

# Actualizing Connecticut Classrooms for Continuous Learning: Guidance and Tools for High-Quality, Equitable Distance Learning

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## Introduction

In Spring 2020, district and school leaders had to make urgent decisions about how to conduct distance learning without the research, guidance, and stakeholder input that normally guide such decisions. Foremost among the challenges leaders faced, together with students, families, and educators, was how to assure that new and unprecedented service delivery models addressed without increasing racial, economic, and educational-status inequities in student supports and outcomes.

In rising to this challenge, Connecticut district and school leaders seized the opportunity to develop new ways to deliver high-quality education to diverse learners. Often, these innovations revealed important new insights about how schools teach and kids learn best.

In preparation for the 2020-2021, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has emphasized the importance of 1) re-opening in the Fall with on-site instruction to the extent safe and allowable, while 2) upholding high-quality service standards grounded in the principles of student-centeredness and equity regardless of the service-delivery model and aligned with longer-term visions for schooling, and 3) developing distance-learning plans to assure continuity of high-quality education if and when schooling must move to remote learning.

In response to the possibility that remote learning will again be required in 2020-2021, this resource supports districts in achieving both of the state’s latter two priorities at once: **planning for high-quality, equitable, student-centered distance learning that assures continuity of learning and serves districts’ longer term visions for education.** The resource draws directly on CSDE’s extensive guidance on Fall 2020 school reopening and on comprehensive research—including extensive conversations with Connecticut superintendents, principals, educators, and families—into how districts and schools in the state and nationally met the challenges and opportunities posed by the Spring 2020 transition to distance learning.

Building on CSDE guidance on the operational considerations districts must address to move substantially online (e.g., assuring 1:1 student-to-device ratios and universal connectivity), this resource focuses on **how to deliver high-quality instruction in a distance-learning setting, create a strong distance-learning community, and continuously improve distance-learning service provision.** Critically, the resource guides districts in making high-quality distance-learning available to and effective for all children, no matter what their home situation and their educational and language needs.

## How to Use this Resource

This resource has three parts:

1. Standards defining high-quality, equitable distance-learning in action;
2. Steps a district should take (i) in Summer 2020, (ii) if and when remote learning must be initiated, and (iii) while distance learning is being implemented; and
3. A [model](#) showing what one district’s distance learning approaches look like in action.

This resource is designed to be used in different ways depending on where you are in the planning process. To get the most out of it, we recommend that you first quickly skim through the entirety of the two documents to enable you to pick the entry point most relevant to your needs and to identify particular parts and tools you want to study in more detail. Leaders and educators who are relatively early in the planning process might then want to focus on the standards and the model plan to help them develop a vision of what distance learning might look like in their district and schools. Leaders and educators with a distance-learning plan already in

place might instead use the documents as a checklist for assessing the completeness of the plan, making sure it fully addresses all key aspects of distance-learning service provision. The main thing is to make the resource work for you, rather than following any prescribed order.

Included in the documents are a small number of linked back-up resource repositories that our research indicates are likely to be of most immediate help if you want more guidance on, or would like to see an example of how others have designed particular features of, a distance-learning plan. As with the rest of the materials, the links are there if and as you need them, without any expectation that you will use them all.

## Distance-Learning Standards

Connecticut's Plan for Reimagining Classrooms for Continuous Learning sets a powerful vision of learners and graduates who are connected, focused, empowered, and masterful and who are ready for future worlds of work.

While many Connecticut districts have quality standards describing what effective on-site schooling looks like in order to realize this vision, fewer have equivalent quality standards for developing connected, focused, empowered, and masterful learners and career-ready graduates in a remote setting.

The following quality standards for distance learning are designed to meet CSDE's bold goals and the moral imperative of an equitable education for all students. The standards directly align to the five Success Factors CSDE sets out in its Plan, focusing on key enabling conditions (Success Factor 2), service standards (Success Factor 1, 3, 4), and learning outcomes (Success Factors 5).

Focus	Standard
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Continuity of Learning and Academic Growth</b></p>	<p><b>S 1.1.</b> Use engaging, standards-aligned, coherent, and culturally responsive<sup>1</sup> and sustaining<sup>2</sup> <b>curricula that supports student-centered e-learning</b>; that cultivates digital fluency and citizenship skills; and that meets the learning needs of students with IEPs, English Learners, students who experience homelessness, and other marginalized populations</p>
	<p><b>S 1.2.</b> Use <b>student-centered pedagogy</b> that reflects a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best remotely that is informed by Connecticut Core standards and evidence-based distance-learning practices, that is aligned to the curricula, that effectively uses technology, that is engaging, and that differentiates instruction to meet the needs of all learners</p>
	<p><b>S 1.3.</b> Use <b>on-going assessment and equitable mastery-based grading and promotion practices</b>, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the school, team, class, and individual-student levels</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Positive and Connected Learning Community</b></p>	<p><b>S 2.1.</b> Communicate <b>clear and high expectations</b> with students, families, community members, teachers, staff, and administrators and provide supports to achieve those expectations</p>

<sup>1</sup> Culturally responsive approaches use “the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them.” Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Teachers College Press.

