



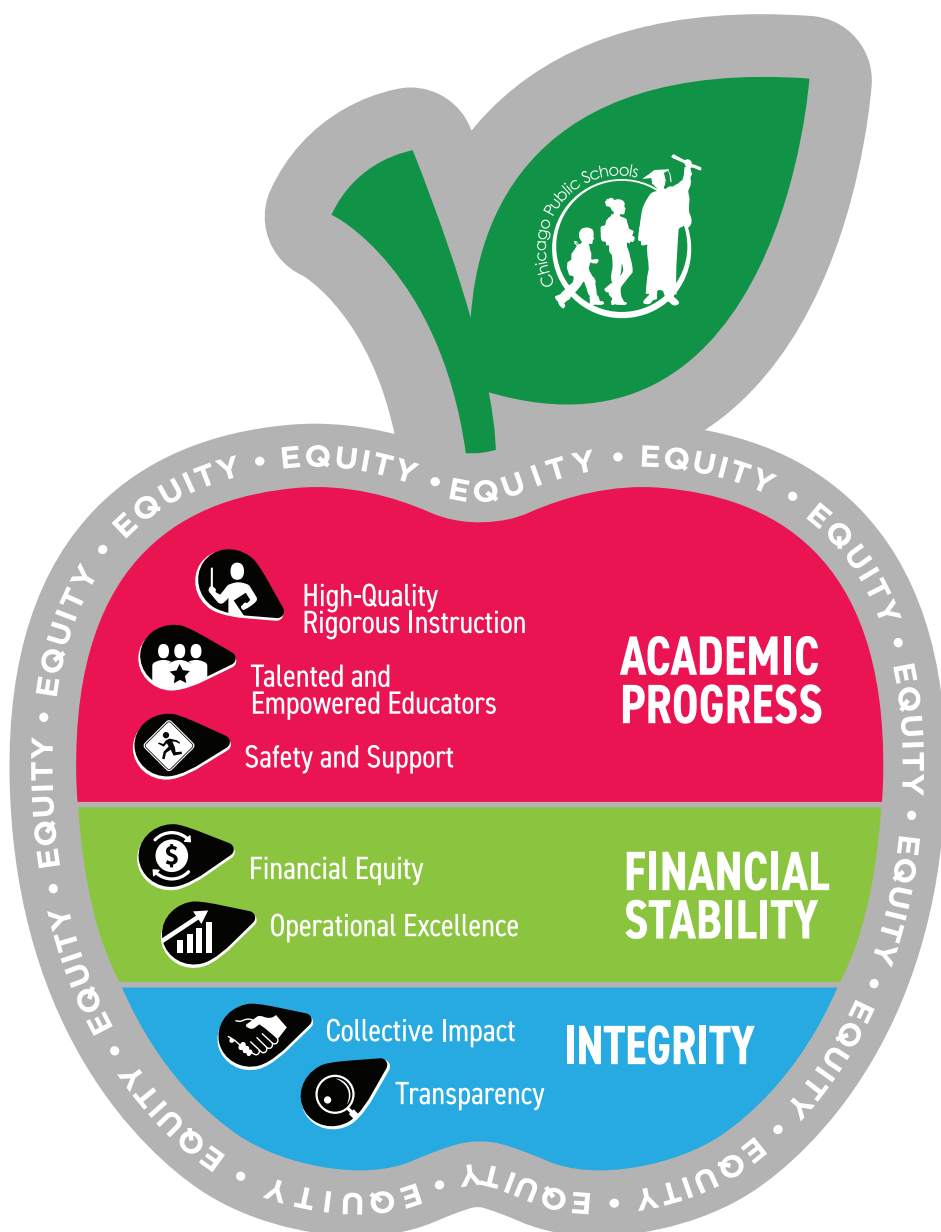
REMOTE LEARNING

Guidance for Parents



Our Mission

To provide a high-quality public education for every child, in every neighborhood, that prepares each for success in college, career, and civic life.



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In alignment with new guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) that will require school districts to convert future canceled school days to “remote learning days,” Chicago Public Schools (CPS) created new guidance that outlines expectations, strategies, and available resources for schools to implement remote learning beginning on April 13. This document provides a detailed overview of CPS’ remote learning plan.

