



Urban Academy Distance Learning Plan

District #4088

March 26, 2020

Dr. Mongsher Ly, Superintendent

Contact: 651-215-9419, mly@urbanacademymn.org

Address: 1668 Montreal Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55116

Prepared for Urban Academy with assistance from Rod Haenke and Stephen Bosacker.

roderickmhaenke@gmail.com

Table of Contents

- [Introduction](#) 3
 - [Purpose](#) 3
 - [Overview](#) 3
 - [Distance Learning](#)..... 3
- [Education and Distance Learning](#)..... 3
 - [Attendance and Truancy](#)..... 3
 - [Distance Learning](#)..... 3
 - [Special Education Services - IEP or 504 Plan](#)..... 5
 - [English Learners](#) 6
 - [Students Experiencing Homelessness or Housing Instability](#) 6
 - [Early Learning](#)..... 6
 - [Assessment](#) 6
 - [Staff](#)..... 6
- [Communications](#) 7
 - [Tribal Considerations](#) 7
 - [Before and After Care](#) 7
- [Services](#) 7
 - [Care for Children of Families of Emergency Workers](#)..... 7
 - [Nutrition](#)..... 8
 - [Meals and/or Instructional Material Pick-up](#)..... 8
 - [Health and Wellness](#) 8
 - [Mental Health Support Resources](#)..... 9
- [Operations](#) 9
 - [Funding](#) 9
 - [Broadband Access](#)..... 9

Introduction

Purpose

Ensure that every student in the state of Minnesota receives an equitable education and has equal access to learning and instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Overview

Minnesota school districts and charters are preparing instructional plans that will allow meaningful, relevant learning to take place while schools are closed. Schools are expected to develop lessons utilizing a distance learning model for every level in grades public PreK-8 and each graduation requirement course for grades 9-12.

This is Urban Academy's (Urban's) Distance Learning Plan. It is designed to meet the requirements laid out in the 03.20.20 - School Closure Guidance for School Districts and Charter Schools.pdf and 03.20.20 - Q-and-A on School Closure.pdf documents from the Minnesota Department of Education.

This plan may evolve due to changing circumstances.

Distance Learning

Distance Learning defined: Students engaging in distance learning have access to appropriate educational materials and receive daily interaction with their licensed teacher(s).

It is important to note that distance learning does not always mean e-learning or online learning. It is critical to provide this learning in a format that can be equitably accessed by all students

Education and Distance Learning

Attendance and Truancy

Urban's attendance policies will remain unchanged. Specific methods for taking attendance will be modified to work for the Distance Learning Plan.

Daily attendance will be taken by each teacher for each individual student as they reach out and contact them daily. Daily attendance will be taken, as if it was a regular day at school, and submitted to the attendance staff for daily tracking.

Expectations about attendance and truancy will be communicated to parents in several ways (1) personal phone call by the teacher and an interpreter, if needed, (2) Notice will be in the work packets that go home, and (3) newsletter that is mailed home. Students will learn and understand from their parents, teachers and staff through direct communication and information sent home in packets. Staff have received expectations from administration through training and standard communications methods.

Distance Learning

The Urban Academy distance learning plan addresses limited technology access by a large number of families. Providing equal access to learning will be accomplished by converting current program and curriculum content to printed packets. Packets will cover all subjects by grade level.

The packets for core subjects of literacy (reading and writing), math and social studies will cover a full week of learning instruction. Packets will start with a friendly greeting and note from the teacher, list the lessons/activities for the week and a schedule of time to spend on each lesson/activity. Mondays through Thursdays students will work on activities in the packets. Activities on Fridays address assessments for each subject covered in the week. Other subjects have packets called Choice Boards covering movement, social studies, science, writing and art. Students have a choice for which activity to complete sometime in the week. Teachers will track student activity and progress through feedback during the week. Parents are asked to support each student's schedule and activities.

Custom packets will be provided to students with IEPs and/or English Learner (EL) Learning Plans to allow for accommodations and to maintain student progress according to their plans.

