



2020-2021 Distance Learning Plan

Our duty as a school is to prepare for all eventualities with safety as our highest priority. In creating a schedule for the 2020-2021 school year, we had many goals, which are outlined here. Among the difficult circumstances, we are guided by our mission to try and be rigorously academic within an environment that is joyful, loving, respectful, supportive, and safe.

METHODOLOGY

First and foremost, is the safety and health of students and employees on campus. Also, with an uncertain future and unpredictable environment, we wanted to create an optimized distance learning schedule that would maintain the rigor and unique nature of our curriculum. With this as our foundation, we worked hard to make a “modular” schedule that could nimbly move between any scenario (hybrid, fully in-person, and the switching back-and-forth between all models) while maintaining consistency and having the least possible disruption or transition time. We also considered the convenience for a significant number of families with more than one child enrolled.

A committee consisting of teachers and staff took into consideration teacher/parent feedback, local, state, CDC, AAP guidelines, and recommendations, as well as best practices from other schools within and outside of our network. After many meetings with rounds and rounds of revisions, the committee was able to create the following plan.

Distance learning will include significantly increased live instruction time (synchronous), some recorded or asynchronous time, increased time for student socialization, technology that helps ensure academic integrity, an enhanced version of Microsoft Teams, and a security-enhanced version of Zoom.

Shortly after the re-opening of school, there will be an addition of a learning management system (LMS) called Schoology, which is a tool that teachers can use for conducting both live and distance classes. It will also become a centralized location for course syllabi and curricular materials, including lesson plans, assessments, etc.

IMPROVEMENTS

During the times when students are off-campus, they will have the full benefit of our improved distance learning schedule.

By the end of the 2019-2020 school year, we were much more satisfied with how successful distance learning ran given the extreme circumstances and received positive feedback from people internal, external, and across our school network. This was due to the dedication and quick adaptations made by everyone (students, families, teachers, administration).

That being said, there is always room for improvement, so we worked extremely hard to expand our distance learning schedule to have a much more robust school experience.

Key Changes:

- **Interchangeable schedule:** We successfully created a “modular” distance learning plan that is interchangeable with the on-campus schedule.
- **More live time:** Increasing live instructional time with teachers to be more in tune with regular class times without exceeding students’ attention spans on a screen.



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- **Better teacher-student ratio:** Nearly all grade-wide classes have been eliminated, and students will now have almost all classes with their element, reducing the student-to-teacher ratio to what we have when class is in session.

Benefits:

- **Flexibility:** Easily transition between distance, hybrid, and on-campus scenarios whether that means the school is mandated to be closed for two days, two weeks, or two months, etc.
- **Teacher availability:** Intersects perfectly, so no matter where they are they will be able to switch back and forth without schedule conflicts.
- **Consistency:** Students do not have to learn a new routine because the daily courses taken on the distance and in-person schedules match almost exactly.
- **Efficiency:** Prevents teachers from having to conduct in-person and distance curriculum simultaneously or multiple times, as would be with an A/B schedule.
- **Continuity:** Can work through the material over five consecutive school days.
- **Balance for assessments:** A Monday–Friday model would load up on assessments being conducted at the same time every in-person week, while this model spaces them out across each week.
- **Social-Emotional:** Have at least two days per week on campus to maintain valuable connections to classmates, teachers, and the in-school experience. Also, students will be guaranteed to have significant live time with their teachers each day regardless of whether they're on campus or online.

Under Discussion & Downsides:

- Some families with multiple children at our school will have students on-campus and distance learning at the same time. We know this will not be easy, but we have worked to minimize the impact of the situation by ensuring we can have as many students as possible on campus at any given time.
- It is impossible to create a schedule for an unknown situation that perfectly balances every circumstance, concern, and convenience.

OUTLINE OF DISTANCE LEARNING IMPROVEMENTS

Live Class Time:

Last year during our period of distance learning, live practice time added up to about 30-40% of a student's normal on-campus schedule. They now will have live class time that equals about 60% of what they have when on-campus.

Grades	On-Campus Period Length	Distance Learning Period Length
PreK–K	30 min.	20 min.
PreK–K	60 min.	40 min.
PreK–3	40 min.	25 min.
Gr. 1–3	85 min.	50 min.
Gr. 4–9	50 min.	30 min.

Combining for Optimization:

- **Lunch & Student Hours** combine to create either a 1.25 or 1.5-hour period during the distance learning day. During this time, teachers will have scheduled student hours where there is opportunity for additional differentiation.
- **P.E. & Recess** will be combined into one period during distance learning. This supports both social-emotional and physical development as students get to connect with the community



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through having their whole class together while also having the focus necessary in a distance recess scenario.

- **READ & Last Period** will be combined for grades 1-4 and give the LET flexibility on how to close out the day with their element.

Adjusting Time Between Classes:

The amount of time between classes has been calibrated by grade based on their academic needs and what is developmentally appropriate.

- **Grades 5–9:** 20 minutes between each class to allow time for independent work, finishing what was started during live class time, and preparing for their next class
- **Grade 4:** 20-minute break after core classes; 10 minutes after Essentials/PE & Recess
- **Grades 1–3:** 10 minutes between classes to maintain the momentum of learning with a quick break
- **PreK & K:** Minimal breaks because it is hard for them to re-focus so their momentum can continue to the next class and their day will end earlier

IN CONCLUSION

The success of our upcoming school year is dependent on the involvement, participation, and willingness of our entire community. We are grateful for the feedback, dedicated work, and diligence it took to put this plan together. Let's go Wildcats!