# Back to School RI:

# Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment Reopening Guidance
# SY20-21

**RIDE** Rhode Island
Department
of Education

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# Best Practices for Distance Learning K-12

## Vision

Distance learning will most likely be necessary at times in the upcoming school year. While face-to-face learning remains the preferred mode of instruction, thoughtful planning for distance learning will increase equity and effectiveness of the educational experience. This document intends to outline best practices for students, teachers, and families for online distance learning.

## Specific Considerations

- Students, teachers, and families are often navigating new spaces online and remotely. Ensure that all parties have clear communication and training in order to best access and deliver distance learning.
- Constructing norms and setting clear expectations are as foundational to distance learning as it is to in person.
- Student engagement in distance learning relies upon tools and instructional strategies that support personal connections.

## Best Practices

Strategies to support varied remote environments.

### Building Student and Family Relationships

| Clear and consistent communication. | Plan and implement regular family/student communication related to schedules, assignments, and performance. Communications should be in language the parent/guardian understands. Be sure to include translated versions as needed; apps like Talking Points support two-way communication with multilingual families. |
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| Streamline outgoing communication. | When possible, combine correspondence into one email from several faculty members (e.g., middle level team) or one grade level email with a link to a webpage with all subjects listed. Many families have more than one child and emails add up quickly, becoming less effective. Be sure to reference the school and grade since many parents have multiple children in the same district. If you use Google Classroom or other learning management system (LMS), include parents' email in the system so they can view upcoming assignments and missing work. |
| Personal outreach. | Check in with all families regularly. A quick phone call or email can help to troubleshoot issues with access or workload.  Create a shared contact log for all staff to record outreach consistently. Conduct periodic surveys with families and students to learn which areas need improvement with distance learning.  Consider using an app like Google Voice which allows educators to make calls without showing their personal phone number. |

## Establishing Norms

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| **Teach the distance learning technology upfront.** | Make sure students and families are familiar with accessing, navigating, and documenting their participation.  Model and practice using online tools with students until it's seamless. If students are in-person, have them access and use online resources while in the classroom so there will be less adjustment if they have to go distance learning or for the planned distance learning days. |
| **Co-construct norms with students.** | Teachers and students should work together to generate a vision of a supportive classroom community by agreeing to actions and behaviors that are respectful, equitable, develop a positive classroom culture, and move learning forward. These norms should be applicable to both in-person and remote instruction. |
| **Begin each activity with norms.** | After launching norms, be sure to revisit norms, building them into daily lessons and assignments whether in-person or online.  Do not assume students will refer back to a posted document. Refer to the norms often- posting them in the physical classroom and making a poster to have near your camera to pull in when discussing them online. |
| **Be consistent with the norms.** | Engagement exists when productive teaching practices, a safe environment, and positive relationships come together.  Consistent use and reminders of the norms will support student engagement. Build time into class to revisit norms and make adjustments as needed.  Have students focus on improving in one area of the norms each day or have students reflect on which norms they can improve on. |

## Engagement

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| **Asynchronous instruction should include interaction.** | Asynchronous instruction is not intended to replace a full day of school and in most instances should be used in combination with synchronous instruction. Collaboration between students and teacher feedback to students can increase engagement in asynchronous activities. Communication can be in the form of comments in a document, emails, comments on Google Classroom posts, entries on a digital whiteboard, or video or audio clips that give verbal feedback.  Strategies to maximize engagement with asynchronous virtual learning include regular teacher-student communication, timely and frequent replies, and using appropriate technology for student/family, personalizing feedback.  Even when teaching asynchronously, it is important to schedule mandatory check-in time in small groups or individual students. |
| **Non-screen activities are necessary for student learning, particularly for younger students.** | Activities that do not rely upon screen time are a valuable resource for student learning. Examples of non-screen activities include choice boards, writing letters, taking photos of finished products made by hand, drawing or hand-writing responses to questions, art projects photographed and emailed or uploaded, movement and brain breaks, and other physical activities (e.g., dancing, games, sports skills, scavenger hunt). |
| **Students need to interact with others, not just complete assignments.** | To support personalized instruction and social emotional needs, be mindful that instruction does not solely utilize asynchronous assignments nor rely on apps or videos to "teach" students.  Teacher-student and/or student-to-student interaction needs to be included, especially in younger grades.  Contextualization and scaffolding are necessary, particularly for differently-abled students or multilingual learners. |

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| **Ensure that online teaching methods and tools are equitable for all technological situations.** | Class activities and assignments need to be planned so that technology does not create a barrier to access, especially for students whose devices or bandwidth might cause issues for synchronous access. (e.g. Have students record and transfer presentations ahead of time to the teacher, the teacher then streams during a class, or the teacher posts them for students to watch and submit individual reflections to the teacher about what they learned from their peers). |
| **Include students in developing criteria to show proficiency.** | Put the students at the center of establishing criteria for successful participation or product. Collaborate in a synchronous discussion to develop criteria or asynchronously create a shared document or Jamboard where students share their suggestions. Synthesize the student ideas into a set of criteria for success or incorporate their ideas into a rubric. |
| **Let students showcase their knowledge and include their voice.** | Include opportunities for student sharing and collaboration. Activities like jigsaws, student facilitated gallery walks with digital group docs, or group project presentations can be shared synchronously. Digital tools such as Google Drawings, Screencastify, and Flipgrid can enable asynchronous sharing. |
| **Engaging in the practices of the subject area.** | Avoid long videos or readings with questions at the end. Use EdPuzzle to focus on video segments with custom questions built in that require completion to advance the video. Give students specific prompts to consider while they annotate a pdf of a reading selection. |
| **Leverage the tools embedded in technology to increase engagement.** | Use break out rooms for small group discussions, creation of collaborative products, and development of models or explanations. Use online polling features to keep all students engaged. During synchronous sessions, encourage appropriate participation such as verbal responses, non-verbal nods/gestures in video, built-in signals such as clapping or hand-raise, or written responses (in chat or in a shared document). |

## *Other Considerations*

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| **Train teachers in online tools.** | Make appropriate tools available to teachers and support staff and provide training. Ask for teacher input on their students' needs in order to find tools that can be used in a variety of learning scenarios and support teachers' effective instructional strategies. Look for tools that integrate with the learning management system (e.g. Google Classroom) to simplify student access. |
| **Model use of tools and visuals for students.** | New tools and resources need explanations. If class is not meeting in-person or synchronously, teachers can record a screencast video while navigating the tool from the student perspective and giving directions verbally. Annotated screenshots of visuals will also help students and their families learn a new resource. |
| **Set clear expectations to students.** | Provide explicit criteria in assignment descriptions, include rubrics, or post a resource document for criteria on standing assignments to the class webpage or portal (e.g., Google Classroom). |