<sup>2</sup> Culturally sustaining approaches “seek to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling” (Django, 2012, p. 95). Culturally sustaining not only takes into account the many ways students learn, but it also requires that students are supported in “sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence.” Django, P. (2012). *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Needed Change in Stance, Terminology, and Practice*. *Educational Researcher*, 41(3), 93-97.

	<p><b>S 2.2.</b> Build and maintain positive and trusting <b>relationships and a culture of learning</b> that supports the academic, personal, social, and emotional growth of students and adults and fosters meaningful collaboration among students, families, community members, teachers, staff, and administrators in integrated settings</p>
<p><b>Systems for Improvement</b></p>	<p><b>S 3.1.</b> Establish and monitor progress against a theory of action for <b>school improvement and innovation</b> that is aligned to a longer-term vision for quality schooling, that reveals disparities in quality of services provided (e.g., by race, primary language spoken, IEP status, housing status, income status), and that is understood and supported by the school community</p>
	<p><b>S 3.2.</b> Make <b>strategic and innovative organizational decisions</b> to support the school’s instructional goals, eliminate disparities in opportunities provided and outcomes achieved, and meet student learning needs</p>
	<p><b>S 3.3.</b> Engage in <b>structured, collaborative, inquiry-based professional and community learning</b> to improve implementation, eliminate disparities (e.g., by race, primary language spoken, IEP status, income status), problem solve challenges, experiment with promising innovations, promote shared leadership, and advance equitable outcomes and student learning</p>

## Designing a High-Quality and Equitable Program

This section guides districts as they create their own high-quality, equitable distance-learning plans. The tables below, organized by standard, outline steps to be taken in three categories: **Essential Actions** (key steps to be taken), **Support Systems and Structures** (ways to adapt or develop school systems), and **Stakeholder Communication and Engagement** (activities that ensure all are informed and ready to participate). The tables organize these steps by those to be completed during **Summer 2020, Upon Initiation of Distance Learning**, and during **Implementation, Monitoring, and Improvement**.

## Continuity of Learning and Academic Growth

### S 1.1

Use engaging, standards-aligned, coherent, and culturally responsive and sustaining **curricula that supports student-centered e-learning**; that cultivates digital fluency and citizenship skills; and that meets the learning needs of students with IEPs, English Learners, students who experience homelessness, and other marginalized populations.

Category	Summer 2020	Upon Initiation of Distance Learning	Implementation, Monitoring, and Improvement
<p><b>Essential Actions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify priority learning standards by grade and content area</li> <li>• Review Spring 2020 curriculum choices and evidence of effectiveness</li> <li>• Audit current curriculum to determine if it is standards-aligned, culturally responsive and sustaining, digitally accessible, and meets the learning needs of students with IEPs, English Learners, students who experience homelessness, and other marginalized populations</li> <li>• Select supplemental and/or replacement curriculum, as needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm scopes and sequences for priority learning standards</li> <li>• Train educators on effectively delivering the curricula</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver curriculum according to scope and sequence</li> <li>• Monitor pacing</li> <li>• Make instructional adjustments to accelerate learning of priority standards</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create scope and sequence that addresses priority learning standards, is appropriate for e-learning, and consists of culturally responsive and sustaining units</li> <li>• Identify learning management system (LMS)</li> <li>• Train educators on effectively delivering the curricula using culturally responsive and sustaining practices</li> <li>• Develop the first units of instruction for the fall</li> <li>• Identify students with IEPs, English Learners, students who experience homelessness, and other students who face significant distance-learning barriers whose needs warrant hybrid or in-person service delivery even in a distance learning model; create service delivery plan for those students</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Support Systems and Structures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop measures of curriculum effectiveness and systems for collecting data (e.g., by analyzing student workpieces)</li> <li>• Develop measures of strong instructional units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train educators on using the LMS</li> <li>• Centralize all log-in/credentialing information for LMS and other instructional learning platforms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the creation and review the quality of units of instruction</li> <li>• Monitor effectiveness of curriculum and make adjustments, including by analyzing student</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review the quality of the first instructional units and iterate based on feedback</li> <li>● Develop layout for the Learning Management System (LMS)</li> <li>● Create and communicate standardized guidance on how to organize each educator's/cohort's virtual learning space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure all educators set up virtual learning spaces in accordance with standardized guidance</li> </ul>	<p>workpieces and collecting feedback on students', families', and educators' user experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Refine materials in response to analysis of effectiveness and student, family, and educator feedback</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stakeholder Communications and Engagement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review feedback on Spring 2020 family/stakeholder communication</li> <li>● Create and/or update district website for family/stakeholder communication</li> <li>● Create accessible (e.g., written and recorded, translated into all relevant languages) family tutorials on the LMS</li> <li>● Set up hotline for LMS support</li> <li>● Create accessible student- and family-facing snapshots of the scope and sequence</li> <li>● Create accessible student- and family-facing overviews of first instructional units</li> <li>● Create weekly learning plan templates (appropriate for early elementary, late elementary, and secondary) to be sent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communicate to educators and families how the district will monitor curriculum effectiveness and refine materials</li> <li>● Design and deliver student and family orientation to distance learning, including tutorials on the LMS</li> <li>● Distribute accessible student- and family-facing snapshots of the scope and sequence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collect information on students', families', and educators' user experience</li> <li>● Refine materials in response to evidence of effectiveness and student, family, and teacher feedback</li> <li>● Provide regular feedback through phone calls, emails, text messages, small group video-conferences, and comments on shared documents and communicated via the LMS</li> <li>● Communicate in format and timelines detailed in communications calendars</li> </ul>

