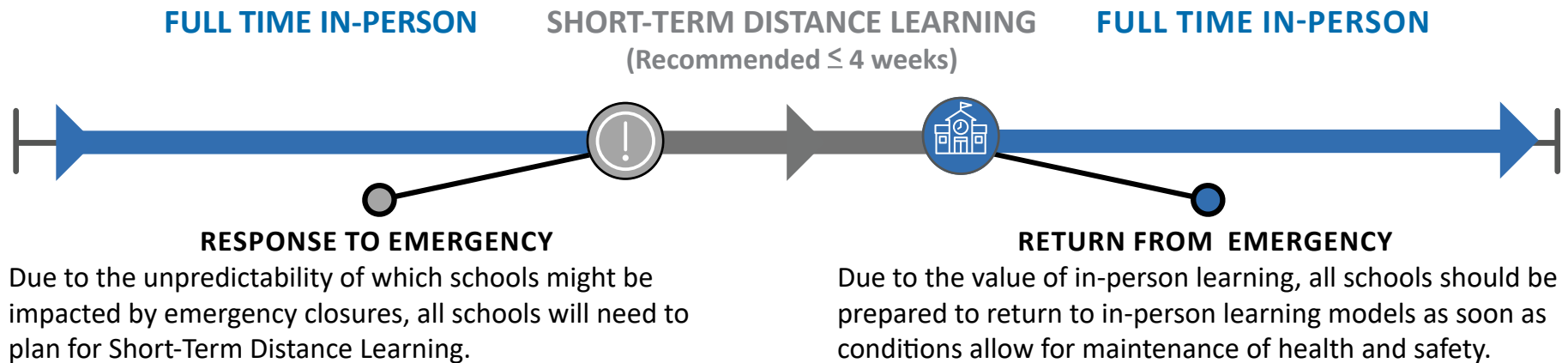
Anchor Ideas

- **Be ready with a robust plan** for Short-Term Distance Learning.

- **Communicate the plan early and often** to staff, students, families, and community members to support a seamless transition.

- **Front load and provide planning time for educators** (e.g., similar to the way emergency substitute plans are prepared).

- **Center care and connection**. Ensure students' mental health, safety, and basic needs are prioritized in the plan.

- **Sustain expectations for engagement, attendance, and learning in the plan**. Balance synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities and reinforce interface between teacher and students.

- Ensure Short-Term Distance Learning is a **temporary solution.**

Short-Term Distance Learning: **Overview & Key Questions**

Short-Term Distance Learning Overview

Short-Term Distance Learning is intended to provide a temporary learning solution and is recommended not to extend for more than 4 weeks. Prioritizing in-person learning is the goal.

FULL TIME IN-PERSON   **SHORT-TERM DISTANCE LEARNING**   **FULL TIME IN-PERSON**
(Recommended ≤ 4 weeks)

RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY

Due to the unpredictability of which schools might be impacted by emergency closures, all schools will need to plan for Short-Term Distance Learning.

RETURN FROM EMERGENCY

Due to the value of in-person learning, all schools should be prepared to return to in-person learning models as soon as conditions allow for maintenance of health and safety.

Key Questions for Short-Term Distance Learning

- **How will we guarantee continuity of learning for students?**
- **How will we connect with students to ensure they feel seen, cared for, and part of the school community?**
- **How will we reach out to each student daily in personalized ways that keep students connected and regularly attending?**
- **How do we lead with our guiding principles during Short-Term Distance Learning? How will they be clearly communicated and experienced?**
- **What data do we need to gather and/or consider in order to effectively plan, sustain, and return from Short-Term Distance Learning?**
- **How we will evaluate the feasibility of both Short-Term Distance Learning and Short-Term Hybrid Learning options?**

Every emergency is different in magnitude, damage, and scope; likewise, capacity to respond to emergencies varies by levels of preparedness and resources. In responding to the emergency, keep in mind the high standards held for learning prior to the emergency. Strive to retain that level of quality in Short-Term Distance Learning to the extent possible.

Short-Term Distance Learning: **Definitions & Resources**

Overview of Instructional Models

FULL TIME IN-PERSON

Full Time In-Person: Learning occurs on-site and in-person. Often referred to as "Brick-and-Mortar," this instructional model maximizes real-time personal interactions between teacher-to-students and peer-to-peer.