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| **Use the same structures, tasks, and remote-friendly tools that are familiar to students.** | Design a thoughtful transition to distance learning by mimicking in-person experiences as much as possible.  Update structures and procedures as needed (e.g., use of videoconferencing, students recording and sharing videos rather than live presentations).  Start using online tools with students in-person (if possible) so that they become familiar with navigation and effective use. |
| **When planning for potential remote learning with multilingual learners, use tools and technologies that scaffold their learning.** | For example:<br><br>1. Include resources in the student's home language, such as videos, to support learning when scaffolding any given lesson.<br><br>2. Create videos (with a screencasting tool) that use familiar terms for the beginning of every assignment (and every week) to walk students through the assignments (and weekly plan).<br><br>3. After creating a video lesson, create an accompanying online organizer for students to fill in with key words/terms from the lesson.<br><br>4. Create standards-driven competency activities (typically in a familiar format like a quiz) that students can complete multiple times until they get them right to help them become familiar with vocabulary.<br><br>5. Use a videoconferencing tool (e.g., Google Meet) that allows you to facilitate a dialogue among students, especially when discussing a primary or secondary source.<br><br>6. Use caution with commercial (or free) content videos/materials since they may have too many unknown words for students to decode. |
| **Allow students to become proficient with online tools and provide support.** | Start with a fewer number of online tools and systems to avoid overload and provide consistency.  If possible, have teachers collaborate on a school-wide list of tools to minimize student-confusion and overload.  Find or make video tutorials for online tools, post to the class webpage or portal (e.g., Google Classroom) as reference materials. |
| **Streamline student documents for assessing and providing feedback.** | Consider using one document per student as their class notebook or journal.  New entries, with date, occur at the top.  This saves time for teacher to open student work, assess, and provide feedback. |
| **Single sign-on makes online accounts more manageable.** | If the district's technology department has enabled a single sign-on system (e.g., Google Education, Clever), try to use this as often as possible so that students do not have to manage multiple username/password combinations for accessing digital resources. |

# References

- Marshall Street Supporting Student-Collaboration.pdf. (n.d.). Retrieved July 20, 2020, from https://drive.google.com/file/d/1S-eO_T_HiN-quy2FqA31RCsp2j9GzW3h/view
- OpenSciEd – Resources for Remote Teaching Norms. (2020). Retrieved July 20, 2020, from https://www.openscied.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Resources-for-Remote-Teaching-Norms.pdf.

# Developing Norms for Distance Learning

## Vision

Building strong relationships and establishing student created norms sets the stage for high expectations and an equitable culture.  With unpredictable transitions between in-person and distance learning, educators will need to build a strong foundation of norms and revisit often to maximize student engagement and performance.  This guidance attempts to rethink and plan for effective class norms and their implementation.

## Specific Considerations

"Creating norms in a face-to-face classroom setting often begins with asking the students to describe and agree on actions… This practice can be useful in a remote environment but must also attend to the features and constraints of the technology used (or not used). When distance learning is new or necessitated by circumstance, contextualizing familiar norms may help students and teachers feel more at ease. In your efforts to establish norms for distance learning, remember that learning can be messy under the best circumstances. Be flexible and remember that perfection is not the goal" (Staying Grounded when Teaching Remote, 2020).

## Best Practices

### Strategies to support the co-construction of norms in varied environments

Distance Learning Norms Development

The following norms are from Staying Grounded when Teaching Remote at https://www.openscied.org/remote-teaching/.

| Synchronous virtual learning | Asynchronous virtual learning |
|---|---|
| <ul><li>Use a virtual whiteboard with stickies (e.g., Pinup, Padlet, Flipgrid) and get consensus on some shared norms, grouping ideas together.</li><li>Re-establish or adjust classroom norms for a virtual setting</li><li>Revisit norms often and draw attention to a specific norm for the learning session.</li><li>Take time to check-in and connect with students.</li><li>Allow students to express a "digital identity" using a background or profile picture.</li></ul> | <ul><li>Use a digital board (e.g., Google Docs, Padlet, JamBoard) to collect ideas allowing all students to return at a later time to analyze and add comments.</li><li>Post ideas and suggestions for norms (perhaps by category) for the teacher to compile.</li><li>Allow students to react to, vote for, and add ideas to a suggested list of norms. This could also include describing what a particular norm could look like in a distance learning setting.</li><li>Utilize online journals that students can share and "talk to" each other about.</li></ul> |

# Norms that represent best practices for teachers and students in distance learning environments

## Respectful

| Synchronous virtual learning | Asynchronous virtual learning |
|---|---|
| • Use digital talk moves to provide positive feedback.<br>• Use established signals/digital responses to facilitate taking turns to avoid simultaneous talking (e.g., raising hands, thumbs up, muting when others are speaking).<br>• Adhere to agreements about when to use cameras and when to mute/unmute audio. | • Agree that digital platforms (e.g., Pinup, Padlet, Google Docs) are safe places for questions and discussions.<br>• Address the inherent anonymity of using digital tools and define respectful interactions.<br>• Know that others will read and respond to your comments.<br>• Develop respectful comment/ feedback starters (e.g., How about…).<br>• Recognize that thought partners might be working on a different timeline and be patient when waiting for responses. |

## Equitable

| Synchronous virtual learning | Asynchronous virtual learning |
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| • Take time to learn and practice using the digital platform and post tutorial videos for reference.<br>• Recognize that students may access digital platforms with different devices that may have differing capabilities.<br>• Use and rotate breakout groups to increase participation and sharing of ideas.<br>• Use strategies to manage speaking such as each person nominating another to speak, until all have spoken<br>• Check in on students who aren't here.<br>• Provide recordings of lessons for students who miss synchronous interactions. | • Provide opportunities for students to share in different ways, such as videos or written responses or images.<br>• Accept responses that reflect varied student resources such as registers of language.<br>• Monitor contributions and participation. Reach out via phone or text to address gaps. |

## Committed to Community

| Synchronous virtual learning | Asynchronous virtual learning |
|---|---|
| • Maintain a format for recording and tracking progress on student questions.<br>• Encourage patience, support, and kindness among the group, paying particular attention to those who might be new to technology or selected platforms. | • Find a way to honor all contributions.<br>• Provide support for parents (e.g., tutorials, online meetings, overviews of assignments, links to helpful websites). |

Moving Thinking Forward

| Synchronous virtual learning | Asynchronous virtual learning |
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| • Establish structures for quick teacher-student and peer-peer feedback.<br>• Utilize breakout groups for small group discussions and processing before whole group sharing. | • Engage in asynchronous discussion boards.<br>• Set expectations for contributing and responding to asynchronous discussions.<br>• Establish a buddy system and encourage students to agree on times to meet online to collaborate on activities. |

## Considerations to make in order to support to different populations of students when providing distance learning

| Student Population | Considerations |
|---|---|
| Underrepresented students | • Provide ideas for adaptations of materials to the students' home culture and interests.<br>• Opening up instruction so that it no longer involves a school building can be freeing for students who aren't connected to school.<br>• Foster thinking about how this "new normal" can benefit students who were marginalized by school.<br>• Provide opportunities for students to practice skills and ideas that matter to them. |
| Multilingual learners | • Engage support staff and community members in creating translations of materials.<br>• Support student-student discourse using technology if possible.<br>• Allow students to dictate or video record responses for activities.<br>• Use a platform like YouTube that has captioning options. |
| Differently-abled | • Allow for and provide multiple modes of expression to students for sharing ideas, listening/reading/communicating.<br>• Involve the parent/caregiver as much as possible.<br>• Provide scaffolding such as frameworks or sentence starters.<br>• Give them a virtual partner to share ideas and models with.<br>• Record lessons and let them view as many times as needed. |
| Students experiencing homelessness | • Work with area shelters and food banks to coordinate learning resource and meal pickup and drop-off, and space for students to do school work and conduct school check-ins.<br>• Engage other staff in supporting students, ensure consistency.<br>• Secure technology and WiFi for students. |

## How can we acknowledge the realities of distance working and learning?

Working and learning remotely often means sharing space with others, competing for limited technological resources, and dividing attention between learning activities or materials and distractions of the remote environment. Even under the best of circumstances, distractions and unexpected interruptions are inevitable. Teachers and learners in remote settings should operate from a standpoint of compassion and assume the best intentions of each other. As educators we ourselves have varying demands at home and therefore need to find a level of remote engagement with our students that is sustainable for our own self-care and family care.