	<p>out to all students and families at the start of each academic week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create student and family communications calendar</li> <li>• Create educator communications calendar</li> <li>• Survey families on their device and connectivity needs and distribute devices and technology needed to assure 1:1 student-to-device (laptop or computer) ratios and universal connectivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute accessible student- and family-facing overviews of first instructional units</li> <li>• Distribute communications calendars</li> <li>• Distribute weekly learning plans for the first week of instruction</li> <li>• Update the district website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and distribute weekly learning plans</li> <li>• Update the district website</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <a href="#">CT Learning Hub</a> provides guidance on <a href="#">K-12 Model Curriculum</a>, including links to <a href="#">CT Public Learn at Home</a> and <a href="#">Scholastic Learn at Home</a>.</li> <li>• The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) <a href="#">Restart and Recovery - Considerations for Teaching and Learning</a> resource repository provides extensive guidance on curriculum selection and implementation.</li> </ul>		

## S 1.2

Use **student-centered pedagogy** that reflects a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best remotely that is informed by Connecticut Core standards and evidence-based distance-learning practices, that is aligned to the curricula, that effectively uses technology, that is engaging, and that differentiates instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

Category	Summer 2020	Upon Initiation of Distance Learning	Implementation, Monitoring, and Improvement
<p><b>Essential Actions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review spring instructional choices and evidence of their effectiveness</li> <li>Establish a set of coherent beliefs about how students learn best in remote settings</li> <li>Develop district guidance on student-centered distance-learning pedagogy that aligns with district beliefs about how students learn best, sets clear expectations, uses culturally responsive and sustaining practices, and establishes the cadence of planned educator-student, educator-family, and student-student interactions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train educators on student-centered distance-learning pedagogy</li> <li>Develop lesson plans for the first unit of instruction</li> <li>Develop weekly learning plans, differentiating those plans for students with IEPs, English Learners, students who experience homelessness, and other students with exceptional needs</li> <li>Disseminate early elementary, late elementary, and secondary school schedules for students and staff that make clear the expectation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver lesson plans</li> <li>Collect evidence of student learning</li> <li>Build coherent instructional units and individual learning plans</li> <li>Revise instructional units and lessons based on collected information</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train educators on student-centered distance-learning pedagogy</li> <li>• Develop early elementary, late elementary, and secondary school schedules for students and staff that make clear the expectation that educators deliver and students attend synchronous 1:1, small-group, and large-group (whole class or school) instruction each day in all subject areas</li> <li>• Create system to collaboratively develop and review weekly learning plans of students with IEPs, English Learners, students who experience homelessness, and other students with exceptional needs</li> <li>• Identify students with IEPs, English Learners, students who experience homelessness, and other students who face significant distance learning barriers whose needs warrant hybrid or in-person service delivery</li> </ul>	<p>that educators deliver and students attend synchronous 1:1, small group, and large group (whole class or school) instruction each day in all subject areas</p>	
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	<p>even in a distance learning model; create service delivery plan for those students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and, if necessary, adjust existing entry requirements for advanced coursework where the typical requirements were not possible to complete or not accessible to students in the spring</li> <li>• Create heterogeneous distance-learning class groupings that mirror the diversity (in ability, race, and language) of the school where possible</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Support Systems and Structures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create plan to monitor the quality of remote instruction and provide coaching responsive to identified needs</li> <li>• Determine ways to adapt teacher collaboration systems and structures to routinize the creation of coherent, student-centered instructional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train educators on student-centered distance-learning pedagogy</li> <li>• Update shared calendars to reflect distance learning schedule</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor quality and quantity of instruction and engagement, including by tracking engagement and analyzing student workpieces and formative and summative assessment results</li> <li>• Intervene to re-engage learners who have been</li> </ul>