In creating this plan, we were cognizant of the unprecedented moment we are living through and the challenges we all face as a district. Families will be asked to sustain at-home learning, teachers will have to quickly incorporate new remote learning practices, and school leaders will have to ensure a smooth transition to remote learning while also reorganizing their schools to sustain a sense of community and coherence.

As a district, we are ready to face this challenge together, and we will not lose sight of the importance of educating our students. School drives learning, sparks curiosity and discovery, builds community and connection, promotes a healthy lifestyle, and serves as a safe place for children to grow. We will continue delivering on the promise of school, even when our students and educators cannot physically work and learn in our school buildings.

Every member of the CPS family will have moments of frustration during this transition. As we work to enact our remote learning plan, we must seek to extend grace, flexibility, and empathy to one another. The commitments outlined below are goals we will work together to achieve—not expectations that we will meet on day one. We will get through this together and ensure our school communities stay connected, healthy, and learning. We are up to the challenge.

Our goals for remote learning are to:

- Provide students with continuous learning opportunities that reinforce critical standards
- Minimize instructional loss
- Provide routines and structures to help students stay engaged and connected
- Attend to our students’ social and emotional needs

To meet these goals, we will support each school as they develop and implement a remote learning plan that aligns to the district’s core values.

CPS Core Values	Remote Learning Driving Principles
Student Centered	Ensure students feel connected to their school community and the adults they know and trust.
Whole Child	Attend to the physical and emotional health of students.
Equity	Consider the needs of all students .
Academic Excellence	Provide students with meaningful activities that go beyond basic skill practice and include engaging projects/enrichment activities that reinforce critical grade-level standards.
Community Partnership	Provide families with the information and guidance they need to navigate remote learning.
Continuous Learning	Attend to the continuous learning needs of each school community, including teachers.



Remote Learning Overview

On Friday, March 27, ISBE released guidance stating that schools must adopt either remote learning or e-learning starting March 31 through the remainder of school closures. CPS will provide remote learning to ensure an equitable learning experience for every student in every neighborhood in Chicago. ISBE provisioned five days of planning for school districts to begin remote learning. CPS is electing to use March 31 through April 3 as planning days and will begin remote learning when schools return from spring break on April 13. The table below provides a high-level summary of the key differences between Act of God days, the designation that was used when schools first closed, and remote learning versus e-learning.

CPS SELECTED OPTION

	Act of God Days (as defined by ISBE)	Remote Learning (as defined by ISBE)	E-Learning (as defined by ISBE)
Mode of Learning	Digital and non-digital	Digital and non-digital	Digital
Engagement/ Attendance	Enrichment materials offered; No expectations for engagement	Expectation of student engagement and teacher availability; No daily attendance	Defined schedule; Virtual attendance taken
Hours on Digital Platform	No hours logged	Minimum thresholds for student activity provided; No logging of hours	Five hours per day of instruction or schoolwork
Grades	Grades provided only if they improve academic standing	Grading protections in place to ensure students with limited access to technology and supports are not penalized	Assumes regular grading practices

School Commitments During Remote Learning

To meet the goals of remote learning, each school community has been asked to create a plan that upholds the following commitments.

Remote Learning Commitments	
Daily	Weekly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide daily remote learning materials equitably to all students that reinforce critical grade-level standards and prioritize social and emotional needs. Ensure all educators are virtually available and engaged with their students every school day. Ensure your school community is virtually available to students and families during regular school day hours through the use of "virtual office hours." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and track student engagement on a weekly basis. Maintain established structures to facilitate staff collaboration, planning, and development regarding the implementation of remote learning plans and long-term planning. Support the continued development of educators to meet the demands of remote learning.

Schools, Parents and Students in Remote Learning

School-based Remote Learning Plans

Schools will communicate their plan to their school communities by April 6. Remote Learning Plans will address the following:

1. How much time your child should spend in structured academic activity.
2. How to access digital and non-digital learning materials.
3. What key learning platforms will be used.
4. How your child can access their teacher, and when they should expect feedback on work submitted.
5. How the school will communicate with you, along with how your child can get support with assignments.

Our goal is to minimize disruption and confusion for families by encouraging school communities to continue using familiar materials, while also setting clear thresholds for what students, educators, and school communities should strive to accomplish during remote learning.