Some tips include:

| For Teachers: | For Students: |
|---|---|
| See full article: https://www.openscied.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Resources-for-Remote-Teaching-Norms.pdf | See the full article at http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct15/vol73/num02/Creating-a-Safe-Digital-Space.aspx |
| • Accept that each individual will be managing different circumstances in their remote environment.<br>• Assume technological glitches will happen.<br>• Be flexible and patient.<br>• Check in frequently with learning community members and ask how they are managing.<br>• Invite and offer gratitude.<br>• Offer reassurance by highlighting the good.<br>• Maintain your regular routines as closely as possible.<br>• Encourage positive media habits and be a role model for healthy habits. | • *Use names*. Using a person's name when you respond to his or her postings creates a friendly online tone.<br>• *Read questions and conversational postings carefully* to avoid unnecessary confusion.<br>• *Compliment your peers* when they post strong responses or contribute original ideas to the conversation.<br>• *Ask questions*. If anything is unclear or you want further information or insight on a topic, just ask.<br>• *Be considerate*. Remember that your peers cannot see your body language or hear your tone of voice, so you need to keep your language direct and respectful.<br>• *Respond instead of reacting*. Do not write a response if you are angry or upset. Instead, wait until you have had time to calm down and collect your thoughts.<br>• *Critique the content*, not the person.<br>• *Don't use all caps* when writing. It is interpreted as yelling. |

# References

- Ascd. (n.d.). The Techy Teacher / Creating a Safe Digital Space. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct15/vol73/num02/Creating-a-Safe-Digital-Space.aspx
- Staying Grounded when Teaching Remote. (2020, June 23). Retrieved from https://www.openscied.org/remote-teachings

# ELA Content-Specific Considerations for Unfinished Learning & Best Practices

## Vision

The central priority of acceleration work in English Language Arts is to ensure that all students in Rhode Island can read and write on grade-level. We recommend that this guidance be utilized in conjunction with the local education agency's set of high-quality instructional materials to ensure that instruction is rigorous and grade-level appropriate.

## Specific Considerations

- It is paramount that our students in grades K-3 receive systematic, cumulative, and explicit instruction in [Structured Literacy](#).
- Prioritize remediation of foundational reading skills that focus on decoding (phonological awareness, phonics, encoding).
- The Common Core ELA State Standards are designed to promote vertical alignment across grade-level. Therefore, given this intentional design, instruction should focus on current-level work.
- High-Quality ELA Curriculum Materials should drive both in-person and remote instruction.
- Students should be given multiple opportunities throughout a week to read, discuss, and write about grade-level text.

The following guidance and best practices build upon Student Achievement Partner's Instructional Priority Content Guidance document. Utilize the RI Reentry guidance in concert with the SAP Instructional Priority Content Guidance as their guidance provides in-depth support for leaders in finding "new efficiencies in the curriculum that are critical for the unique challenges that have resulted from school closures and anticipated disruptions in the ear ahead, keeping at the forefront principles of equitable instruction that supports all students." Specifically, to inform and guide decisions:

- to design modifications to scope and sequence documents,
- to design professional learning scope and sequence for teachers,
- to design modifications to district-created instructional materials where used, and
- to support administrators in implementing equitable instruction and equitable structures.

# Best Practices[1]

1. **Prioritize the most critical prerequisite skills and knowledge for each subject area and grade level now**.
   - K-12
     - Prioritize and accelerate **language comprehension**.
       - Integrate **vocabulary** instruction within and across content areas.
       - Provide multiple opportunities for oral read-alouds of expository texts to **build background** and topical knowledge.
       - Teach increasingly complex sentence **structure** and prioritize **grammar** to further comprehension by using strategies outlined within High-Quality Curriculum, or strategies such at The Hochman Method.
     - Prioritize College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards in your current grade-level.
       - Student Achievement Partners notes "**some standards require greater emphasis than others based on the literacy research** about what matters most and the time and practice they take to develop."
       - The following 14 CCR standards – CCSS RF.4, L.4, L.5, L.6, RI.1, RI.4, RI.9, RI.10, RL.1, RL.4, RL.10, SL.1, W.8, and W.9 should be prioritized.[2]
   - K-3: Foundational Reading Skills
     - Prioritize foundational reading skills with focus on **decoding**. Student Achievement Partners recommends 40 to 60 minutes daily should be dedicated to strong **systematic, cumulative, explicit** instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, encoding, and regular, repeated practice with decodable texts.
     - Prioritize opportunities for students to practice early literacy skills. Use online learning platform such as Lexia, Amplify Reading, or Foundations Learning System.

2. **Plan your approach to identifying students' unfinished learning in that prerequisite content knowledge and those prerequisite skills**.
   - K-12
     - Due to the interruption in curriculum last year, it is important to probe for missing background knowledge before beginning a unit. Ask students to share what they know about the topic of each unit. This should be informal and brief. Such pre-checks should not take more than 20 minutes of instructional time or be graded. The purpose is to leverage students' background knowledge as they access complex texts about a similar topic.
     - In Grades 3-12, when students are more likely to be independently reading core texts, include periodic and informal measurement of fluency with grade-level text to monitor progress and provide additional supports.
   - K-3: Foundational Reading Skills
     - Gather data on all students during the first weeks of school.
     - Gather relevant diagnostic data using a flowchart such as this one provided by The AIM Institute. Assess students using measures for letter knowledge, phonological and phonemic awareness,

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[1] Steps for best practices adapted from TNTP's Learning Acceleration Guide *Recommendations for Accelerating Student Learning*
[2] Student Achievement Partners: https://achievethecore.org/content/upload/2020%E2%80%9321 Priority Instructional Content in ELA Literacy and Mathematics_June 2020.pdf#page=62

encoding, rapid naming, and decoding real and pseudowords in isolation from high-quality adopted materials to inform instruction.

- o If high-quality materials are missing these assessments, use the following resources to support: DIBELS or Acadience, or assessments from Really Great Reading.