	<p>units, lesson plans, and individual learning plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine how to measure student engagement</li> <li>• Develop student re-engagement systems for use when students are absent for two or more days without communication</li> </ul>		<p>absent for two or more days without communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement teacher collaboration systems and structures</li> <li>• Deliver professional learning to educators</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stakeholder Communications and Engagement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage administrators, educators, and families in establishing and communicating a set of coherent beliefs about how students learn best in remote settings</li> <li>• Review feedback on Spring 2020 family/stakeholder communication</li> <li>• Create and/or update district website for family/stakeholder communication</li> <li>• Create weekly learning plan templates (appropriate for early elementary, late elementary, and secondary) to be sent out to all students and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate pedagogical expectations to educators and families</li> <li>• Deliver professional learning to educators and families</li> <li>• Design and deliver student and family orientation to distance learning and ways to best support their children</li> <li>• Distribute weekly learning plan for the first week of instruction</li> <li>• Update the district website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect information on students', families', and educators' learning experience</li> <li>• Provide regular feedback through phone calls, emails, text messages, small group video-conferences, and comments on shared documents and communicated via the LMS</li> <li>• Refine pedagogical approach in response to evidence of effectiveness and student, family, and teacher feedback</li> <li>• Communicate in format and timelines detailed in communications calendars</li> </ul>

	<p>families at the start of each academic week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan professional learning for both educators and families</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and distribute weekly learning plans</li> <li>Update the district website</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <a href="#">CT Learning Hub</a> provides guidance for <a href="#">educators</a> on remote learning and offers a number of tools for student-directed learning, including the <a href="#">Personal Interest Project (PIP)</a>, <a href="#">Defined Learning</a>, and <a href="#">Thinkalong</a>.</li> <li>The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) <a href="#">Restart and Recovery - Considerations for Teaching and Learning</a> resource repository provides extensive guidance on remote instruction delivery.</li> </ul>		

### S 1.3

Use **on-going assessment and equitable mastery-based grading and promotion practices**, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the school, team, class, and individual-student levels.

Category	Summer 2020	Upon Initiation of Distance Learning	Implementation, Monitoring, and Improvement
<b>Essential Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review available information related to student mastery levels, learning trajectories, and social-emotional needs</li> <li>Review spring assessment choices and evidence of their effectiveness</li> <li>Review and, if necessary, adjust existing entry requirements for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administer assessments, as needed, to determine baseline distance-learning mastery levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use formative and summative assessment practices (modifying in accordance with students' IEPs) to gauge learning and adjust instruction</li> <li>Provide Tier 2 supports that are responsive to formative assessment results</li> </ul>

	<p>advanced coursework where the typical requirements were not possible to complete or not accessible to students in the spring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit formative and summative assessments to determine if they are digitally accessible to all students, are aligned with the curriculum, are inclusive, and provide information needed to differentiate instruction and evaluate mastery of learning</li> <li>• Identify baseline assessment approach to determine students' mastery levels at the start of the year and create calendar for administering assessments, balancing the need to re-engage students and families with the need to ascertain proficiency levels</li> <li>• Select supplemental and/or replacement assessments, as needed</li> <li>• Develop guidance on rhythm and quality of educator-to-student and student-to-student feedback during distance learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document students' mastery levels and chart out learning goals</li> <li>• Communicate guidance on rhythm and quality of educator-to-student and student-to-student feedback during distance learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide regular and on-going educator-to-student feedback and facilitate student-to-student feedback opportunities</li> <li>• Populate and deliver report cards</li> <li>• Implement promotion policies</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify which subjects and grades will use mastery-based grading during the 2020-2021 school year</li> <li>• For subjects and grades using mastery-based grading, define mastery and develop assessment plan</li> <li>• For subjects and grades using mastery-based grading, define performance levels, scoring rubrics, and rating systems</li> <li>• Articulate distance-learning promotion policies (for all subjects and grades, including those not using mastery-based grading)</li> <li>• Articulate summative feedback practices (for all subjects and grades, including those not using mastery-based grading)</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Support Systems and Structures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train educators on assessment models and on giving effective mastery-based formative and summative feedback in the distance learning environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support educators in administering assessments, as needed, to determine baseline distance-learning mastery levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support educators in modifying formative and summative assessment practices in accordance with students' IEPs</li> <li>• Collect students', families', educators', and</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centralize information on students' mastery levels and learning goals</li> </ul>	<p>administrators' feedback on the assessment system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate formative and summative assessment data review cycles and data-informed inquiry or other problem-solving and decision-making practices</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stakeholder Communications and Engagement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey families to determine who will need technology support for assessments</li> <li>Create and disseminate accessible (e.g. written and recorded, translated into all relevant languages) overview of distance-learning assessment and feedback practices and promotion policies</li> <li>Update website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate to families how educators will accommodate and support students and families with assessment administration</li> <li>Update website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support students and families to complete assessments</li> <li>Populate and deliver report cards</li> <li>Provide regular feedback through phone calls, emails, text messages, small group video-conferences, and comments on shared documents and communicated via the LMS</li> <li>Update the district website</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <a href="#">CT Learning Hub</a> provides guidance for <a href="#">educators</a> on remote learning, including on <a href="#">assessment and grading</a>.</li> <li>The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) <a href="#">Restart and Recovery - Considerations for Teaching and Learning</a> resource repository provides extensive guidance on assessment and grading practices.</li> </ul>		



## Positive and Connected Learning Community

### S 2.1

Communicate **clear and high expectations** with students, families, community members, teachers, staff, and administrators and provide supports to achieve those expectations.

