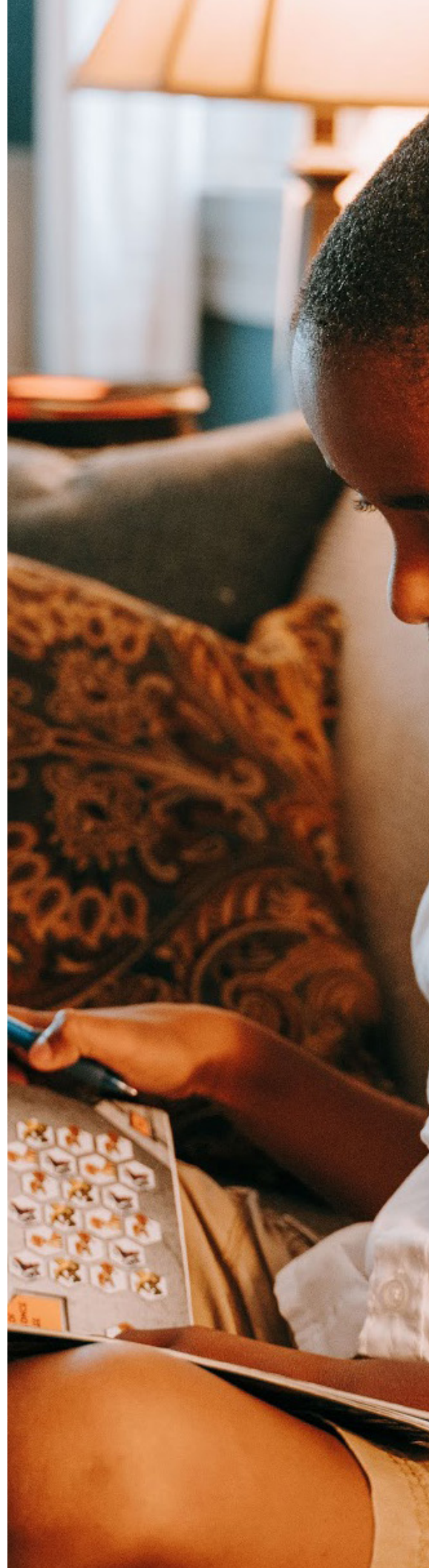




• ARCHDIOCESE OF DETROIT •  
**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

# Unleash THE Learning

Recommendations for Distance Learning



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*What follows is the result of the dedicated leadership and collaboration among the Department of Catholic Schools, principals, teachers, and parents within the Archdiocese of Detroit. The Academic Excellence Subcommittee worked tirelessly to produce recommendations in line with best practices and research, while remaining thoughtful of parent feedback provided in the End-of-Year Parent Survey. The current draft was also reviewed and approved by members of the Academic Excellence Committee comprised of DCS team members, college professors, principals, and members of the Department of Communications.*

## **Academic Excellence Subcommittee**

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*While the following presents the Department of Catholic Schools' distance learning recommendations, schools ought to consider designating days/times for usage of online learning even when/if they are permitted to reopen and hold in-person classes, so as to maintain familiarity with the online learning platforms and to ensure a smooth transition for all (students, parents, and teachers) during periods of distance learning.*

## **Instructional Schedule / Number of Synchronous v. Asynchronous Learning Opportunities**

### **PREK**

- Small groups for literacy/math (approx. 3 students) meet 2x/week synchronously for 15-20 mins.
- Whole group meets at least 1x/week synchronously for 20 mins.
- Circle time (e.g., science experiments/social studies) asynchronously (pre-recorded).
- One-on-one for students with special needs/accommodations or ELL on an as needed basis.
- Minimum # of synchronous connections per week – 3.

### **K-2**

- Whole group meets synchronously 5 days (10-15 mins.).
- Small groups meet for reading 3x/week (e.g. Mon/Wed/Fri, 20 mins.).
- Small groups meet for math 2x/week (e.g. Tues/Th, 20 mins.).
- Special needs/accommodations or ELL meet one-on-one as needed.
- Minimum number of synchronous connections per week – 10.

### **3-5**

- Whole group meets synchronously, 2x/day, 5 days (10 mins. in the morning to preview the day/10-15 mins. after lunch to refocus).
- 3 days of synchronous math (20 mins. each).
- 2 days of synchronous literacy (20 mins. each).
- Science/Soc Studies taught in 2-week units, inquiry/project-based.
- Specials-designate a day for each special/specials teachers may attend whole group meeting when applicable/necessary.

- Minimum # of synchronous connections per week – 15.