3. **Adapt your scope, sequence/pacing guidance for each subject area, and grade level to reflect where teachers might need to provide acceleration support.**
   - K-12
     - o Implement the following guidance provided by Student Achievement Partners, organized by grade band: K-1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-12
     - o Begin by looking at your scope and sequences for current year instruction only. Given the intentional design of the CCSS, we do not recommend adapting scope and sequences to accommodate previous year or grade instruction.
     - o Use the 14 CCR standards (CCSS RF.4, L.4, L.5, L.6, RI.1, RI.4, RI.9, RI.10, RL.1, RL.4, RL.10, SL.1, W.8, and W.9) to prioritize content.
     - o Collaborate with your team to classify lessons as **"must do," "should do," and "aspire to do"** for a **unit** of study.
       - ▪ The **"must do,"** lessons will be the lessons aligned the 14 CCR standards recommended for prioritization.
       - ▪ Create a consistent pacing guide to execute all **"must do"**, many **"should do"**, and some **"aspire to do"** lessons by the designated end date for the unit.
   - K-3: Foundational Reading Skills
     - o Any weaknesses identified in letter knowledge, phonological and phonemic awareness, encoding, rapid naming, and/or decoding should become prioritized areas of instruction and remediation.

4. **Monitor your students' progress on grade-appropriate assignments and adjust your supports for teachers and leaders based on student results.**
   - K-12
     - o Consider motivation, engagement, and data when determining supports for students.
     - o Consider the reason behind student motivation, engagement, and data and determine if there may be an underlying learning difference that may not be immediately noticeable that require supports. For example, if students who struggle with word-level reading are showing weaknesses in reading comprehension, consider technology supports to create and maintain a Universal Design for Learning that removes any barriers to knowledge. For literacy, this includes considering digital supports.
   - K-3: Foundational Reading Skills
     - o Collect formative data during daily lessons to inform both whole-class and skill-based small-group instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, and decoding accuracy.
     - o If your high-quality curriculum materials do not include formative assessments, students' ability to decode and encode new words based on grade-level appropriate phonological awareness and phonics instruction can be tracked using checklists.
     - o Instruction should be adjusted according to this data with instructional prioritization placed on populations including multilingual learners and students who struggle with word-level reading. Use the flowchart to guide instructional decisions as students progress through skills.

# Mathematics Content-Specific Considerations for Unfinished Learning & Best Practices

## Vision

The central priority of acceleration is to ensure that all students in Rhode Island remain on track for college and career readiness in mathematics by moving forward with instruction on grade-level content, capitalizing on students' strengths and providing bridges to prior learning as needed. Accelerating student learning of grade-level content avoids the more typical practice of remediation in which students engage with large chunks of content from the previous grade prior to grade-level learning.

We recommend that this guidance be utilized in conjunction with an LEA's set of high-quality instructional materials to ensure that instruction is rigorous and grade-level appropriate.

## Specific Considerations

- **Grade-/course-level** mathematics standards are the guide for instruction.
- Foundational grade-level content, content necessary to advance future learning, should be prioritized in order to provide time and space to accelerate grade-level learning.
- Identify prerequisite knowledge and skills relevant to supporting the understanding of grade-level content.
- Assessment should be used to determine **how** to bring students into a unit of grade-level instruction, not whether to bring them into it (Student Achievement Partners, 2020).
- Both in-person and remote instruction should incorporate the three elements of rigor embodied in the standards.
- Content instruction should continue to integrate the Standards for Mathematical Practice since they are closely related to social, emotional, and academic development (Student Achievement Partners, 2020), and draw on norms and best practices for remote instruction as circumstances require.

## Best Practices

1. **Grade-/course-level** mathematics standards are the guide for instruction.
   a. Educational experts in mathematics agree, teachers should focus on teaching their students grade-level content, so students remain on track for college and career readiness (NCTM, NCSM, 2020).
   b. Educators at all grade levels should resist the temptation to begin the year by teaching/reteaching standards from a previous grade level.
2. Foundational grade-level content, content necessary to advance future learning, should be prioritized in order to accelerate grade-level learning.

a.  Consult RIDE's Accelerating Student Learning guidance for K-8 and High School, as well as the guidance that may be provided by your high quality mathematics curriculum.
b.  For all grades and high school courses, consult the guidance provided by Student Achievement Partners.
c.  The notable courses are Algebra 1 (whether offered over the course of one or two years or in middle school) and Algebra 2 if it is offered the year immediately following Algebra 1. Teams of Algebra teachers should draw on their content expertise to come to consensus about what the content priorities should be. The PSAT/SAT high school assessment targets and the Student Achievement Partners' Mathematics guidance will help inform what standards should not be eliminated from the prioritization, but by no means identify the scope of content that should be taught.

3.  Identify prerequisite knowledge and skills relevant to supporting the understanding of grade-level content.
    a.  Educators in grades K-8 can use the Coherence Map, the Rhode Island Mathematics Progression, and/or their high-quality curriculum resources to assist in identifying relevant prerequisite knowledge and skills.
    b.  Content and course sequences in high school vary across the state. As such high school educators, and those middle school educators teaching Algebra or Geometry, will need to consider course sequencing and the breadth of standards within a prior course when addressing prerequisite skills. For example, a teacher of an Algebra 2 course will most likely need to think of standards from Algebra 1 as opposed to those from Geometry. Algebra 1 teachers should consider 8th grade standards that may or may not have been addressed due to COVID-19. Prerequisite skills for Geometry might link back to the standards for grade 7 or 8, so these students may only have typical areas of unfinished learning and not gaps attributable to COVID-19.  Again, the Coherence Map is a helpful resource.

4.  Assessment should be used to determine **how** to bring students into a unit of grade-level instruction, not whether to bring them into it (Student Achievement Partners, 2020).
    a.  Formative assessment should be strategically and consistently used to gauge understanding of prerequisite knowledge and skills. Rather than an extensive assessment at the beginning of the year, assess students' readiness for new content just prior to beginning a unit, and avoid the temptation to assess for prior knowledge unrelated to the content at hand. For some grade-level content, there are few if any prerequisite skills and therefore no need to pre-assess at all. (Student Achievement Partners, 2020).
    b.  Results from formative assessments should determine strengths and the need for just-in-time supports and scaffolding for grade-level content (NCTM, NCSM 2020).
    c.  The Coherence Map can be a useful tool when selecting formative assessment tasks.
    d.  Open-ended tasks and constructed responses can be useful for broadly assessing prerequisite knowledge and skills (NCTM, NCSM 2020).

5.  Both in-person and remote instruction should continue to incorporate the three elements of rigor embodied in the standards.
    a.  The standards call for a balance of procedural skill and fluency, conceptual understanding, and application, which should be preserved in either in-person or remote instruction. RIDE's Accelerating Student Learning guidance for K-8 and High School offer suggestions on how to structure a lesson aimed at accelerating learning while attending to the three aspects of rigor.

b. Employing well-chosen, high demand tasks that connect to the students' world provides them with opportunities to "engage deeply with grade-level mathematics by justifying claims, sharing their thinking and responding to the thinking of others" (Student Achievement Partners, 2020). The use of such tasks becomes of paramount importance during these times in order to avoid shallow engagement characterized by low cognitive demand, habits we wish to avoid instilling in our students. Some of the sources for high demand tasks include those found in the Coherence Map, or Illustrative Mathematics. Don't overlook those provided in your own high quality curriculum.