Category	Summer 2020	Upon Initiation of Distance Learning	Implementation, Monitoring, and Improvement
<p><b>Essential Actions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review systems of communication from the spring and evidence of their effectiveness</li> <li>Adopt distance-learning standards and work with students, families, educators, and administrators to develop roles, responsibilities, and expectations for students, families, educators, and administrators</li> <li>Develop age- and role-appropriate norms for e-learning participation</li> <li>Create accessible (e.g. written and recorded,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate roles, responsibilities, and expectations to students, families, educators, and administrators</li> <li>Communicate and elaborate on norms for participation</li> <li>Ensure expectations and norms are reinforced through the set-up and design of the LMS and other online learning platforms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforce expectations and norms</li> <li>Implement incentive system</li> <li>Implement discipline system, leading first with social-emotional learning and maintaining a focus on restorative practices and re-engagement strategies</li> <li>Update LMS</li> </ul>

	<p>translated into all relevant languages) means of communicating roles, responsibilities, and expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop distance-learning incentive systems</li> <li>• Identify discipline system adjustments for distance-learning setting, with a focus on restorative practices and re-engagement strategies</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Support Systems and Structures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop early elementary, late elementary, and secondary school schedules for students and staff that make clear the expectation that educators deliver and students attend synchronous 1:1, small-group, and large-group (whole class or school) instruction each day in all subject areas</li> <li>• Provide professional learning to educators and administrators on the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disseminate early elementary, late elementary, and secondary school schedules for students and staff that make clear the expectation that educators deliver and students attend synchronous 1:1, small-group, and large-group (whole class or school) instruction each day in all subject areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor communication and support systems</li> <li>• Revise communication and support systems based on collected information</li> </ul>

	<p>distance learning expectations and norms for participation</p>		
<p><b>Stakeholder Communications and Engagement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gather feedback from students, families, community members, teachers, staff, and administrators on the level and type of expectations put in place during Spring 2020 and the efficacy of communication</li> <li>● Vet, revise, and communicate distance learning roles, responsibilities, and expectations</li> <li>● Create weekly learning plan templates (appropriate for early elementary, late elementary, and secondary) to be sent out to all students and families at the start of each academic week</li> <li>● Set up hotline for LMS and distance learning support</li> <li>● Update the district website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Design and deliver student and family orientation to distance learning, including an introduction to distance learning roles, responsibilities, and expectations for students, families, educators, and administrators and an introduction to distance learning participation norms</li> <li>● Distribute weekly learning plan for the first week of instruction</li> <li>● Update the district website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conduct weekly 1:1 educator-to-family calls or, in some cases, home visits, to check in on families, reinforce expectations and norms, and support families and students in learning and assessment</li> <li>● Host virtual coffee hours and webinars for parents on distance learning (academic and social-emotional)</li> <li>● Provide weekly updates from district leadership using multiple platforms (email, website, social media) that celebrate successes and communicate updates and announcements</li> <li>● Develop and distribute weekly learning plans</li> <li>● Operate a LMS and distance learning hotline</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gather feedback from students and families on the level and type of expectations and responsibilities placed on each stakeholder group and on communication systems</li> <li>● Revise roles, responsibilities, expectations, and communication system based on collected information</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <a href="#">CT Learning Hub</a> provides guidance on <a href="#">Parent Learning</a>, including links to <a href="#">Professional Support Series for Families</a> and <a href="#">Parent Toolkit</a>.</li> <li>● The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) <a href="#">Restart and Recovery - Considerations for Teaching and Learning</a> resource repository provides extensive guidance on clear and high expectations for staff, students, and families.</li> </ul>		

## S 2.2

Build and maintain positive and trusting **relationships and a culture of learning** that supports the academic, personal, social, and emotional growth of students and adults and fosters meaningful collaboration among students, families, community members, teachers, staff, and administrators in integrated settings.