## 6-8

- 1 Whole group synchronous morning meeting daily (10 mins. each) w/homeroom teacher.
- Block Schedule: M/W-Reading/Math/Science, T/TH-Eng/Religion/SS/Electives.
- 1.5 hour blocks (last 30 mins. are built-in office hours--students who need help can stay).
- Fridays may be used for small groups/individual assistance if needed.
- Minimum # of synchronous connections per week – 9.

## 9-12

- Consideration should be given to arranging the instructional schedule to allow for sufficient teacher preparation time, planning, and grading. For example, the instructional week could be reduced to 4 days allowing for one teacher plan day and office hours. Or a school could alternate instruction days for specific subjects.

# Catholic Curriculum

- Religion/ Catholic Faith should be integrated daily at all levels.
- Weekly Virtual Mass should be provided.
- Principal morning meeting w/school community as frequent as possible (synchronous or asynchronous when/if not possible to go live), lead prayer, share Saint of the day, scripture passage, etc.
- Schools should provide virtual retreats and opportunities for spiritual growth to parents, students and staff.

# Students with Special Needs, Accommodations, ELL

## K-8

- Administrators should ensure that Accommodation Plans are made digitally accessible to the teachers at all times.
- Teachers and counselors should collaborate in communications with parents to ensure needs of each student are met.

- Administrators should strive to ensure that accommodations are made to the best of the school's ability.
- Administrators should arrange for a reasonable number of check-ins with the parents of students with accommodations from appropriate staff (e.g., counselor, teacher, interventionist, administrator) to ensure students' needs are addressed.

## 9-12

- Establish a system of frequent monitoring and intervention for students with accommodation plans that utilizes the resources available at the individual school to ensure that students' needs are met, regardless of format of delivery.

# Technology/Devices

## ALL LEVELS

- Schools should ensure that students have access to a web-enabled device that is compatible with the platforms utilized for distance learning (synchronous/asynchronous).
- Schools should establish a protocol for students (or parents depending on level) to address technical issues (who to contact and how).

# Attendance Policy

*Attendance expectations must be clearly articulated to both parents and students at all levels.*

## ELEMENTARY

- Administrators should require parents to acknowledge the day's lessons to ensure parents are informed of each day's learning goals and/or expectations. The process should be streamlined on a school shared site. Administrative staff should follow up with parents as needed.
- Teachers should require and take attendance at synchronous meetings to hold students accountable. Teachers should follow-up with parents if students are absent and/or report any concerns to administration.

## HIGH SCHOOL

- Attendance at synchronous instruction is highly recommended and developing methods of checking on the health and well-being of all students is encouraged (e.g., regular reports from teachers to administrators indicating student absences or concerns about students).

# Grading and Accountability

## ELEMENTARY (K-8)

- Maintain standard method of grading for grades K-8 (e.g., K-2 typically use satisfactory/unsatisfactory models while grades 3-8 employ traditional grades).
- Late work policy should allow for flexibility in times of crisis (e.g., giving students the opportunity to earn credit up to one week before each card-marking ends).
- Failures should be rare and should only occur if all efforts to help have been exhausted.
- The grading policy and expectations must be clearly communicated to the students and parents.
- Specials - Provide flexibility to families in need; In some cases, specials are provided by shared-time teacher who must follow grading procedures of the public school district.

## HIGH SCHOOL

- Maintain regular grading practices for student work. In a distance learning environment, teachers should post grades more frequently than under regular circumstances.
- Schools should establish and communicate specific timelines for posting grades.

# Summative Assessments

## PREK-1

- Literacy assessments should be I-I.
- Science/SS/Math may be assessed in small groups.
- PreK/K frequency should be first week of school, before winter break, early May (BOY, MOY, EOY), but these are different than the STAR testing.

## 2-3

- Literacy assessments should be I-I.
- Other subjects may be assessed in small groups.
- BOY, MOY, EOY frequency (apart from STAR testing).

## 4-5

- Math/Literacy assessed in small groups.
- Other subjects may be project-based or capstone.



- MOY and EOY frequency (apart from Star testing).

## 6-8

- Math/Literacy assessed in small groups.
- Other subjects may be project-based or capstone.
- MOY and EOY frequency (apart from Star testing).

*It is recommended that teachers do not assign additional work (other than review) during testing week.*

## K-8 STAR TESTING

- Remote Testing options should only allow for teachers as proctors via zoom either with small group or one-on-one if needed for accommodations.
- Planning for a return to school this fall, BOY Star testing will be done in the school building (provided the Governor does not change previous announcement which indicated a return to the school buildings at the start of the school year).
- Schools will need to manage communications with teachers, parents and students regarding the possibility of remote testing during MOY and/or EOY.

## HIGH SCHOOL

- Schools should plan for alternative forms of summative assessment if circumstances prohibit the administration of traditional forms of assessment.