6. Content instruction should continue to integrate the Standards for Mathematical Practice since they are closely related to social, emotional, and academic development (Student Achievement Partners, 2020), and draw on norms and best practices for remote instruction as circumstances require.

a. Focus on integrating one or two relevant Standards for Mathematical Practice within a lesson to enhance content understanding.

b. Capitalize on the opportunities provided by the Standards for Mathematical Practice to build relationships, a sense of community, and student agency. For example, by providing norms for students to construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others, educators create an environment that allows students to work with and respect their peers, deepen their understanding, and increase their mathematical confidence.

c. In a distance learning environment, establish "classroom" norms and incorporate applicable structures and protocols from RIDE's best practices for remote learning guidance.

# References

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# Science Content-Specific Considerations for Unfinished Learning & Best Practices

## Vision

The central priority of acceleration work is to ensure that all students in Rhode Island meet the grade level or grade band Performance Expectations of the Next Generation Science Standards.  We recommend you use the following guidance in conjunction with your district's set of high-quality instructional materials to ensure that instruction is rigorous and grade level appropriate.  Additionally, use lessons learned to enhance best practices during distance learning.

## Specific Considerations

- Teachers prioritize and plan grade-level content and review prerequisite Disciplinary Core Ideas for the current year's scope and sequence (Learning Progressions Matrix of DCIs).
- Use vertical collaboration from prior year teachers and progression documents to plan acceleration support.
- Consider implications on pacing and activities planned in the current grade level scope and sequence.
- Use formative and summative assessments and progress monitor for proficiency according to Disciplinary Core Idea learning progressions using 3-Dimensional assessment tasks.

## Best Practices

### Addressing Unfinished Learning

1. Teach current grade level (K-5) or grade span (6-8, 9-12) NGSS Standards according to your district scope and sequence. Read the NGSS Standards here & Matrix of Disciplinary Core Ideas.
2. Avoid remediation that focuses solely on teaching what was missed in a prior year. Instead, prepare to scaffold students to relevant grade level topics and NGSS Performance Expectations as needed.
3. Students will have multiple opportunities to engage in Science and Engineering Practices and Crosscutting Concepts in subsequent years and these will not be considered unfinished learning.   However, all teachers should be familiar with the progressions of these dimensions.
    a. Learning Progressions Matrix of SEPs
    b. Learning Progressions Matrix of CCCs
    c. Matrix of Learning Progressions for Engineering

# *Distance Learning in K-12 Science*

## Building Student and Family Relationships

| | |
|---|---|
| **Communication expectations** | Develop a structure and frequency for family/student communication on app, assignments, and performance expectations for science. |
| **Communication method** | At the middle level, consider sending a team level correspondence with all content assignments in the same email/doc or one grade level email with a link to a webpage with all subjects listed.  Many families have more than one child and emails add quickly and become less effective.  If you use Google Classroom, invite parents, so they see new assignments and comments in real time. |

## Establishing Norms in Science

| | |
|---|---|
| **Teach the distance learning technology upfront** | Make sure students and families are familiar with accessing, navigating, and documenting their participation.  Model and practice whole group until it's seamless.   Show them how to toggle between windows and tabs for simulations and their electronic science notebook. |
| **Begin each activity with norms** | After launching face to face and virtual norms (see these sample science norms), be sure to revisit often and build into daily lessons and assignments whether synchronous or asynchronous. |
| **Model with tools and visuals.** | Students need to understand what the expectations are for full participation and assignment proficiency.  For example, you could link Talk Moves in your slides and in the chat as a reminder of norms. |
| **Provide opportunities for students to become proficient.** | Focus on a few apps and set expectations with students for peer and independent participation.  Collaborate on criteria for group discussion and what products should look like by allowing student voice. |
| **Streamline managing student documents for assessing and providing feedback.** | Consider using one document per student as their digital science notebook.  New entries occur at the top.  This saves time for the teacher to open student work, assess, and provide feedback. |

## Engagement in Science

| | |
|---|---|
| **Engagement exists when productive teaching practices, a safe environment, and positive relationships come together.** | Asynchronous activities should rely on peer collaboration and feedback to increase engagement.  Strategies to achieve this in virtual learning include regular communication, replying timely and frequently, using the technology that works best for student or family, personalizing feedback, and setting up mandatory 1:1 check-ins. |
| **Understand what's working with students and families.** | Conduct periodic surveys with families and students to learn which areas need improvement with distance learning. |

| Let students showcase their knowledge. | Put the students at the center of establishing criteria for successful criteria of participation and product.  Provide opportunities for students to present live or record over a slide deck or with Screencast. |
|---|---|
| Conduct synchronous sessions that include student voice and student presentations. | Activities like jigsaws, student facilitated gallery walks with digital group docs, or group project presentation – try out these ideas for student to student interaction. |
| Create intentional small groups to accelerate learning. | Use break out rooms and polling features to keep students engaged. Some teachers find it helpful to require a minimum number of verbal or written responses during synchronous sessions to demonstrate proficiency in some of the science and engineering practices. Try these group discourse strategies! |
| Engaging in the practices of science helps students understand how scientific knowledge develops; such direct involvement gives them an appreciation of the wide range of approaches that are used to investigate, model, and explain the world. | Avoid long videos with questions at the end, instead use Ed Puzzle to focus on segments with custom questions built in that require completion to advance the video.  Make sure questions are related to one or more of the 3 dimensions of NGSS.  Are students using videos, articles, and simulations to: <br><br> 1. Ask questions (for science) or defining problems (for engineering) <br> 2. Develop or use models <br> 3. Plan and carry out investigations <br> 4. Analyze and interpret data <br> 5. Use mathematics and computational thinking <br> 6. Construct explanations (for science) or designing solutions (for engineering) <br> 7. Engage in argument from evidence <br> 8. Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information (NGSS Appendix F) <br> 9. Identify broader themes, Crosscutting Concepts (NGSS Appendix G) |

# Resources and References

- Resources
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# Social Studies Content-Specific Considerations for Unfinished Learning & Best Practices

## Vision

How should social studies teachers approach planning for instruction and assessment in a school year where learning may take place both in-classroom (under social distancing constraints) and virtually? This guide, in addition to the Distance Learning Best Practices document, looks at strategies for engaging students in social studies topics, concepts, and skills whether learning is taking place in the classroom or through distance learning to try for seamless transitions from one to the other.

While social studies' content and skills are less rigidly bound to a sequential development process than other content areas, many students may begin the year with unfinished learning as a result of instructional and curricular choices and priorities from distance learning the previous spring. The benefit to social studies in this situation is its flexibility. Within its domains (history, geography, culture, civics, and economics), content generally starts in the elementary grades through an understanding of ourselves, and how we interact with the world, which then expands to a broader worldview throughout the secondary grades into the community and wider world – topics varying by district choice, and skills introduced and generally building in similar sequence to literacy and science.

Although domain content can be integrated with other subject areas, the concern is that social studies may again be the least prioritized of the core content areas, particularly in the elementary grades, as a result of addressing unfinished learning for the other subjects. This document describes various strategies to engage students in social studies disciplines through topics, concepts, and skills during the upcoming school year so that, regardless of the mode of instruction, there is continuity of students' progress in the content and skills of that grade.