Category	Summer 2020	Upon Initiation of Distance Learning	Implementation, Monitoring, and Improvement
<p><b>Essential Actions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review feedback from the spring on how students and teachers fostered relationships and collaborated with one another</li> <li>Audit social-emotional learning curriculum to determine if it is culturally responsive and sustaining, digitally accessible and/or appropriate for e-learning, and provides Tier 1 support</li> <li>Identify new and/or supplemental social-emotional learning curriculum, if necessary</li> <li>Train educators on the design and delivery of social-emotional learning curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate extracurricular and innovate ways that staff can build school community</li> <li>Provide resources to staff on how they can foster relationships with students</li> <li>Identify, create, and communicate support plan for at-risk students and families that might benefit from intensive social-emotional, wraparound, or trauma-informed supports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct weekly 1:1 educator-to-family calls or, in some cases, home visits, to check in on families, reinforce expectations and norms, and support families and students in learning and assessment</li> <li>Host virtual coffee hours and webinars for parents on distance learning (academic and social-emotional)</li> <li>Provide weekly updates from district leadership using multiple platforms (email, website, social media) that celebrate successes and communicate updates and announcements</li> <li>Deploy counselors, social workers, nurses, and other</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design extracurricular activities to enhance students' relationships and social-emotional learning</li> <li>• Hire and/or partner with community-based organizations to access additional counselors, social workers, and nurses to reach out to assist families on a regular basis</li> <li>• Develop innovative ways to build school community (e.g. spirit week, car parades, signs in windows, coffee chats)</li> <li>• Identify educators who will serve as key points-of-contact (in elementary school, primary teachers; in secondary school, advisory teachers) for small groups of students</li> <li>• Review and adjust caseload for special education educators and case managers</li> <li>• Identify students with IEPs, English Learners, students who experience homelessness, and other students who face significant distance learning barriers whose needs warrant</li> </ul>	<p>in the distance-learning environment</p>	<p>school staff to address students' specific social-emotional learning or trauma-related needs, including by hosting virtual check-ins and counseling sessions and by visiting homes and delivering essential supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and distribute weekly learning plans</li> <li>• Deploy in-person service-delivery model for students whose distance learning barriers necessitate in-person service provision</li> <li>• Implement whole-school community building activities and initiatives (e.g. spirit week, car parades, signs in windows)</li> <li>• Operate a LMS and distance learning hotline</li> <li>• Gather feedback from students and families on the strength of relationships, social-emotional learning, and the culture of learning more broadly speaking</li> <li>• Revise culture-building and social-emotional learning</li> </ul>
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	<p>hybrid or in-person service delivery even in a distance learning model; create service delivery plan for those students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and, if necessary, adjust existing entry requirements for advanced coursework where the typical requirements were not possible to complete or not accessible to students in the spring</li> <li>• Create heterogeneous distance-learning class groupings that mirror the diversity (in ability, race, and language) of the school where possible</li> </ul>		<p>approach based on information gathered</p>
<p><b>Support Systems and Structures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide mental health supports for students and staff</li> <li>• Develop teams to support with social-emotional learning and well-being (e.g. Care Team, Resource Team)</li> <li>• Train teachers on anti-racist pedagogy and trauma-informed practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate mental health supports to students, educators and other school staff, families, and administrators</li> <li>• Provide resources to staff on how to structure morning meetings, closing circles, and flex time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support to staff to ensure that they are social-emotionally doing well</li> <li>• Monitor social-emotional learning practices and embed them in distance learning</li> <li>• Foster collaboration among staff members</li> <li>• Identify and create regular opportunities for students to</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop time in schedules for advisory, morning meetings, closing circles, and flex time</li> <li>• Develop time for teachers to collaborate with one another</li> <li>• Identify and create regular opportunities for students to collaborate with one another and work on deeper learning projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and create regular opportunities for students to collaborate with one another to provide feedback and work on deeper learning projects</li> </ul>	<p>collaborate with one another to provide feedback and work on deeper learning projects</p>
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<p><b>Stakeholder Communications and Engagement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review feedback from students and families on how to increase teacher-student interactions in a distance learning setting</li> <li>● Create accessible (e.g. written and recorded, translated into all relevant languages) communications about the district’s social-emotional learning approach and supports available to students, families, educators, and administrators</li> <li>● Determine ways in which family members can support student-to-student, student-to-educator, family-to-family, and family-to-educator relationship building</li> <li>● Create e-facilitation plan for parent teacher organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Design and deliver student and family orientation to distance learning, including an overview of social-emotional learning and relationship-building opportunities and mental health supports</li> <li>● Host coffee chats and virtual office hours to respond to students’ and families’ questions</li> <li>● Disseminate accessible communications about all aspects of the distance learning model (instructional and social-emotional)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gather feedback from students and families</li> <li>● Build relationships with students and families</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <a href="#">CT Learning Hub</a> provides guidance on <a href="#">Social Emotional Learning</a>, including links to the <a href="#">CT Family School Partnership</a> and the <a href="#">CDSE Social Emotional Learning Webpage</a>.</li> <li>● The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) <a href="#">Restart and Recovery - Considerations for Teaching and Learning</a> resource repository provides extensive guidance on well-being and social emotional learning.</li> </ul>		

## Systems for Improvement

### S 3.1

Establish and monitor progress against a theory of action for **school improvement and innovation** that is aligned to a longer-term vision for quality schooling, that reveals disparities in quality of services provided (e.g. by race, primary language spoken, IEP status, housing status, income status), and that is understood and supported by the school community.