Each day teachers will talk with each student to connect personally and discover how the student is doing with activities and learning. Some instruction and help will be provided during these times. Each week EL teachers will communicate with students according to the existing pattern of interaction and in collaboration with the students' teachers. Service and plans may be adjusted based on feedback and assessments. Special Education teachers will communicate weekly with students according to the existing pattern and based on the student's IEP, in collaboration with teachers, paraprofessionals and parents.

Materials will be delivered weekly by bus along with meals to pre-arranged bus stops where families will receive the packets for the following week.

Teachers and other staff will communicate regularly with parents and students about plans, adjustments, needs and so on. Communications will happen as best serves the parents and students – by phone calls, with the help of a translator as needed, by email, text, and possibly other means.

To the degree possible, differentiated instruction and one-on-one support will be provided through communications with the student and parents by the teacher, the EL teacher, the SpEd teacher and paraprofessionals. Modifications and approaches for learning such as scaffolding and gradual release can be provided through learning materials. Coordination and collaboration between staff will help ensure that each student's learning is supported and progressing.

Instructional leadership, as in the normal course of action at the school, is provided by Dr. Mongsher Ly, Instructional Coach Harold Lang, and the Instructional Leadership Team. This will happen through regular online meetings and by continually monitoring student engagement, teacher practices, and curriculum development.

Job embedded professional development, high quality instructional practices, and data driven decision making will be handled by the same staff with the same standards but adapted to the distance learning framework. The Leadership Team will continue to meet on a regular basis to review compiled assessment data from teachers doing distance learning and plan aligned professional development activities to support teachers in helping students that are not achieving their full potential, especially those struggling with distance learning. We anticipate the strategies may focus primarily on student

engagement. The Team will also talk through feedback from teachers and plan Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings that will be delivered regularly using Google Hangouts or Zoom. Additionally, the leadership team will meet to review the overall Distance Learning Plan and to review progress and focus on building capacity across staff. The Instructional Coach will provide individual coaching to teachers via email, telephone, and Google Hangouts.

All non-teaching staff will be on board and doing “reach-out” services to students’ homes and families for continued support. For example, providing home visits by dropping off work packets or food if the student(s) misses the drop off time and day. If a student was being provided support in school by specific individual(s) then the support or specialist staff will continue to reach out to the student to continue that support.

Materials delivered to students and parents will not contain protected student or staff information. All planning and preparations for student learning remain within the school’s secure processes and software systems.

The purpose of Distance Learning is to protect everyone’s health as much as feasible. Therefore, scheduling and preparing student packets/materials at the school facility will be done in ways that maintains effective social distancing within the school. Spacing and scheduling for access to computers and copiers distributes workloads over a full week and minimizes possibilities of transmitting the virus between people. All surfaces will be sanitized between sessions to further minimize transmission. Handoffs of packets and food will be done with minimal contact and ideal distances between people. Personnel will have sanitizing solutions to clean surfaces and hands between handoffs. Containers and materials that could transmit the virus will be sanitized as much as possible. All staff, parents and students will be given instructions/guidance on how to protect against the spread of the virus.

Dr. Mongsher Ly, Instructional Coach Harold Lang, and the Instructional Leadership Team will meet to review the overall Distant Learning Plan and to review progress. Adjustments will be made as needed. Significant learnings and changes likely will occur. The school will update the plan as needs emerge and as new practices are developed to meet those needs. This will happen through regular online meetings.

Any student who also must be at a daycare provider during the school day will have the packets available to engage in learning. The daycare provider will be responsible to support these learning activities if there is any overlap with a normal school day.

Any Urban Academy students whose parents are qualified emergency workers will be given care at the Urban Academy facility according to MDE and State requirements. Staff who are present with the students will manage student needs within the expected constraints to minimize transmission of the virus and also to support students as they work on their learning activities.

Special Education Services - IEP or 504 Plan

Each student with an IEP will receive ongoing services to the degree possible through the distance learning section outlined at the beginning of this plan. Each student’s IEP will be monitored and the appropriate teacher will work with the student through customized packets, phone calls and conversations with others who support the student’s learning and learning plan. Progress will be assessed through conversations and weekly assessments.