## Specific Considerations

- Social studies standards and yearlong scopes and sequences should guide what standards and topics will be covered when and how students will apply their knowledge of the standards.
- Educators must be critical consumers of text-based and online resources for both in-person and remote instruction since social studies has no nationally recognized standards for high quality curriculum materials. In other words, there needs to be a balance when prioritizing content so that availability of resources (high quality or not) is not the determining factor for whether content is taught.
- Students making age-appropriate connections between the self, community, and world are integral to the study of history, geography, culture, civics, economics, and current events in the social studies.
- Student agency and engagement should be supported through age-appropriate learning opportunities that integrate text-based and virtual materials and instructional activities.

# Best Practices

1. Collaborate to ensure social studies has sufficient/equitable time provided regardless of classroom, hybrid, or distance learning methods.
   - The risk of condensing core content into literacy and math is the loss of discipline specific skills and knowledge that are not a direct focus through literacy and math instruction.
   - Avoid the urge to address deep and broad content in a shorter period of instructional time.
   - Discuss with educators the content to prioritize for this year. Take into consideration unfinished content from the prior year if it was prerequisite to this year's necessary knowledge and skills.
   - Grade spans may approach this by:
     - K-5: Deliberate integration of social studies with other content areas when lesson or unit planning, particularly through project-based learning.
     - 6-12: Deliberate partnership with teachers from other content areas when lesson or unit planning (e.g., common tasks, project-based learning) to support students' ability to learn and apply knowledge and skills across content areas.
2. Prioritize age-appropriate development of historical thinking skills, civic dispositions, and student agency.
   - Focus on key themes or essential questions (both current and throughout history) to tap into students' curiosity and support making connections.
   - Increase student agency in learning (e.g., 'acting like a historian', media literacy skills, synthesizing learning to solve real-world scenarios) in age-appropriate ways.
   - Grade spans may approach this by:
     - K-5: Exploring how and why people in different places built and/or changed their communities (e.g., geography for transportation and materials, civics for rules and customs and getting along, history for comparing different ways to get to the 'same' goal, economics for interactions and trade between things people valued).
     - 6-12:  Students choose a topic from a particular era, event, or decision, and find information from a list of reputable and current sources in order to answer a set of essential questions. Alternatively, students choose an issue in their community, research its origins and other actions taken to address it, and then create and follow their own plan to resolve it.
3. Plan an approach that utilizes instructional strategies centered in engagement with (rather than dissemination of) information, and which can seamlessly transition from classroom to remote learning.
   - Social studies content and skills are reinforced by instructional strategies utilizing hands-on engagement (e.g., project-based learning, group work, community engagement, field trips, classroom guests) – which may be more difficult in distance learning or during times of transition.
   - Build students' content knowledge through engagement with primary or secondary sources that cover multiple perspectives on the same era, topic, event, or issue.
   - Grade spans may approach this by:
     - K-2: Reading and discussing books as a class that share stories about children from different perspectives and cultures; students make connections between events or characters in that book and other books read, as well as connections to themselves.
     - 3-5: Discussing historical scenarios with students and having students consider the context, problem, and create their own solutions to resolve it – regardless how feasible their answers actually are, the point is to problem solve – then share what happened and explore the reasons

behind that outcome or decision. Alternatively, students choose a person from a diverse list in a particular time period or with a particular theme and present "as" that person.

- o 6-12: Engaging students in making connections from learning to life by thoughtfully using the current context in age-appropriate ways (need for thoughtful curation of materials from the media to prevent the pandemic from being overwhelming to students), or researching past world-impacting events (or eras) and different historical experiences or responses: what are current/past experiences like, how do/did events and decisions affect individuals and groups, how are/were those decisions made and enforced, and how do/did people balance rights and responsibilities.

4. Review current materials when planning in order to reflect on how engaging the materials are for students, how easily materials can be adapted for virtual use, and how sensitive the contents are to students' social emotional learning needs during this time/context.

- Finding and using materials that engage students is critical to ensuring learning continues regardless of location of instruction. Since approximately half of all social studies educators supplement or replace district-provided textbook materials with materials they find themselves, careful attention needs to be paid to the sources.
- Social studies materials vary widely, and some may not be easily adaptable for use when transitioning to distance learning, so before introducing that content in the classroom, map as many resources as possible to age-appropriate virtual or online sources (e.g., interactive apps, modules, museum exhibits, virtual field trips, videoconferencing guests) and plan how to scaffold appropriately for vocabulary or other considerations.
- In addition to being culturally responsive, materials chosen may need to be reviewed with a lens toward students' social emotional learning needs and their experiences and hardships faced since the pandemic began – in particular for current events, given the media's focus on emotionally draining topics. This also provokes the need to target critical literacy skills in a cultural time period where media are influenced by ideological positions.
- Grade spans may approach this by:
  - o K-5: Interactive lessons with physical or online manipulatives (e.g., learning about money, puzzles for geography, trivia with a purpose).
  - o 6-8: By topic, source from online museum or historical site exhibits for information as well as interactive tasks or videos, or even virtual guests.
  - o 9-12: Curate a list of non-profit websites that focus on a particular historical topic, event, era, or person (e.g., legislative commissions, humanities grant-funded projects) as both source material and as models for projects in the types of questions asked and answered, and in the presentation of information.

5. Make available and train teachers in online tools that can be used in-person or remotely, and that support teachers' effective instructional strategies for teaching social studies content.

- Be particularly mindful in keeping resources or materials from driving instruction or choices of content coverage. Avoid sole utilization of asynchronous assignments or reliance upon third-party apps or videos to "teach" students. Social studies content requires contextualization and educator- and student-to-student engagement (especially at younger grades). Scaffolding may be necessary for resources that include unfamiliar vocabulary (particularly for differently-abled students or multilingual learners) or reference topics not part of students' prior knowledge.

- Test whether certain familiar technology tools used in the classroom can be used during remote instruction before introducing them to students (e.g., GIS mapping applications, economic or other simulations, high resolution media). Some tools may not be usable due to licensing or installation requirements, or else may burden students with low internet bandwidth or older computers or devices. Consider equitable alternatives when planning those units.

6. Monitor students' progress on grade-appropriate assignments, and adjust strategies and supports based on student results.
    - Resist the temptation to prioritize "fast results" when selecting or creating an assessment, instead of student demonstration of understanding of content.
    - Consider both traditional and creative means for students to demonstrate learning (e.g., quizzes, tests, graded activities, writing tasks or essays, artwork, poems, presentations, newspaper articles, web pages, podcasts, films, news briefings, documentaries, video testimonials, film reviews).

# Resources and References

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# Early Learning Curriculum & Best Practice Considerations

## Vision

This guidance is to support all Preschool and Pre-K classrooms as we re-enter school on August 31, 2020.  As young children enter EC classrooms, they will exhibit knowledge and skills across multiple learning domains in a variety of ways. To accommodate this, ECE teachers are accustomed to setting the stage at the beginning of each school year and should always begin by implementing with fidelity, a high-quality curriculum and strong social and emotional learning.

