

## Distance Learning Plan Twin Cities Academy

The MDE has outlined a set of expectations that will constitute a school district's plan for providing instruction to all students in the event that school is closed for a long period of time. A plan is to be developed and posted on a school's website by March 30th, 2020. Below are the components of the plan required by the MDE.

### **Part A: Instructional Expectations**

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.

#### **General Requirements:**

Summary of the teaching and learning structures and platforms to be utilized during distance learning.

How the school ensures that all students will have equal access to the learning and required materials to successfully receive credit in their class, including technology. Include voluntary prekindergarten or school readiness plus programs, if applicable.

- On Friday March 13th in preparation for a possible shut down, TCA surveyed all students as to whether they had access to internet and technology at home. TCA received an 80% response rate through this survey. During the week of March 16th any students who had not responded were contacted via phone calls, texts and emails to determine needs. TCA has adequate Chromebooks to meet all student needs at this time. TCA is working directly with the 3% of families without internet to set up free internet either through Comcast or through open Xfinity "hot spots." In the event a student is still unable to access online learning, TCA is prepared to mail or drop off packets of material in order to ensure that all students have equal access to instruction. All students have TCA gmail accounts from which they will be accessing online learning. How to access the online learning was sent via regular mail to all families in five different languages and is also posted on our website and was sent out via an email blast.

The school will provide the following trainings for staff in implementation of the distance learning model and district expectations.

- TCA will be using the Google Classroom platform. Most teachers were already using some form of this platform for their daily instruction. On Tuesday March 17th all teachers came to the school in the morning for a virtual staff meeting (staying in their own rooms) and were provided with guidance via Google Documents on how to set up their Google Classroom courses. Expert teachers in the program were available to support teachers as needed. Online

updates are provided every day to answer questions and support teachers remotely. At the time of this report all teachers are reporting that Google Classroom courses are up and running. TCA intends to have a non-graded testing period on Wednesday March 25th, Thursday March 26th and Friday March 27th, prior to Spring Break. During Spring Break administration will work with the families with whom teachers report they have not yet engaged. TCA distance learning will be “live” on April 6th after the return from Spring Break.

The school will provide the following trainings for students on implementation of the distance learning model and district expectations.

- Students will be engaged during a “testing” period during the week of March 23rd (see above). Teachers have been provided with a Youtube Video to share with all students on how to use Google Classroom. Directions on how to use the Google Classroom platform have also been mailed to all students in five different languages.

The school will provide the following trainings for parents/guardians on implementation of the distance learning model and district expectations.

- TCA has provided access information and training for the use of the Google Classroom tool via a mailing and online through our website. Additionally TCA parents and guardians are being invited remotely to participate in Google Classroom introductions and trainings by their student’s teachers. More training is to be planned for April.

Programming options for school nurses, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, paraprofessionals, other school specialists and cultural liaisons.

- All support staff including the school nurse, school counselors, social workers, mental health providers and school specialists have developed their own Google Classrooms as a platform to continue to engage with students they would normally see onsite, and for any new students who may wish to access services. All paraprofessionals are assigned to the Google Classroom courses as co-teachers to continue to support and engage the students they supported during the onsite education. All support staff are also reaching out via personal phone calls, texts and emails to students per a regular weekly schedule as well.

Attendance policy for students and staff during the remote learning period:

- Students are required to engage with Google Classroom courses they are assigned in on a weekly basis. All weekly assignments given daily to students are required to be completed during that week. If a student does not engage within the week, the teacher will report that to administration and administration will contact the family and determine the attendance issues and days to mark as needed. Parents/guardians may also use the regular email and phone call attendance line to report absences. These will be recorded weekly as they occur as well. A student will not be marked absent for the full week, only the day(s) reported to administration.

Materials students will be provided and method(s) of distribution.

- All student materials and resources will be currently paperless and provided through online resources. All students have access to school provided technology and hot spot internet if needed. If a student absolutely is unable to access online learning, the school will provide paper-based packets for learning via postal mail or drop off.