Student Commitments During Remote Learning

During remote learning, we expect that students and families stay engaged in learning. Students will be offered both digital and non-digital learning options, as well as dedicated "office hours," where students and families can receive support from teachers via Google Meet, phone, or email. Remote Learning packets are also available at cps.edu/remotelearning or any food pick-up site.

Students are expected to complete assignments. Teachers are able to grade work, while grades cannot negatively impact a student's academic standing, students who do not engage in academic work can be issued an incomplete. Students issued an incomplete will have the opportunity to make-up the incomplete following the remote learning period.

While teachers will have the option to assess student learning and assignments, grades will be counted only if they improve a student's grade. Grades will not negatively impact any student's academic standing.

Due to the digital divide, the varied schedules of families, and the complex challenges students are facing during the school closure, students will not be required to:

- Log into a digital platform to mark attendance.
- Demonstrate academic engagement by logging minimum hours in a digital platform.

Parent Support of Remote Learning

We recognize that sustaining remote learning is not something parents have ever had to do. We will work with parents and families to determine how we can best support you. However, as we make this transition to remote learning, here are some general tips that parents can consider.

- Create a daily routine so your child always knows when it will be time to focus on learning.
- Have your children set academic and social and emotional goals prior to engaging in learning. For example, ask them, What do you plan to work on today? What will you do if you get stuck? How can I support you?
- Determine the time when your child is best able to focus. For some children, this is the first thing in the morning and for others, it is in the afternoon.
- Ensure your child is receiving adequate sleep and is well-rested when they begin their learning.
- Keep device screens within your view and monitor screens when children are working online to ensure they are actively engaged in the digital school work and resources provided.
- Provide your child with frequent encouragement and reminders as needed.
- Find the workspace where your child works best. For some, it is sitting in their favorite spot on the couch and for others, it may be standing at the kitchen table.
- Allow your child to take a movement or sensory break every 30-60 minutes (or as is developmentally appropriate).
- Once your child is done working for the day, ask them to reflect. For example, ask them, What did you learn today? What did you accomplish today? What did you find challenging today?

Be patient and flexible with yourself and your child. Focus on ensuring that your child remains academically engaged, connected to their school community, and emotionally supported.

Remote Learning Frequently Asked Questions

What are the expectations for student engagement?

Students are expected to engage in their assignments as much as possible. Students will **not** be asked to log a minimum amount of daily learning hours. Rather, schools will be asked to prepare content to meet estimated minimum thresholds for activity duration. These thresholds of activity duration are the same for digital and non-digital resources.

The following are recommended durations for daily student academic engagement:

Pre-K: 60 minutes

Grades K–2: 90 minutes

Grades 3–5: 120 minutes

Grades 6–8: 180 minutes

Grades 9–12: 270 minutes

These minimum time requirements are not meant to be the number of minutes spent engaging directly with a teacher or using a specific educational program or technology. Rather, they should reflect a balance of engagement activities. These engagement thresholds include both digital interaction and assigned work.

Teachers are encouraged to give additional work and enrichment or engagement opportunities that go above the minimum thresholds stated above, as long as it is made clear to students and families that these activities are optional. This is particularly true for primary grades, where it is not developmentally appropriate to expect a student to focus on academic tasks for a long period of time. Instead, students and families should be supported in having access to varied enrichment opportunities.

What type of content will my child be asked to complete?

All remote learning should align with district and state standards. Given the reduced amount of time that students will spend on academic work and the remote nature of the learning environment, it is recommended that teachers focus on reinforcing the critical grade-level standards that have already been introduced to students.

However, teachers have the option to teach new content or skills if your school has a clear plan on how to deliver this content in an equitable manner. Given the realities of the digital divide and different levels of access among our families, schools should ensure that students are not penalized or held accountable for mastery of new content.

Schools should seek to provide a balance of four types of opportunities aligned with critical grade-level standards:

- **Skill Practice:** Schools should provide skill practice opportunities that are grade-level and developmentally appropriate and easily student-driven. Many educational technology programs are helpful in supporting skills practice because they provide students with immediate feedback. If students do not have regular access to technology, this can also be achieved through thoughtfully designed worksheets.
- **Projects:** Activities (often spanning multiple days) allow students to develop their understanding of concepts taught throughout the school year and apply their knowledge in new and interesting ways. To support all students, these projects should be available in digital and non-digital formats with opportunities for extensions.
- **Enrichment Activities:** Enrichment activities in the form of games, puzzles, movement activities, and other opportunities allow students to explore areas of interest and develop general cognitive and life skills. Enrichment is often designed in ways that family members and caregivers can easily engage with their children to support student collaboration and communication skills.
- **Reading:** Students should have daily opportunities to read diverse, engaging texts of their choice. In the primary grades, this may mean students are reading with a family member or caregiver.