Given the current context of our world, we anticipate children coming in with more social challenges and emotional needs. To improve educational and social and emotional outcomes for young children, EC educators must focus on demonstrated SEL, use HQ curriculum to intentionally plan, build thoughtful routines, and construct knowledge by engaging children in a variety of relevant learning experiences, all while being reflective, responsive, and adaptable to the needs of the children and the fluctuating environment (Trauma Informed Teaching).

As distance learning is an especially challenging model for our youngest learners, this document will focus on addressing social and emotional needs, building foundational structures which will support transitions, and improving distance learning (ECE Remote Learning).

## Specific Considerations

- Play is essential in all early childhood classrooms (NAEYC Meaningful Play).
- High-Quality ECE curriculum should drive both in-person and distance learning.
- All learning opportunities should be rooted in child development and based on the RIELDS.
- Assessment data should be used to determine how students apply their knowledge and to continuously improve instructional support for students.
- Building relationships is even more important during distance learning.
- Regular communication and collaboration with families is a key component to success.
- A variety of engaging instructional practices should be leveraged for online learning and off-screen activities.

## Best Practices

### Social and Emotional Learning

While there is a great deal of information unknown, there is a certain amount of control within your organization or classrooms to make informed, thoughtful and forward-thinking decisions.

Early Childhood classrooms are, for many, the first introduction into education and schools for young children. ECE classroom teachers are dedicated to creating welcoming and engaging environments that acknowledge and support each child's efforts to construct an understanding of the world. Play is the primary mechanism through which young children develop higher-level thinking skills, enhanced language development, problem-solving capabilities, and empathy toward each other.

As schools plan to come back together, they must consider ways to prioritize the mental and physical wellbeing of students, staff, and families, regardless of location. And, if we believe play is a crucial part of learning, we owe it to our students to find a way to incorporate play into distance learning.

## Routines

When children are in the classroom, teachers must prioritize creating safe and supportive environments. Establishing predictable routines within ECE classrooms fosters a sense of calm within children as they navigate a new environment. Calm children are better able to focus, regulate their emotions, and begin building relationships. An orderly environment, focusing on safety and nurturing each child's wellbeing will include time for academics, unstructured time for playing and collaboration, small group and independent work, movement, and explorations.

As distance learning is a likely scenario, it will be important that classroom routines provide a sense of emotional safety and security and maximize learning time, so when a change in location occurs, teachers can build on the existing foundation. ECE teachers should model rituals that teach, provide opportunities, practice skills, and help students incorporate positive practices into their daily routines that can be translated into an at home environment.

An important consideration for building routines is the delivery platform and applications that children will be using if/when engaging in distance learning. While technology might not typically be a component of setting the stage in ECE classrooms, this will be an important step in creating an effective and equitable learning environment. Children who understand the platform and basic operating procedures of learning apps (e.g., logging in, mute, finding work) will be more successful during distance learning.

For additional information about developing successful classroom routines visit EC Learning Environments or listen to CD Routine Podcast.

## Relationships

Students come from diverse backgrounds, but the one thing they all have in common is the need for a safe learning environment. Building relationships is an integral part of creating a safe early learning classroom. While EC teachers must always take time to cultivate strong relationships, build partnerships, and plan for SEL, COVID-19 has brought with it a greater need for this approach.

Teachers must effectively plan for supportive and equitable learning environments that promote social, emotional, and academic learning for all students, as a child's social skills, emotional state, and sense of value have an impact on their learning. It is important for classrooms to have a HQ curriculum embedded with building positive relationships into everyday play and learning.

When building relationships is at the center of an early childhood classroom, the quality of student-teacher interactions and academics improves. Teachers lead group discussions, model, and practice building relationship skills such as how to kindly get a friend's attention, how to take turns, how to express feelings, and how to solve

conflicts. These opportunities to learn and practice within each day help children connect with others, relieve stress, and support making positive choices (Teacher Child Relationships).

In an effort to support transitions throughout the year, teachers should seek ways to build relationships that will foster a positive online community. Consider how structures used in the classrooms will translate into distance learning. Think about the pace of lessons, take a few moments to slow down and set the right tone for the class, build in regular check-ins to assess student's engagement and understanding (thumbs up, thumbs down), and think about closing with a reflection activity. Check-ins do not need to be long to be effective but will help establish expectations for how you and your class want to be together as a learning community in class and during distance learning.

For additional information about building and sustaining relationships visit Reconnecting with Conscious Discipline.

## Resilience

Resilience develops through supportive relationships, adaptive skills, and positive experiences that are built over time. The teacher's role is to create an atmosphere that supports relationships and uses strong systems of communication in order to guide and support children through problems and strong feelings, and to embed positive strategies into daily practice.

While in school, helping children to develop the ability to recognize and identify their emotions, and manage them appropriately, will strengthen their ability to so during distance learning and will help prepare them for the challenges of transitioning. Children who function well in the face of adversity do so with the help of positive social interactions, caring relationships, and exposure to supportive interventions, this can be done both in person and through DL. The more we are able to celebrate successes, encourage conversations, and model healthy strategies for managing feelings the more resilient children will become (Resilience and Conscious Discipline).

## Distance Learning

It is likely that at some point during the school year children will move from one educational setting to another. As students move through in-person and distance learning their ability to predict routines, rely on relationships and continue to develop resilience will play a major factor in their success. When moving to DL, ECE teams should consider a schedule that is more fluid since independent use of technology has obvious limitations for young children. During distance learning, teachers should create fun activities that address both social emotional and academic needs, which should be reflected in classroom and DL schedules.

Teachers should think carefully about how they can create an online space and schedule that closely represents the physical classroom. Encourage students to share something from home, move classroom accessories like bulletin boards and job charts online, celebrate student work, and when possible, circulate and observe student learning.  As students become more familiar with the DL routine and expectations, teachers should work to incorporate opportunities for children to spend time online with each other through virtual recess, hangouts, and age-appropriate connections, while also arranging time for individual teacher check-ins.

Remember that teachers set the tone for the classroom, regardless of location, and should be continually aware of their presence. Slowing down, pausing between sentences, smiling, maintaining eye contact, talking in a calm manner, making your face visible, and being mindful of anxiety levels will significantly help students to co-regulate.

Regular communication with families will be essential as younger children will need support to complete many distance learning activities. Teachers must be aware that DL may take longer than face-to-face teaching and carefully

plan so as not to overwhelm students and parents. Students and families must be made aware of the regular schedule and any changes that might be made, the expectations for participation, and how and when they will receive feedback.

Providing families with easily accessible suggestions to develop language skills, reading together, counting, fine and gross motor skills, and support practice and additional skill development during regular family activities teachers can refer them to Rhode Island's Family Fun Activities.

In and out of the classroom, ECE teachers must be agile and adaptable, building relationships, modeling skills and expectations, supporting the physical safety and emotional wellbeing of all children, while continually gathering input from students, planned and unplanned learning experiences, and families, and using that information to adjust the environment, their instruction, and educational and SEL supports accordingly.

# Resources

Below are additional resources to support teachers and children during the first weeks of school and in preparation for distance learning.