Security of the distance learning model is secure and will not allow for the release of protected student or staff information.

- Google classroom is password protected and only invited students/teachers to a course have access to the information. Google claims its systems are among the industry's most secure. All grading will continue to occur on Infinite Campus of which students and parents have access to view through the password protected portal.

**Resources for Families: Information on Childcare, Nutrition Program, Translation Services, Internet Access, Talking with Children About Covid19, Mental Health & Other Supports**

The school is providing food service for [all families/families qualifying for FRL] please see below for information on distribution method.

TCA is using its school buses to provide "food truck" style meals one time a week. There are 12 sites where a student can pick up meals. Meals are packaged to provide each student with five breakfasts and five lunches per federal guidelines. One bus is specifically doing house stops for food delivery one time a week, for families that are required to be fully shut in due to medical vulnerability to the coronavirus.

The school is providing childcare for families of first responders [other additional], please see below for information on accessing childcare.

TCA is a secondary school and currently students of this age do not require child care.

Insert information on other supports students and families may wish to access.

TCA has mailed and published on its website multiple resources and supports for its families beyond what our school can provide. As a St. Paul public charter school our students and families have access

to many resources, and we are regularly publicizing these to our families to help with the challenges of the pandemic. Resources include additional food opportunities for low income families, health resources, mental health resources, and technology resources during this time.

**Special Education Requirements:** State and Federal law requires a school to continue to meet the all requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The school will ensure supports identified on a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan are provided as described below.

- See Specific Plan for Special Education/504

Process for communicating with parents and guardians regarding their child's services, which should include discussion regarding amending IEP's to address how best to meet the student's needs in a flexible learning model. This includes direct specialized instruction, related services, and accommodations.

- See Specific Plan for Special Education/504

School's protocol to communicate with administration and staff to prepare and support them in meeting the needs of students eligible for special education, child find activities, evaluations/reevaluations, and IEP implementation.

- See Specific Plan for Special Education/504

### **English Language Learner Requirements**

How the school will fulfill Individual Learning Plans for English Language Learners. Include possible scaffolding methods available to support students in a distance learning environment.

- EL Teacher has a caseload of students and will communicate weekly with students based on MDE approved EL Plan to support and provide instruction based on their ACCESS score and service grid.

Plan for communicating with families that do not use English as a primary language. Including plans for translation where necessary.

- All communication is translated into five languages (English, Spanish, Hmong, Somali, Arabic and Karen - for specific families)

### **Protections for Students Experiencing Homelessness or Housing Instability**

How the school will satisfy the Federal requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, to support homelessness students throughout this crisis and promote their full participation in their education throughout the duration of the distance learning period.

- Homeless Coordinator, Lisa Dennis, has regular check ins with all identified homeless students throughout the distance learning period to include checking in on academics, access to food, access to shelter and providing outside resources.

How will the school monitor participation and engagement of homeless students in distance learning including both attendance and performance.

- Homeless Coordinator, Lisa Dennis, will review grades and participation of identified students bi-weekly or more.

How will the school monitor the efficacy of distance learning plans and approaches for all students including homeless students, and be prepared to consider alternatives or additional support needs as part of that review.

- All identified students have been provided with technology by the school, and regular review of online participation will indicate how effective programming is for homeless students. In the event a student is not able to attend to online programming effectively, TCA will provide other learning options, such as packet work and work with the family to ensure that all resources are available to support any challenges to learning.

How the school will maintain regular contact with local public health departments, county or Tribal human services departments, and Continuum of Care planning bodies on ongoing or emerging needs and to connect to resources that can assist students and families experiencing homelessness.

- The director participates in regular conference call updates with the MDE and the MDH, as well as receives all email communication to ensure most up to date information during the health crisis. All resources the director becomes aware of through these communications and through the Minnesota Department of Economic Development, will be shared on the school's website and through individual family contact by the counseling department as needed.