Category	Summer 2020	Upon Initiation of Distance Learning	Implementation, Monitoring, and Improvement
<b>Essential Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the implicit or explicit theory of action for distance learning in Spring 2020 and update based on review of research, stakeholder feedback, state guidelines, and other information and guidance about what effective distance learning entails</li> <li>Establish and/or affirm the long-term vision for schooling for the next 3-5 years</li> <li>Assess the theory of action to determine if it effectively builds toward the longer-term vision for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affirm theory of action for distance learning</li> <li>Affirm key performance indicators</li> <li>Set up data collection mechanisms to gather information needed to assess progress on and attainment of key performance indicators</li> <li>Set up remote structure for regularly making meaning of collected information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect data about the quality and level of implementation of distance learning, including by supporting staff in using mechanisms for reporting and tracking data, such as PowerSchool</li> <li>Conduct virtual walk-throughs to identify supports needed and engage in post-walk</li> </ul>

	<p>quality schooling and revise as necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the theory of action to determine if it promises to eliminate disparities (particularly by race, primary language spoken, IEP status, housing status, income status) in equitable access to and outcomes of high quality education and revise as necessary</li> <li>• Identify key performance indicators for all aspects of the theory of action, making sure that key performance metrics will reveal disparities in the quality and level of education provided by race, primary language spoken, IEP status, housing status, income status</li> <li>• Communicate and vet vision, theory of action, and key performance metrics with the district's Board of Education</li> <li>• Organize staff members into teams focused on making meaning of collected information and acting on it</li> <li>• Create calendar and identify roles and responsibilities for collecting data and meeting to review and act on collected data</li> </ul>	<p>with internal and external stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm and communicate roles, responsibilities, and calendar for collecting data and for meeting to review and act on collected data</li> <li>• Train staff on using mechanisms for reporting and tracking data, such as PowerSchool</li> </ul>	<p>through coaching conversations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with internal and external stakeholders to review and act on the collected information</li> <li>• Based on evidence about what works, update and communicated the updated theory of action and key performance indicators</li> <li>• Communicate evidence of progress and impact to the district's Board of Education</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create mechanisms for reporting and tracking collected data, using platforms like PowerSchool as is feasible and helpful</li> <li>• Train staff in using mechanisms for reporting and tracking data, such as PowerSchool</li> </ul>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Stakeholder Communications and Engagement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct surveys, interviews, and focus groups with students, families, community members, teachers, staff, and administrators and distance learning experts to ascertain effective distance learning strategies, goals, and key performance indicators and to develop energy around a longer-term vision for equitable, high-quality schooling</li> <li>• Package theory of action and longer-term vision for equitable, high-quality schooling in accessible (e.g. written and recorded, translated into all relevant languages) format</li> <li>• Update district website with theory of action for distance learning and longer-term vision of schooling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use theory of action and longer-term vision to prepare for and deliver distance-learning orientation to students, families, community members, teachers, staff, and administrators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather feedback from students, families, community members, teachers, staff, and administrators on the quality and level of distance schooling</li> <li>• Communicate to and engage students, families, community members, teachers, staff, and administrators in making meaning of collected data</li> </ul>

<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <a href="#">Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)</a> and linked resources in the <a href="#">Superintendent's Digest</a> provide useful background knowledge for use when districts are setting a vision and creating a theory of action.</li> <li>• The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) <a href="#">Restart and Recovery - Considerations for Teaching and Learning</a> resource repository provides extensive guidance on setting a vision and developing the system conditions necessary for school improvement.</li> </ul>
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### S 3.2

Make **strategic and innovative organizational decisions** to support the school’s instructional goals, eliminate disparities in opportunities provided and outcomes achieved, and meet student learning needs.

Category	Summer 2020	Upon Initiation of Distance Learning	Implementation, Monitoring, and Improvement
<b>Essential Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update staffing model, teaming structure, and staff members’ roles and responsibilities in alignment with the theory of action for distance learning; hire as necessary</li> <li>• Develop annual budget based on distance learning theory of action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update staffing model, teaming structure, and staff members’ roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Update annual budget</li> <li>• Purchase curricula, technology, and software/programming licenses needed to operationalize distance learning theory of action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement theory of action and collect data on its efficacy</li> <li>• Evaluate personnel in alignment with policies and practices; communicate and act on collected information</li> <li>• Use collected information to identify opportunities for improvement and innovation</li> <li>• Test out improvements and innovations and scale as</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share and secure approval of annual budget from the district's Board of Education</li> <li>• Assess equity of budget and resources allocation within and across schools and adjust based on surfaced inequities (e.g. by race, primary language spoken, IEP status, housing status, income status)</li> <li>• Update personnel evaluation policies and practices</li> <li>• Purchase curricula, technology, and software/programming licenses needed to operationalize distance learning theory of action</li> <li>• Create distance learning meeting schedule for school leadership teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update and communicate distance learning meeting schedule for school leadership teams</li> </ul>	<p>warranted by evidence of efficacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracking spending and resource allocation, disaggregating by race, primary language spoken, IEP status, housing status, income status and make adjustments as needed to maintain fiscal health and equity of resource allocation</li> <li>• Communicate updates on spending and resource allocation to the district's Board of Education</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stakeholder Communications and Engagement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create accessible (e.g. written and recorded, translated into all relevant languages) means of communicating high-level information about staffing and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate high-level information about staffing and teaming models, roles and responsibilities, and finances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather feedback from students, families, community members, teachers, staff, and administrators on the quality and level of distance schooling</li> </ul>