English Learners

Each student with an ELL Individual Learning Plan will receive ongoing services to the degree possible through the distance learning plan outlined in the distance learning section outlined at the beginning of this plan. Each student's Individualized Learning Plan will be monitored, and the appropriate teacher will work with the student through customized packets, phone calls and conversations with others who support the student's learning and learning plan. Progress will be assessed through weekly assessments and verbally administered WIDA assessments, by student reporting and reading of work done for specific activities.

Students Experiencing Homelessness or Housing Instability

Homeless students will be given the same support as all the other students. School materials, food and teacher contact will be provided without any limitations.

Early Learning

The teacher will contact each student on a daily basis along with one more parent. It is vital that parents are a part of this learning process as their 4-year-old will need a lot of guidance through these trying times. The teacher will setup a daily routine with the parent(s) to ensure and support daily learning. These actions will happen regardless of where students will be during the school day. The Urban Academy Prekindergarten program will fulfill minimum hour requirements between teacher and student based on MDE guidance and rules adjusted for the distance learning period.

Assessment

The school's education program is designed so that all standards are covered through the school year and formative assessments provide clear evidence of student progress. Standardized assessments such as the MCAs and NWEA MAP tests are important indicators to support formative assessments. Considering these standardized and proctored tests are not available, the school's plan is to continue with educating students and assessing weekly progress. Student progress will be tracked by teachers and the school's SIS data systems.

The Federal Department of Education has cancelled mandatory state academic assessments for this year. These are used to help measure individual, school and state progress on important academic standards. The goal is for all students to make good academic growth each year. Urban will measure academic progress through weekly formative assessments. Results will be reported to students and parents in standard student reports.

Staff

Training was conducted at the school facility for staff as soon as possible after the issuing of the Emergency Order. Training will continue for all staff as the distance learning plans are developed and refined. Ongoing training will be conducted with personal safety and transmission of the virus in mind. Some of this will be accomplished remotely through Google apps such as Google Hangouts, shared documents, emails and phone calls. Social distancing will be strictly followed for any in-facility training and work required to deliver distance learning to students.

Communications

The Instructional Coach collects questions from staff daily and compiles answers into one email to staff that is sent every day at about 3:00 p.m. Questions that need immediate response will be addressed as needed. Dr. Mongsher Ly will still be holding regular Cabinet meetings that bring together all departments via Google Hangouts to communicate needed information to all staff as well as identify any crucial issues.

Urban Academy staff will communicate with parents, students and the community about the distance learning model in several ways: Through the Urban Academy Website, mailings and notices in work packets that are delivered to parents. Follow up phone calls will be made to ensure understanding.

Information from the State Department of Education, State Department of Health and the information from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will be posted on the website and also posted on the newsletter that will be mailed home.

Interpreter staff will also be calling homes to do outreach to families to support them and inform them of the continued information that is coming from the local and national agencies as indicated.

The school administration tracks all relevant updates from the state of MN, CDC, and St. Paul departments. Relevant conference calls or webinars are attended. The school will communicate with authorities, including its authorizer, IQS, about the state of the school and needs that emerge. Should any staff or students become infected with Coronavirus the school will notify the MDE and MDH and appropriate personnel and agencies as required by then current orders. Urban will follow up based on instruction from the agencies.

Urban will communicate with staff and parents to connect them with resources that can assist families experiencing homelessness. This assistance will be as close as possible to what the school normally does.

Tribal Considerations

For any students enrolled at Urban who are registered as members of a Native American tribe the Urban Family Specialist and other specialists will reach out to all tribal liaison officers or tribal authorities to support student learning concerns and needs without any limitations. School packets, food and parent contact will be provided. Urban will also be culturally respectful and responsive to students reporting as American Indian and Alaska Native but not officially registered with a tribe.

Before and After Care

Urban will continue to do outreach to all families and community partners through website and newsletters. The school will provide before and after care programs for children of Families of Emergency Care only. If needed, support staff will be available to provide the student care.

