

CONTINUOUS EDUCATION CASE STUDIES

• FIRSTLINE SCHOOLS • LOW-TECH OPTION

1

DEFINE CLEAR STUDENT OUTCOMES

FirstLine Schools understood that it would be imperative to provide their scholars with continuous access to their teachers and high quality instruction during this unprecedented time.

They put a plan in place when schools were first closed and continue to make adjustments and improvements to this plan along the way. The plan was predicated upon *access for all* and *continuous communication with stakeholders* while staying grounded in their organizational **commitments** that were modified for this time.

2

IMPLEMENT REMOTE INSTRUCTION

FirstLine chose to implement a hybrid approach to distance learning. Due to limited access to devices or internet service, it was important for FirstLine's plan to include a no tech option that met the needs of **all students**. This meant that when students left school on March 13th, they went home with **materials** with which they were familiar. These were materials aligned to the Tier I curriculum students had used all year long (see **4th grade sample packet**). Teachers contacted families to identify which students had not received their materials and then staff members rode bus routes to hand out the materials to students who had been absent. Soft copies of the packets were also posted **online**.

As schools remained closed, additional packets were produced and then mailed to families. Packets were then made available at the school site for families who had not received them in the mail. FirstLine used this **process** to ensure all students had access to their materials, and teachers followed **this guidance** to support students and families awaiting packet materials.

Providing ongoing service to students with disabilities was also important to FirstLine's community. Special education teachers support students with disabilities with phone calls and virtual support to ensure they have access to instruction using accommodations or modifications outlined in their IEPs. The following **guidelines** show how special educators are continuing to provide direct services to students.

In addition to the packet materials, students interact with teachers on a daily basis by **following a schedule** that balances small chunks of virtual learning paired with clear times for feedback on assignments. Student and teacher interactions happen through Google Meet so that students who have internet access can join virtually while those without can call in and still connect with their teachers and classmates. **Clear expectations for the virtual space** keeps consistency while still providing the flexibility that is needed to reach all learners.

3

INITIATE COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

Providing staff, families and students with good information was also crucial throughout the process.

- **COVID19 Task Force (CEO, CAO, Schools Team, Operations, Communication Team, School Leaders)**
 - » The task force was convened and began to have daily calls to discuss plans and ensure strong implementation. The calls were then switched to twice a day once schools closed and the plan began.

- **Staff communication**

- » Schools have daily virtual meetings to clarify plans and allow staff members to ask questions.
- » Content leads hosted **virtual PD** for teachers on the 12th and the 16th to review the instructional plans and distance learning tools.
- » For the first two weeks of the distance learning plan, teachers were surveyed daily in order to provide feedback to their schools and the network. They are now surveyed weekly in order to allow for continuous improvement.
- » All Network emails increased in frequency the first two weeks of the plan and continue to happen twice a week.

- **Family/student communication**

- » In their very first **communication with parents**, FirstLine made their expectations for continuous learning clear.
- » **Initial calls** were made on the 16th to inventory communication preferences and access to technology and paper materials.
- » The Communications team designed a **page** on the website for all information related to the distance learning plan. They provide updates regularly on this page as well as through phone calls and text messages.

» **FirstLine's plan provides clear directions to families about how to turn in assignments and how to access support as needed.**

- » Teachers call students who did not call in or join the Google Meet. There is time during the daily schedule for grade level teams to have a virtual check-in to share attendance updates with one another.
- » Schools have designed teams of staff members who reach out to families who teachers have not heard from. Administrators track attendance and follow up with students and parents.

With these structures and mindsets in place, FirstLine's plan supports quality instruction and deepens family engagement. Collaboration is key to ensure that the appropriate conditions for success and school deployment strategies are in place to maximize impact on student learning during this time away from school buildings.