## Letter Template to the Board of Education

April XX, 2020

To: Members of the Board of Education

Re: Distance Learning for All During Extended School Closure

We hope this letter finds you and your loved ones safe and healthy.

We truly appreciate the leadership you continue to provide for our students and the communities we serve during this exceptional time. When our district is in a crisis, our community looks to their elected leaders to provide a unified message that is supportive of our students and families and helps reassure them that we are doing everything we can for them. It is more critical than ever that we provide our community with factual information that is clear, calm, and reassuring.

As you may know, Oregon Department of Education (ODE) has issued guidance for districts to provide distance learning for all students - [Distance Learning for All](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/healthsafety/Documents/Distance%20Learning%20for%20All%20Guidance%20March%202020.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) (DL4A). *[DISTRICT NAME]*, along with all other districts in the state, is implementing this model to provide access to grade-level learning and extend support from school staff to students and families. While distance learning will not replace the complete school experience, it will provide an important anchor of care, connection, and continuity of learning during school closure.

Distance learning is a model for teaching and learning in which the teacher and student are not in the same location. While it may include online learning, it does not require it.

Key elements of distance learning include:

* Ensuring safety, belonging and mental health as a foundation for learning.
* Partnering with parents, families, and caregivers; centering equity in all outreach and communication efforts with parents, families and caregivers.
* Establishing routines, expectations and priorities to facilitate instruction. Consider the environments and ages of the learners when planning instructional time, activities and connections.
* Ensuring equity and access in all aspects of distance learning. Apply the tenets of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to create the greatest access for students and use a variety of modes, resources and strategies with consideration for how students and families may be disproportionately impacted.
* Focusing on essential learning, leveraging formative assessment and student assets to inform differentiation and extensions. Guarantee learning to support students on their path to college and career.
* Providing multiple, flexible opportunities to earn credit for high school graduation.

Distance learning in our district will include [list strategies, tools, resources, professional learning, and educator supports]. To be most effective, we’ll need to establish a variety of learning strategies, educational materials, and modes of communication between our educators, students, and families.

As we navigate this new direction, we must extend grace and patiences to ourselves, our educators, and our students and families in order to persevere and ensure learning for our students.

Thank you for your care and commitment to ensure a safe and ongoing educational experience for our students. Our district will have a plan in place to implement these guidelines and practices by April 13, which we will review with you.

You may also explore the [ODE’s Distance Learning for All website](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/Pages/Distance-Learning-for-All.aspx) for additional guidance and resources.

*[Include dates, timelines, and any additional district expectations.]*

Be well!

## Letter Template to Community and Family Members

April XX, 2020

To: Community and Family Members

Re: Distance Learning for All During Extended School Closure

Our hallways, music rooms, sports fields and classrooms have all gone quiet during this unexpected state-wide school closure. We miss your children and adjusting to this “new normal” is difficult when we are hardwired to seek connection and community. We hope you are taking care, and we appreciate all you are doing to support one another in a time of community need. We are committed to serving you for the duration of the school closure, staying focused on your child’s well-being and learning. *We are [Fill in District] strong.*

Our district, along with all other districts in the state, is implementing a distance learning model that virtually connects students with teachers to provide access to grade-level learning and extends support from school staff to students and families. While distance learning will not replace the complete school experience, it will provide an important anchor of care, connection, and continuity of learning during school closure.

Distance learning is a model for teaching and learning in which the teacher and student are not in the same location. While it may include online learning, it does not require online learning. Distance learning in our district will include [list strategies, tools, resources]. To be most effective, we’ll need to establish a variety of learning strategies, educational materials, and modes of communication between teachers, students, and families. This effort will require all of us working together in close partnership. We will learn from each other as we go, working side by side to ensure learning for all of our students.

Here are some key elements of distance learning:

* Every student regularly connects with their teacher(s).
* Teachers and students prioritize time together to focus on the most important or relevant learning.
* Teachers, families, and caregivers work as a team.
* Together, teachers and families establish consistent routines and a learning environment that leads to success.
* Teachers continue to monitor, report, and record each student’s progress towards learning goals and standards. Distance learning activities encourage critical problem solving, collaboration, communication, and creativity.
* Schools provide multiple, flexible opportunities to earn credit for high school graduation.