Services

Care for Children of Families of Emergency Workers

Urban will continue to do outreach to all families and community partners through website and newsletters to learn which parents qualify as Emergency Workers. Urban will manage communications with MDE for these students and families and sign up the children for services at the facility.

If needed, parents have will have the options to either drop off and pick up at the school or if these students are currently enrolled at Urban, transportation will be provided.

Classrooms at Urban will be designated for before and after care by Urban support staff. Academic plans, materials, and food services will be provided to each student that is being cared for at the school.

Nutrition

Urban will be delivering food twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays). This will be done by bus drivers as they will deliver to the bus stops scheduled in the PM; and support staff will support the delivery.

Meals and/or Instructional Material Pick-up

Since the start of planning for Distance Learning Urban has been communicating with parents about specific plans to deliver meals and instructional materials to the families. Parents will receive ongoing notifications via website, packets, and phone calls to coordinate scheduling of days and times for pick-up.

The plan is to deliver these things through the school's bus company. Deliveries will be in the afternoons on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week. Specific stops will be identified and communicated to families. The bus driver and possibly an accompanying school paraprofessional will help hand items to the correct parents or family members waiting at the stop. Other delivery options will be negotiated with families who are not able to match the bus schedule.

Beyond the weekly packets the school is sending home, the school is currently trying to identify additional resources that can be sent home, including library books.

All families will be directly contacted and notified of how and when the school materials and meals will be dropped off. Families will be asked if there are any barriers to stopping them from getting materials and meals. The teaching staff and support staff will provide, door to door, drop-off and pickup services.

Families who are homeless will be asked if they have appropriate storage for food. If they do not, we will setup times at the school where the families can come to the school and eat their meals. Urban Academy will provide transportation to those families in need.

Health and Wellness

Parents will be notified by their student's classroom teachers and support staff on how to inform and support their child's understanding of the coronavirus and how they can help prevent the spread of the virus with best hygiene practices (i.e. Washing hands, coughing and sneezing practices, social distance, etc.).

Staff will get continued support from Administration on how to support their students to cope with the closing of schools and how serious the coronavirus is to their families and our nation. As teachers reach out to their students on a daily basis, they will inform and have continued conversations with the students to ensure them that their teacher is with them and will continue to support them, as needed.

At the school facility the school custodian will follow a schedule of cleaning and sanitizing of frequently touched surfaces, particularly surfaces that people must use with direct skin contact. Social distancing will be implemented across the facility at all times. The number of people allowed in the facility and especially in rooms will be limited through careful scheduling and appointment making. As much as possible conversations will be conducted remotely. Items that are handed off from one person to another will either be sanitized first, or hands and items will be sanitized afterwards.

Mental Health Support Resources

Urban Academy's Family Specialist and Social Worker will be accessible to assist with providing assistance to families. Lists of food providers, food shelves, clothing, medical, dental, and social services will be on hand and ready to support our families.

Urban's social worker will help students and families who may need mental health services to connect with a mental health provider (i.e. County Services, Wilder Foundation, etc.). Urban's current tele-mental health partners are the Minnesota Association of Children's Mental Health and the Wilder Foundation.

Urban's Family Specialist and Family Liaisons will assist families by making phone calls and appointments with the County for medical assistance benefits and may also provide transportation and interpreter services.

Regarding bullying among Urban students, as teachers reach out to their students on a daily basis, they will inform and have continued conversations with their students to ensure them that their teacher is with them and will continue to support them, as needed. Teachers will give reminders to treat others properly and continue to educate the students on Wise Skills.

Operations

Funding

During the season of Distance Learning Urban will continue to operate all functions necessary to maintain the school. The school will continue its contract with its finance management service contractor. This contractor manages all finance transactions and documentation and prepares payrolls on schedule. This will continue since the school is financially liquid.

Broadband Access

Urban will inform families that Xfinity and Quick 5 Minute Process have reached out to assist with providing \$10 per month internet services to low income families. If Urban identifies any other providers who will serve these families these will be added to the list to communicate.