These four categories of activities should be made available **across all content areas and courses** and in **digital and non-digital formats**. The district will continue to regularly produce printable packets on an ongoing basis which are available at cps.edu/remotelearning. New packets will be posted on Monday, March 30th, and again on Monday, April 13th.

Please note that these guidelines may not apply to specific programs that will continue to have formalized assessments associated with them, such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and dual credit courses.

Remote Learning Frequently Asked Questions

How will schools and educators address students' social and emotional needs?

Educators will support their students' social and emotional needs by helping students maintain routines—which is a key strategy during times of change and uncertainty. Additionally, educators will continue to provide students the opportunity to build and practice social and emotional learning (SEL), especially for students who may feel distress, anxiety, and fear. Schools should strive to:

- Maintain a sense of community.
- Teach SEL skills.
- Share SEL information and resources with families.

How will students access content?

Because there is a digital divide in our city and nation, we cannot rely on only digital learning content. Schools will provide digital and non-digital content to students. Food distribution sites will also have printed packets of the enrichment resources available on cps.edu/remotelarning

Is my child required to keep track of their "attendance" or submit assignments?

CPS will **not** require students to log in or report attendance, nor should schools or teachers. Our primary goal during remote learning is to keep every student engaged. We understand that each family's situation is different, and logging online or submitting work every day may not be possible.

Can my child be tested or assessed during this time period?

Yes. Student assessment is important to help you and your child's teacher understand how well your child is learning. Assessments can also help inform further support and resources during remote learning and once schools reopen. Please note that during school closures, even though summative assessments can be given, grades can **only** be entered into Aspen if they **improve** your child's grade.

How will my child be graded during school closures?

Grades are important tools for communicating academic progress to families and educators alike. Schools are able to provide grades to students based on the work

completed during the remote learning period, but **your child's final grade should not be harmed** as a result of school closures and remote learning. Grades entered in Aspen for work completed during the remote learning period can only raise your child's grade.

We expect that students remain engaged and complete assignments to the furthest extent possible. If your child does not complete a given assignment during the remote learning period, they can be issued an "incomplete." If your child receives an incomplete, he or she will have the opportunity to make up or complete the assignment during this semester. In the coming weeks, CPS will continue to provide more detailed guidance around grading expectations.

We are currently working on detailed grading guidance and we plan to address topics such as grade posting in Aspen, report card distribution, and grade book entry as soon as possible. Additionally, the district will continue to provide updates on key issues such as credit accumulation, grade promotion, and graduation requirements. Please note that different expectations may be set for programs such as Career and Technical Education (CTE), virtual credit recovery courses, dual credit, and others.

How will schools provide feedback to students?

Digital Feedback

Students will receive feedback on the assigned learning activities at least once per week. Just as they would in the classroom, teachers can utilize rubrics and exemplars to clarify expectations on a specific task and identify areas of success and areas of growth within student work. When possible, students can provide feedback to their peers on their work and teachers can provide self-reflection prompts for students to think about their own progress.

Non-Digital Feedback

Providing feedback to students who do not have digital access will be challenging. Schools will need to consider creating a regular weekly check-in schedule using the Google Meet phone option or conference lines. It is important to connect with students in order to provide support and feedback. Please ensure your school has your family's most up-to-date contact information.

Remote Learning Frequently Asked Questions

What are the minimum commitments for teacher availability?

At a minimum, teachers should be available and engaged with students and/or their caregivers, for four hours per day. This time will include the following activities:

- a. Be virtually engaged with their students for at least two hours per day. Teachers can fulfill this commitment in many ways, including:
 - i. Streaming “live activities,” such as a morning meeting, mini-lesson, digital discussions, or lectures.
 - ii. Providing “virtual office hours,” by being available to students virtually to answer questions, engage in discussion, and offer general academic support.
 - iii. Forthcoming ideas, generated by schools that offer students opportunities to connect with their teachers.
- b. Provide students with feedback at least on a weekly basis.
- c. Be available to answer student and parent questions.
- d. Engage students who do not have digital access.
- e. Attend team meetings or required collaboration sessions.