- SEL
  - o RI SEL Recommendations
  - o SEL Re-Entry Roadmap
- Distance Learning
  - o Creating a Digital Classroom
  - o Digital Media Supports
  - o Virtual Learning Strategies

# Assessment Considerations & Best Practices for School Year 2020-21

## Vision

The central priority of a comprehensive assessment system is to ensure that all educators, families, and students have actionable feedback and data to inform instruction. We recommend that schools or districts use this guidance when planning for assessing student learning in conjunction with high-quality instructional materials to ensure that instruction is rigorous and grade level appropriate.

## Specific Considerations

- A comprehensive assessment system includes different types of assessments intended for specific purposes administered strategically throughout the school year to measure students' ability to apply their knowledge and skills according to the content standards.
- Assessments should align to the high-quality curriculum and standards taught, with results analyzed within the context of the assessment's purpose and its method of administration (in-person or remote).
- Assessments are intended to serve curriculum and instruction, and therefore administration should respect and support instructional time.

## Best Practices

Learning gaps and summer learning loss are not new challenges, but given the unprecedented move to statewide distance learning due to COVID-19, the extent of the gaps and learning losses are unknown. As we plan for the SY 2020-21, what are the best assessment practices to quickly identify gaps in learning and ensure students make meaningful progress? We know what works to help students succeed – high expectations and rigorous grade-level instruction; therefore, our assessments need to provide the data needed to inform that instruction. The goal is to protect instructional time while at the same time provide educators the information they need.
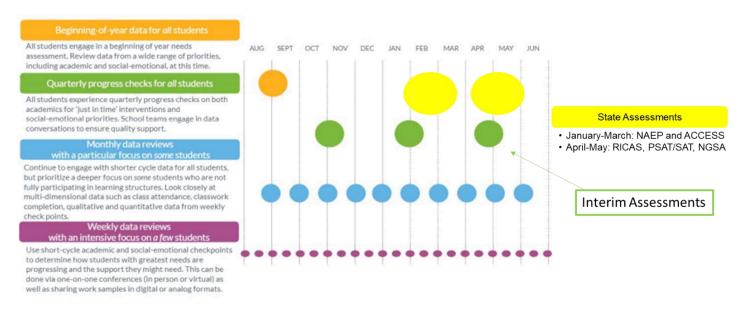
1. Plan and Establish Learning Outcomes

2. Teach

3. Learn and Practice

4. Assess

Four best practices form a cycle to support student learning and meaningful progress.

1. **Plan and Establish Learning Outcomes:** Gather student academic data through these types of assessments as part of your school and/or district comprehensive assessment system (see the sample year-long data review map on the next page). Use the data to inform your instruction, next steps, and supports, especially for students not making progress.

- **Beginning Year Data (orange dot):** Historical data, needs assessment (e.g., prerequisite knowledge/skills for first unit, students' social emotional needs), and/or discussion of student's progress with prior year teacher(s). What skills and knowledge were not covered in the curriculum? Which skills and knowledge were a challenge due to distance learning? Discuss distance learning experiences with students and their families to find what worked and what did not.
- **State Assessment results from 2018-19 (yellow dots)** for RICAS, NGSA, SAT, PSAT 10, and DLM, as applicable. When comparing grade-level results, do lower scores at the reporting category or domain level correspond to lack of coverage in the curriculum? If not, when and how is that curriculum content taught?
- **Interim Assessment (green dots)** denotes assessments like Star, IXL, iReady, NWEA, etc. Are students progressing in their learning? If assessments were administered remotely, are the results consistent with other measures of student learning?
- **Diagnostic Screener data (blue dots)** indicates MTSS and other measures used to identify and prioritize students who are not making progress. Where do the students need additional supports or interventions? How can their learning be accelerated?
- **Formative Assessments (purple dots)** are quick checks of student learning, such as homework, exit tickets, or practice during class. What does students' work tell you about what they are learning successfully, having challenges with, or missing entirely at an individual student, small group, or classroom level? How does that inform your practice on a day-to-day or week-to-week basis? What may need to be revisited when introducing new content?

## SAMPLE YEAR-LONG DATA REVIEW MAP:



Source, with State Assessment addition:
- Achievement Network. "3 Principles for Assessments During Instructional Recovery and Beyond". http://go.achievementnetwork.org/rs/731-WJI-089/images/ANet%20Guidance_3%20Principles%20for%20Assessment%20During%20Instructional%20Recovery%20and%20Beyond.pdf

2. **Teach:** Learning gaps are not a new challenge, and we know what works to help students succeed:
   - Keep expectations high and prioritize rigorous grade-level instruction.
   - Don't waste time trying to make up for all the gaps; use surgical precision to accurately and quickly identify the prerequisite knowledge and skills needed to access the current lesson and scaffold for those who need more support.
   - Keep remediation limited to a relatively short amount of time each week and make sure it is personalized.

3. **Learn and Practice:**
   - Ensure that students are able to learn and practice those skills that were challenging due to distance learning.
   - Ensure that in-class and distance learning practice opportunities cover the same knowledge and skills.
   - Differentiate teaching methods and materials so that students who are in class and are distance learning make progress through the curriculum together.

4. **Assess and Reflect:**
   - Compare results from formative assessments (and any other assessments that were administered) to benchmarks used to create learning goals.
   - Are students making progress on learning goals?
   - Does the data you collected support your course of action?
   - Did each student make progress on learning the prerequisite knowledge and skills? Is additional teaching or remediation necessary?
   - Reflect on whether the assessment tools included in your Comprehensive Assessment System:
     - provided information to identify students who may need additional supports to demonstrate proficiency of grade level content standards?
     - supported in-person and remote administration?
     - allowed administration with accommodations for differently-abled students and multilingual learners?
     - measured the knowledge and skills included in your curriculum?
     - measured the learning goals you developed?
   - Consider other sources of information about your students' learning, such as conversations with students and families.
   - Share results from assessments with families and discuss implications from the results and other sources of information on student instruction.

# For Further Support for Educators

- **Consider providing PD on formative assessment practices**. Be sure to reflect on and include practices that worked well during distance learning in the event that some or all students will need to continue to learn in a virtual environment.
- **Carve out time for collaborative data-driven discussions throughout the year**. Be sure to align with MTSS practices.
- **Information on interim assessments and other related resources and guidance** will be posted on the RIDE website at www.ride.ri.gov/TC.

# Resources and References

- Huff, Kristen. "Educational Assessment 2020-21 Is Assessment 101". Center for Assessment. https://www.nciea.org/blog/school-disruption/educational-assessment-2020-21-assessment-101
- Achievement Network. "3 Principles for Assessments During Instructional Recovery and Beyond". http://go.achievementnetwork.org/rs/731-WJI-089/images/ANet%20Guidance_3%20Principles%20for%20Assessment%20During%20Instructional%20Recovery%20and%20Beyond.pdf
- Sawchuk, Stephen. "5 Tips for Measuring and Responding to COVID-19 Learning Loss". June 12, 2020. https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/06/12/5-tips-for-measuring-and-responding-to.html?cmp=eml-contshr-shr
- RIDE Comprehensive Assessment System webpage: www.ride.ri.gov/CAS
- RIDE MTSS/RTI webpage: www.ride.ri.gov/rti and https://mtssri.org/
- RIDE Data Use PD web page: www.ride.ri.gov/Data-Use-PD