SHORT-TERM DISTANCE LEARNING

Full Time Short-Term Distance Learning:
A temporary instance when an entire class, grade level, cohort, school, or district shifts to distance learning. Learning emulates in-person learning to the extent possible, with all students learning off-site. Most commonly, learning will occur online and include an intentional balance of synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities.

Full Time Short-Term Hybrid Learning:
A temporary instructional model that is a blend of in-person and distance learning. Hybrid models can accommodate multiple variables while maximizing access to in-person instruction.

Resources to Support High Quality Instruction During Short-Term Distance Learning

- Key Components of Digital Learning: A Starting Point for Design, Dialogue, and Implementation features design principles and resources for various elements of online and hybrid learning models.

- The Hybrid Design Review provides resources, examples, and guiding questions to support hybrid instructional models.

Short-Term Distance Learning: **Best Practices**

FULL TIME IN-PERSON **Preparing**	SHORT-TERM DISTANCE LEARNING **Sustaining**	FULL TIME IN-PERSON **Returning**
• Inform the school community about the potential for a quick transition to Short-Term Distance Learning in the event of an emergency. • Engage students, families, and educators in lessons learned from previous emergencies. • Survey families to understand what their child needs to access Short-Term Distance Learning. • Establish communication channels and strategies to interact with families. • Ensure a plan for multilingual access, communication, and engagement for multilingual families. • Ensure students and staff will have online access (e.g., devices, connectivity). Begin distribution early. • Support staff and student readiness to shift quickly into Short-Term Distance Learning by providing training that includes logistical details. • Ensure teachers have at least two weeks of distance learning lesson plans prepared, inclusive of support for students who are emergent bilinguals and for students who experience disability. Prioritize planning for daily synchronous teacher interface with students. • Meet with IEP and 504 Plan Teams to identify supports students will need, including evaluation planning. • Plan meal distribution. • Create an outreach strategy and documentation plan for attendance/participation. • Prepare asynchronous materials for students and staff who may not have connectivity based on the nature of the emergency.	• Provide regular and accessible communication to staff, students, and families; signal desired return date for Full Time In-Person Learning. • Have known educators reach out and sustain connection to students and families. • Distribute resources, such as meals, clothing, supplies, and, where needed, asynchronous learning packets. • Initiate school routines as soon as possible, with patterns and rituals that mimic the in-person learning experience. • Utilize previously-prepared lesson plans to ensure a quick pivot to Short-Term Distance Learning. • Engage families as critical partners. Build from student assets in the home environment (e.g., interests, culture, heritage, multi-generational living, and language). • Engage community-based organizations to co-facilitate culturally specific outreach. • Intentionally balance asynchronous and synchronous learning opportunities, while prioritizing at least one daily synchronous teacher interface with students. • Tend to student well-being and mental health, securing services as needed. • Keep daily attendance logs, support student engagement, and use formative assessment practices to sustain learning progress. • Create a reentry plan that includes transportation and communication with families. • Attend to special education evaluation timelines (if any student evaluation process was initiated before the emergency) as required timelines still apply.	• Prepare physical space for the return of staff and students. Welcome the school community back to in-person learning in ways that provide care and connection related to the specific emergency conditions. • Support mental health. Ensure that staff, students, and families have the opportunity for processing, healing, and connection. • Build in additional time for relationship building, connection, reflection, and healing throughout the initial weeks of return to in-person learning. • Infuse art, music, movement, and storytelling in the learning day as ways to help students heal and make sense of their experience. • Involve staff and community-based organizations in continued outreach to families. • Focus on accelerating learning opportunities for students, not remediation or review. • Reignite engagement by investing in relationships, honoring student voice, and continuing formative assessment practices. • Collect feedback about the experience from the school community, including staff, students, and families, and use the feedback to inform future Short-Term Distance Learning plan. • Share stories of community resilience and strength to reinforce morale and connection.

Important Reminder: All federal and state rules and statutes that apply to full time in-person instruction apply throughout any instructional model, including Short-Term Distance Learning.

Short-Term Distance Learning: **Additional Questions & Considerations**

When students' strengths and needs are centered throughout Short-Term Distance Learning, it increases engagement and connection. Below are additional ways to help deepen a shared commitment to sustaining student learning and well-being during times of emergency.