If you are a parent, guardian, or family member, you can help your child by establishing a routine. Teachers are beginning to build schedules, like the sample found here. *[INSERT LINK OR ATTACH* [*ODE’S TOOL #5*](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/healthsafety/Documents/Tool%205%20Distance%20Learning%20Sample%20Instructional%20Day%20K-12.pdf)*, OR TO YOUR DISTRICT’S RECOMMENDED INSTRUCTIONAL DAY RESOURCE]* You play a critical role in determining what education looks like in your home. Teachers will work with you to help establish a routine that works for you and fosters learning. Remember that we are all learning how to do things in new and creative ways and to give yourself grace during this change. Please let your teacher know how this schedule is working for you and your family.

We understand that distance learning is happening in the context of many challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis. We want to keep students learning and growing, while keeping our expectations realistic. Please refer to the chart below for guidelines about how much time to spend on activities (especially the recommended maximum times).

**Instructional Day Recommended Guidelines**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade Level** | **Teacher-Led Learning**  Structured, grade-level learning directed by teacher and supported by teacher. | **Learning and Supplemental Activities**  In addition to Teacher-Led Learning, led by the student and/or family. | **Meeting Nutrition and Wellness Needs**  Breakfast, Lunch, Snack and Recess/Play breaks. |
| K-1 | 45 Minutes Maximum | 1-2 Hours Recommended | 2 Hours Recommended |
| 2-3 | 60 Minutes Maximum | 2 Hours Recommended | 2 Hours Recommended |
| 4-5 | 90 Minutes Maximum | 3 Hours Recommended | 2 Hours Recommended |
| 6-8 | 30 Minutes per Subject;  3 hours Maximum | 1-2 Hours Recommended | 2 Hours Recommended |
| 9-12 | 30 Minutes per Subject;  3 hours Maximum | 1-2 Hours Recommended | 2 Hours Recommended |

Thank you for your patience as we work together to keep students safe, engaged, and learning. If you have questions or are looking for additional resources to support your child’s learning, please contact one of the following:

* Your child’s teacher or teachers
* Your school administrator
* Your child’s counselor

Be well!

*[INSERT DISTRICT CLOSING SIGNATURE HERE]*

## Letter Template to District and School Staff

April XX, 2020

To: District and School Staff

Re: Distance Learning for All During Extended School Closure

We recognize and truly appreciate the support, expertise, and leadership you continue to provide for each other, our students, and the communities we serve during this exceptional time. As we navigate the challenges of COVID-19 and this extended school closure, it is more important than ever that we care for and connect with our students and families as well as each other. We must work collaboratively to provide continuity of learning and critical supports for the safety and well-being of our students.

As you may know, Oregon Department of Education (ODE) has issued guidance for districts to provide distance learning for all students - [Distance Learning for All](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/healthsafety/Documents/Distance%20Learning%20for%20All%20Guidance%20March%202020.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery) (DL4A). Our district, along with all other districts in the state, is implementing this model to provide access to grade-level learning and extend support from school staff to students and families. While distance learning will not replace the complete school experience, it will provide an important anchor of care, connection, and continuity of learning during school closure.

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* Focusing on essential learning, leveraging formative assessment and student assets to inform differentiation and extensions. Guarantee learning to support students on their path to college and career.
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Distance learning in our district will include [list strategies, tools, resources, professional learning, and educator supports]. To be most effective, we’ll need to establish a variety of learning strategies, educational materials, and modes of communication between our educators, students, and families.

As we navigate this new direction, we must extend grace and patiences to ourselves, our colleagues, and our students in order to persevere and ensure learning for our students.

Thank you for your care, expertise and commitment to provide a safe and ongoing educational experience for our students. Our district will have a plan in place to implement these guidelines and practices by April 13. In the meantime, if you have questions or are looking for additional resources to support your students’ learning, please contact: [*INSERT DISTRICT LEVEL CONTEXT HERE*].

You may also explore and use [resources](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/Pages/Distance-Learning-for-All.aspx) curated by the Oregon Department of Education or review the new [Oregon Open Learning website](https://www.oercommons.org/hubs/oregon) for shared educator resources.

Be well!

*[INSERT DISTRICT CLOSING SIGNATURE HERE]*