Supporting Teachers and Students Facing School Closures with Distance Learning

As our LINC team began to think about how to help schools and district plan for Coronavirus related school closures, we immediately put on our teacher hats. As you well know, teachers are the primary source of support, guidance, and comfort for students and families during times such as these. In addition, teachers feel the added pressure of preventing the loss of valuable instructional time. We hope you find this helpful. Please let us know how we can continue to support your efforts by reaching out to us via email at info@linclearning.com or on Twitter @linc_pd.

Before we dive into the tips and resources we assembled for teachers to support them in a rapid shift to distance/virtual learning, here are some overarching thoughts to keep in mind:
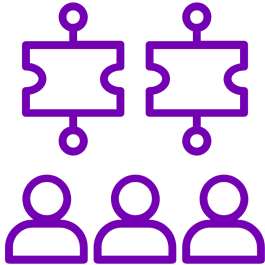
- **Equity and access**: Plan for students and families who do not have access to devices and internet.
- **Leverage what is already in place**: Now might not be the best time to introduce anything new. Rely on the established routines and technology that students and families are familiar with.
- **Schedule communication**: Set up a consistent schedule for communication. This could be virtual drop-in office hours using a Google Hangout (which has a phone call-in option). Solicit student and family input early and often. This will convey that you are open to ideas and suggestions to make this work for everyone.
- **Self-Care (REALLY)**: Gift yourself the patience, compassion, and understanding that you so generously give to others. We like this article and its advice: How to Work From Home: 20 Tips From People Who Do It Successfully.

We've organized our recommendations for educators below. We'd also value hearing from you about your plans and what is working well as these situations unfold. See Tips for Teachers for ideas to consider as you are planning for remote learning. **Access an editable template you can use to share routines and structures for your classroom here.**

We have also compiled an Educator Resource List with ideas, tips and resources for remote learning activities.

Finally, we have created a playlist in LINCspring, our virtual professional learning platform, focused specifically on preparing teachers for distance learning. See more here about this playlist or contact us at info@linclearning.com for more information about LINCspring.

Teaching and Learning		
Priority	**How**	**Tips**
Distributing Assignments and Communication.	• Use your Learning Management System (LMS) to distribute assignments and communicate with students and families. • Other options might be through email or Padlet. Use the stream layout in Padlet to communicate and share assignments with your students by adding posts to the stream.	**Tips:** If you currently do not use an LMS, consider creating a Google Classroom. You can use it to simply and easily distribute work and give updates to students and families. See the following guides for using Seesaw or Google Classroom: • Seesaw E-Learning Days Webinar • Getting Started with Google Classroom
Engaging Students and Creating Routines	• Begin each day/class with student goal-setting or mood checks to create student ownership. Here is a sample daily goal-setting document. • Post a daily agenda through your LMS, email or a digital tool like Padlet. • Create a daily exit ticket to gauge how students are doing.	**Tips:** This check can be used for attendance. Create a Google Form to track who is checking in each day. **Sample Prompt**: How do you feel about this structure for learning? What is working, what could be improved?
Engage with Playlists for Independent Learning	• A playlist will provide activities for students either digitally, offline, or both. Students will use	**Tips**: Check out Meeting the Needs of All Students Through Playlists, a blog post with ideas for elementary,

	this as their agenda to work independently until they meet with you. ● Ideas for creating a playlist are [here](#). ● Sample [Distance Learning Hyperdoc](#). ● Sample Playlists are provided in the [Educator Resource List](#)	middle school and high school.
Online Discussions to Engage Students	● Use online discussions to keep students connected and engaged. ● Use your LMS or another tool such as [Padlet](#) and [Flipgrid](#) to keep students connected.	**Tips**: [Fostering Collaboration and Connectivity Within Classrooms](#) [Engaging Online Discussions](#) *Google Slides with Ideas for Engaging Discussions*

Collaborative Learning to Keep Students Connected	● Include collaborative learning activities for students such as working on a group or partner activity/project.
	  ○ Students can collaborate through book clubs, an art project, or anything of shared interest.
	  ○ Have students share their collaborative work through [Zoom](#) or [Flipgrid](#).
		Tips: Use this [rubric](#) so students can self-assess during a collaborative activity.
		
		[Fostering Collaboration and Connectivity Within Classrooms](#)

On-boarding Students and Families		
Priority	**How**	**Tips**
Establish and Share Clear and Consistent Communication Strategies for Students and Families.	Create communication commitments and scheduling (academic expectations and check-ins) - Set routines for the "school day." - See Sample of **Virtual School Guidelines**. - See Sample tips for families. Feel free to adapt. (*To make your own copy to edit in Google Docs, go to File, Make a Copy*).	Consider what engagement should look like in your distance classroom. Plan for how will you take attendance. (Your administration may have shared this with you already). Download this editable document, Tips for Parents.
Solicit Family Input	Use a Google Form or Survey Monkey to get feedback from parents.	Ask families about what is working and what might need to be adjusted.
Conduct Onboarding to Digital Platforms and Tools	Share written instructions or create a screencast to share how-to videos for digital tools you are using.	Be sure your students are comfortable with your digital tools before they leave school.
Determine Available Student Access to WiFi	Check with administration to determine if they have made connections with community members to inquire about WiFI access for students.	**Tips:** Prepare printed instructional packets in advance for those students who will not have access.

Social and Emotional Care		
Priority	**How**	**Tips**
Offer Some Fun to Students!	- Incorporate activities to keep it light! - Let students engage in activities that interest them during breaks and share with the class. (Tik	**Tips:** Have students create "Picture a Day" Boards: something green, favorite thing in your house. Virtual "Where's Waldo:"

	Tok creations, cooking, drawing, music, etc,)	Pick a mascot image and hide it everyday somewhere in the online space.
Create Space for Conversation and Feedback	● Offer Office Hours - Students can schedule virtual or phone. Use Zoom, Google Hangouts or Skype	
Schedule Class Community Gatherings	Use Zoom, Google Hangouts or Skype	Use a tool like Flipgrid to keep students connected face-to-face. This would be a great time to connect students with other schools using #GridPals through Flipgrid.