# LMS / Method for Posting/ Collecting Assignments

## ELEMENTARY

- Schools should limit the number of sites students and parents must visit for posting and collecting assignments. One shared site such as Seesaw, Classroom Dojo, or Google Classroom is recommended.
- The schedule for posting and collecting assignments should be clearly articulated to both parents and students.

## HIGH SCHOOL

- The method for assigning work and communication of assignment due dates and submission times should be uniform building-wide and should be clearly communicated. For example, by



Monday at 9:00 a.m., student assignments and expectations for the week should be posted and accessible.

## Online Curriculum Enrichment

### ELEMENTARY

- Freckle is recommended for K-8 Math, Reading, Science & Social Studies, as it is connected to the Star testing data.
- Schools may decide locally which online resources will best serve their students to supplement teacher instruction.

### HIGH SCHOOL

- Schools should place an emphasis on direct instruction by teachers via multiple methods (live instruction, recorded videos, etc.). Online resources such as Khan Academy, YouTube, etc. should serve as a supplement to live instruction rather than replacing it.

## SEL / Mental Health Support *(for students/parents)*

### PREK-1

- Pictorial depiction of mood check-in daily.

### 2-8

- Daily mood check-in via google form.
- Teachers should share form data with counselors to assist with necessary follow-up.

### PREK-8

- Teachers may consider using grade-appropriate books/stories in lessons w/students to help younger students articulate their emotional well-being.
- Communicate SEL to parents in grade level bands (PreK-1, 2-4, 5-8).
- Repeat the communication to parents at start of every closure.

### HIGH SCHOOL

- Each school should establish a procedure for monitoring student well-being.

## ALL LEVELS

- Schools should consider the mental health and welfare of parents/families, especially in understanding various circumstances (e.g., work from home, illness, loss, changes in employment) of each family during periods of remote learning.
- Schools should provide resources (e.g. mental health professionals, crisis hotlines, spiritual support) at the start of each period of remote learning.
- Schools should provide a reasonable number of check-ins with parents/families to ensure they are supported.

# Teacher Mental Health/Well-Being

## ELEMENTARY

- Principals should provide access to mental health experts and resources during times of crisis and remote learning (e.g. Lifeworks for staff under MCC).
- Time frames should be established and communicated (between teacher and parents, and between principals and teachers) regarding when to contact teachers and when to expect return emails/phone calls.
- Provide for synchronous social connections weekly, if possible, among staff members to maintain a sense of community.
- A reasonable number of 1-1 check-ins from administrators to staff members to ensure safety, health, welfare.

## HIGH SCHOOL

- When creating academic schedules, take into consideration the additional time and effort that is necessary in a remote instruction environment and adjust accordingly by providing ample planning time for teachers to be successful.
- Establish a regular schedule of virtual faculty meetings.
- Provide opportunities for informal/social gatherings of teachers to check in with one another.
- Regularly communicate with staff members about resources and opportunities for mental health support (e.g., Lifeworks through MCC, etc.).
- School administrators and/or pastoral staff should be attentive to the individual health and wellness needs of fellow employees and provide additional resources.

# Teacher Evaluations

## ELEMENTARY

- Administrators and teachers should agree upon an evaluation (formal/informal) policy during remote instruction.
- Informal observations during synchronous meetings should offer helpful feedback to the teacher.
- Offering teachers the opportunity to observe one another in the remote setting is recommended to encourage collaboration and offer support.

## HIGH SCHOOL

- Continue the observation and evaluation process with the understanding that there are challenges that teachers face in a remote teaching environment.
- Prioritize the completion of evaluations during times of live instruction.

# PD for Teachers

## ALL LEVELS

- Encourage engagement in AOD Uniform PD Days.
- Encourage engagement in AOD Teacher PLCs once a month.
- Principals should strive to provide relevant PD to address the needs of their teachers and students.
- Principals should consider classroom learning labs in which teachers may visit one another's synchronous sessions.

# Substitute Teachers

## ALL LEVELS

- Acquaint any substitute teachers with the technology and online resources being used.
- Ensure administrators have complete access to lesson plans AND all online learning platforms the teacher is using in the event they need to conduct the synchronous sessions or employ a substitute.

# Expectations with Synchronous Meets

*(e.g. quiet area, away from distractions)*

## ALL LEVELS

- Administrators should require that all teachers use a shared calendar indicating all synchronous connections.
- Administrators should inform teachers that they may drop in it at any time in an effort to ensure safety and protection of students.
- Schools and teachers should collaborate to create clearly articulated rules/expectations of students for synchronous meets. For example: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/iijk2pHL9dJ32xbFxTIt9YVv3XLU3oyHI8bd6GL4RBjk/edit>
- Administrators should clearly articulate professional decorum expectations to teachers for synchronous meets (e.g. setting and dress should mimic classroom norms).

## Resources

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