	teaming models, roles and responsibilities, and finances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update district website</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate to and engage students, families, community members, teachers, staff, and administrators in making meaning of collected data</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <a href="#">Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)</a> and linked resources in the <a href="#">Superintendent's Digest</a> provide useful background knowledge for use when districts are engaged in strategic decision making.</li> <li>The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) <a href="#">Restart and Recovery - Considerations for Teaching and Learning</a> resource repository provides extensive guidance on strategic decision making and innovation.</li> </ul>		

### S 3.3

Engage in **structured, collaborative, inquiry-based professional and community learning** to improve implementation, eliminate disparities (e.g., by race, language status, ability status, income status), problem solve challenges, experiment with promising innovations, promote shared leadership, and advance equitable outcomes and student learning.

Category	Summer 2020	Upon Initiation of Distance Learning	Implementation, Monitoring, and Improvement
<b>Essential Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review data on collaborative inquiry (with internal and external stakeholders) and professional learning opportunities provided in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up remote structure for regularly making meaning of collected information with internal and external stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct virtual walk-throughs to identify supports needed and engage in post-walk through coaching conversations</li> </ul>

	<p>Spring 2020 and identify strengths and weaknesses of approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize staff members into teams (e.g. by grade, content area, program area, initiative; vertical and horizontal) focused on making meaning of collected information and acting on it</li> <li>• Seek out family and community interest for participating in collaborative inquiry opportunities</li> <li>• Create calendar and identify roles and responsibilities for collecting data and meeting to review and act on collected data</li> <li>• Develop time in master schedules for teachers to collaborate with one another</li> <li>• Create mechanisms for reporting and tracking collected data, using platforms like PowerSchool as is feasible and helpful</li> <li>• Train staff in using mechanisms for reporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm and communicate roles, responsibilities, and calendar for collecting data and for meeting to review and act on collected data</li> <li>• Train staff on using mechanisms for reporting and tracking data, such as PowerSchool</li> <li>• Seek out interest and secure family and community participation in collaborative inquiry opportunities</li> <li>• Kick off teams focused on making meaning of collected information and establish team norms, roles and responsibilities, communication channels, and ways to share and spread innovations and insights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in instructional coaching, translating in-person schedule and agendas to virtual space</li> <li>• Disaggregate and study collected information to identify disparities in equity of access to and outcomes of high quality distance learning</li> <li>• Communicate surfaced disparities to teams focused on addressing those disparities</li> <li>• Support teams in engaging in cycles of inquiry to eliminate disparities</li> <li>• Codify and spread innovations across teams and schools</li> <li>• Identify and engage targeted and school-wide professional learning opportunities to build from families', community members', teachers', staffs', and administrators' ability to implement and improve the distance learning theory of action</li> <li>• Monitor if and how professional and community learning is eliminating disparities, problem solving challenges, experimenting with promising</li> </ul>
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	and tracking data, such as PowerSchool		innovations, promoting shared leadership, and advancing equitable outcomes and student learning
<b>Stakeholder Communications and Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop accessible (e.g. written and recorded, translated into all relevant languages) communications to describe purpose and method of collaborative inquiry to families and community members and to gauge their interest in participating and ways to make the opportunity accessible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate information about collaborative inquiry opportunities into district orientation to distance learning</li> <li>• Solicit family and community member interest in participating in collaborative inquiry</li> <li>• Confirm family and community member interest in participating in collaborative inquiry</li> <li>• Publish information about family and community engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capture, create, and disseminate accessible (e.g. written and recorded, translated into all relevant languages) communications about distance learning quality and outcomes, collaborative inquiry activities, and collaborative inquiry outcomes</li> <li>• Gather family and community member feedback on the collaborative inquiry process; improve based on collected data</li> <li>• Seek additional family and community member participation in collaborative inquiry opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <a href="#">CT Learning Hub</a> provides guidance on <a href="#">Collaboration</a>, including a link <a href="#">GoOpenCT</a> which provides a space for Connecticut teachers and leaders to collaborate and share learning materials.</li> <li>• The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) <a href="#">Restart and Recovery - Considerations for Teaching and Learning</a> resource repository provides extensive guidance on structuring collaboration and inquiry-based professional and community learning.</li> </ul>		