Questions to Prepare for Student Learning

- What did the team learn about this child during prior distance learning opportunities that can inform a current plan for the child?
- What specific supports, tools, and/or accommodations have been, or could be, helpful for this child during periods of distance learning?
- Are there any health related needs, including mental health, that the team needs to consider for this student during the period of Short-Term Distance Learning?
- Who are the critical support staff (e.g., teachers, service providers, counselors, educational assistants) each student will need to access during Short-Term Distance Learning, and how will they access them?
- How will each of these critical support staff be supported to provide each student with the needed services during Short-Term Distance Learning?
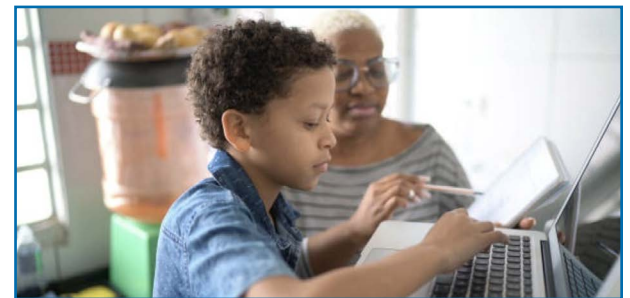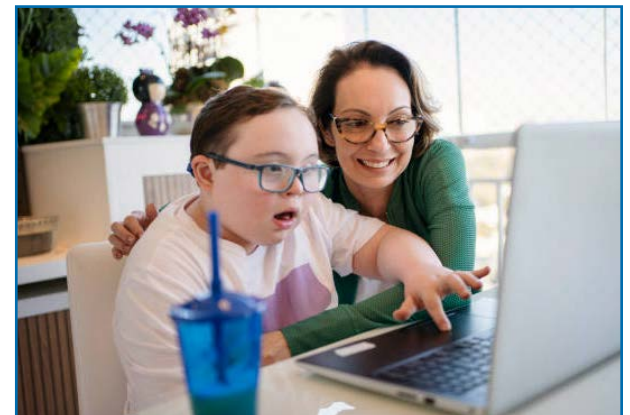
Considerations to Sustain Student Learning

- Connect with families to provide individualized support and sustained services.
- Develop asynchronous learning support for students to preview and review learning.
- Maintain learning trajectory tied to grade level content standards.
- Maximize opportunities for small group check-ins by leveraging technology and assistive technology to give students time to see, interact with, and learn from each other.
- Establish peer learning opportunities through informal peer-to-peer mentors or learning partners.
- Design opportunities for wrap-around services, including mental health support/telehealth services.
- Ensure accurate attendance is taken to generally monitor student engagement and plan to successfully meet their educational goals.

Short-Term Distance Learning: **Maintaining Critical Services**

In periods of Short-Term Distance Learning, it is important that each district/program reviews and ensures their compliance with all Federal and State statutes, rules, and regulations, regardless of local operating circumstances. Shifting to Short-Term Distance Learning does not relieve districts of these responsibilities.

- Continue to meet Federal Requirements (e.g., Federal Civil Rights laws, including the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and IDEA and State Requirements) and State Requirements (e.g., OAR Chapter 581, Division 22 rules). Of critical note:

  i. In order to ensure a free appropriate public education (FAPE) is available for all eligible students, IEPs are implemented as written or, if they cannot be fully implemented, a new meeting should be held to consider the new circumstances.

  ii. In order to meet child find obligations and preserve the continuity of service provision, evaluation and IEP timelines remain in place during Short-Term Distance Learning.

  iii. Students maintain access to their general education peers, as written in their IEPs, throughout periods of Short-Term Distance Learning.

- Prioritize resources and supports for students who are marginalized by the system and therefore may be most vulnerable in times of an emergency (e.g., students in foster care; migrant students; students who experience houselessness; Oregon's Tribal, Indigenous, Black, Latino/a/x, Asian, and Pacific Islander students; LGBTQ2SIA+ identifying students; and students navigating poverty).

- Sustain meal services for all students.

- Provide the necessary learning supports to appropriately serve all students, with careful attention to meet requirements for emergent bilingual students, students who experience disability, and students identified as Talented and Gifted.

- Care for students who have health conditions that require additional nursing services, per Oregon law (ORS 336.201).

- Maintain daily attendance efforts to connect with students, to ensure student safety and whereabouts, and to provide consistent opportunity for connection and learning.