Will my child be able to work with their school counselor during the closure?

Yes. School counselors will be available to provide students with academic, career, and social and emotional support for at least four hours every weekday. These supports include helping eighth-grade students select, enroll in, **and** transition to high school, and helping high school students develop concrete postsecondary plans.

Will anyone from my child’s school be available to answer my questions during the closure?

Yes. Schools will share their plans for school-wide virtual office hours to ensure there will always be someone available during regular school hours to address your questions and concerns.

My child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP). How will they be supported during remote learning?

Schools will continue to support students with diverse learning needs during school closures. Special education and general education teachers, along with related service providers, will collaborate to modify remote learning materials to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Teachers will continue to modify grades for students whose current IEP reflects the need.

A school-based member of your child’s IEP team will collaborate with the school during your child’s weekly check-in to support your child having access to remote learning content.

Please review the CPS Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services’ [frequently asked questions](#) regarding supports for diverse learners during the school closures.



Remote Learning Frequently Asked Questions

How will schools support English Learners (ELs) during remote learning?

Schools should plan to provide supports for ELs that align, to the greatest extent possible, with the supports EL students received during regular classroom instruction. For example, ELs who receive native language instruction should continue to have access to academic content in their native language.

My family is in a temporary living situation. How will my child be supported during remote learning?

If your family is currently experiencing homelessness, please contact 773-553-2242 or STLSinfo@cps.edu to get more information about available supports and resources.

District-created, hard copies of learning materials will be provided at all food distribution sites for children to complete during the closures.

How can my child connect with their teacher virtually?

Your child's teacher will communicate with you about their virtual availability. All Google-based communications tools can be accessed with your child's CPS email account (ending in @cps.edu). Some potential [Google-based communication tools](#) include:

- **Google Meet** provides a safe and secure way for teachers to host video sessions with a group of students in real-time. For more information, please review this [quick guide to Google Meet for parents and students](#).
- **Google Chat** allows teachers to chat with individual students, groups of students, or create a room to communicate with their class.
- **Google Classroom** allows teachers to create a discussion board for their classes, distribute assignments, and give real-time feedback to students.
- **Google Live Stream** provides teachers the option to record or broadcast a one-way video to their students. For more information, please review this [quick guide to Google Live Stream for parents and students](#).

Chicago Public Schools is committed to providing remote learning opportunities for students. Google Meets and Google Live Stream are the District's secure, integrated, and recommended standard for remote learning during the COVID-19 school closures. However, in an effort to accommodate the needs of the school community during this unprecedented time, schools/teachers may elect to use other tools outside of the District's endorsed standard, such as Zoom. Schools who wish to use a tool outside of Google Suite tools should notify parents and allow them to opt their student out of using such a tool.

What if my family does not have consistent access to technology or the internet?

If you do not have access to technology, you can access printed remote learning materials from your child's school or at any CPS food distribution site. You will also still be able to stay in contact with your child's teacher through teleconferences and tele-communications. Your child's teacher can use Google Meet to set up a call-in number to connect with their students via telephone.

Additionally, the district will be working in close collaboration with our school principals to distribute 65,000 school-based Chromebooks, laptops, and iPads; 37,000 newly purchased devices; and additional devices through potential philanthropic contributions. In total, we will distribute more than 100,000 devices to families in the weeks ahead to ensure our students have significantly more access to electronic learning resources.

What can a day of remote learning look like for my child?

Setting up a daily remote learning schedule can help your child keep up with their learning while at home. See below for an example of one possible student weekly schedule. Schools will work with families to provide sample schedules.

Click on the links to see a sample student schedule by grade band.

- [PreK](#)
- [K-2](#)
- [3-5](#)
- [6-8](#)
- [High School](#)

What about all of my other questions?

There is no roadmap to follow in this unprecedented time. Therefore, we are working to answer questions as quickly as possible while adhering to rapidly shifting state and national guidelines. We commit to providing regular updates as soon as more information is available.

For specific questions about instructional support and guidance for your child, please contact your school.

For other questions, please contact familyservices@cps.edu.