Continuity of Learning
PLANNING GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

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Ministry of Education
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INTRODUCTION

The Continuity of Learning Planning Guide is provided to support teachers in preparing to provide continuity of educational opportunities for students during the current COVID-19 pandemic. This work includes developing plans and using alternative delivery methods to provide curriculum, instruction, assessment and assistance to students and families.

Educators have considerable flexibility in the delivery of educational opportunities and supports in order to meet the unique needs and circumstances of their school communities and individual learners. In doing so, school districts and independent school authorities are provided with the following overarching commitments that have been identified by the Ministry of Education:

Guiding Principles

1. Ensure a healthy and safe environment for all students, families and employees.
2. Provide the services needed to support children of our essential workers.
3. Support vulnerable students who may need special assistance.
4. Provide continuity of educational opportunities for all students.

TEACHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR LEARNERS AND FAMILIES

Learners who are used to more of an in-class instructional environment may face challenges working in a more independent, self-directed environment. In order to help learners adjust to having less direct guidance from a teacher, it is important to give learners opportunities to work on developing skills and learning about topics that are of interest to them. When learners have a sense of intrinsic motivation and are able to build confidence, they are far more likely to stay engaged, even when the work becomes more difficult.

It is important to model a growth mindset with your learners and have realistic expectations for work. This style of teaching and learning will likely be very different for everyone and you and your learners will be learning and growing together as you experience successes, frustrations and problem-solving solutions. When discussing the new learning environment with learners, it will be helpful to promote this as an opportunity for everyone to experiment and take risks without fear of failure. For some learners, this change in learning environment will be stressful, so maintaining a positive outlook and celebrating their effort is crucial.

It is also important to consider the family and their capacity and comfort in being more directly **and regularly involved in their children's learning. For some people, experience** and

circumstances will allow them to quickly adapt. For others, there is real potential that they could become overwhelmed. When educators can, it is important to encourage and validate small **"victories" that families are achieving**. While the school syste**m can't take on the primary responsibility for social-emotional health and wellness during challenging times, we don't want** to contribute more stress, particularly for those who are least well-resourced to effectively manage it. A focus on learning through active engagement by the learner and the provision of specific and clear directions will help everyone to manage. Avoidance of over-scheduling or over-prescribing will also be essential.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Supporting the safety and health of students, families and staff is a top priority during a pandemic event. In addition to taking measures to protect our physical health, we also need to attend to our social and emotional well-being.

School is a social place and learners rely on the connections they have with the adults and peers in their class and school setting. During this time when in-**person social engagement isn't** possible, it is essential that learners **–** especially those in vulnerable circumstances **– don't feel** alone.

During this time especially, students need to know that they are valued and that they are still part of a school community. Establishing regular one on one and group learning sessions linked by phone or computer technology can make a real difference. Following up with individual learners who are struggling is also essential. While the topic of your follow-up may be assignment specific, the child feels reassured that they are not alone.

Students' sense of well-being may continue to shift as the pandemic evolves. Schools and school districts should keep in mind that students who were not considered vulnerable prior to the COVID-19 outbreak may now be experiencing mental health challenges. As educators and **support staff can be valuable "eyes and ears" for the community, it is i**mportant to remember **that a "**Duty to Report**" continues if there is concern about student safety.**

In addition to the three curricular Core Competencies - Communication, Thinking, and Personal and Social - the Physical and Health Education (PHE) curriculum focuses on well-being and the connections between physical, intellectual, mental, and social health. Social and emotional learning (SEL) approaches also support positive environments, provide techniques to promote well-being and positive mental health, and support students who may have increased needs.

Teachers should consider how to build in behavioural competencies central to SEL: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

Some resources to help support mental health:

- *erase (e*xpect *r*espect and *a s*afe *e*ducation) website: Mental Health and Well-Being resources including trauma-informed practice resources
- SEL Resources During Covid-19 (CASEL): dedicated covid-19 webpage providing guidelines and resources for parents, caregivers, and educators.
- **Managing COVID-19, Stress, Anxiety and Depression**
- **MCFD child and youth mental health services**
- **The "Keeping Healthy" section of the** Keep Learning website has a number of resources that may be helpful for educators, students and parents/caregivers
- *WE Schools @ Home* virtual program: gives parents and teachers free educational resources and daily interactive programming to support well-being, service-learning, and at-home education. WE Schools Live! is broadcast daily on Facebook providing themed educational content for families, and weekly live webinars are available for educators.
- Virtual Mental Health Supports During COVID-19 (BC Government): links to virtual mental health supports, including supports for youth, frontline healthcare workers, seniors, Indigenous peoples, and victims of family or sexual violence.
- COVID-19: Stay Well in Uncertain Times, Canadian Mental Health Association, dedicated COVID-19 webpage providing resources and supports

PLANNING FOR A RANGE OF AGES AND ABILITIES

Teachers will use many strategies to facilitate remote learning. Classroom teachers/enrolling teachers will work with other education professionals - non-enrolling teachers, support staff and administrators - to develop and moderate learning environments that engage all learners and support their growth. At all levels, considerations need to be made for accessibility for learners and manageability for families.

Kindergarten – Grade 3

For learners in the primary years, engagement may include but not be limited to providing schedules, opportunities and resources for families and caregivers. Educators may also use **technologies to establish "live" virtual contact with individuals or groups of** learners to facilitate their learning activities and to sustain a sense of community among young learners.

Grades 4 - 9

For learners in the intermediate and early secondary years, engagement may include learners in a wide array of learning activities, with a focus on project-based, inquiry or problem-based learning. **Educators may also use technologies to establish "live" virtual contact with individuals** or groups of learners to facilitate their learning activities and to sustain a sense of community.

Grades 10 - 12

For learners in the graduation years, teacher-led/moderated activities and individual or group projects will enable learners to achieve and demonstrate the competencies required for course completion and expected of graduates of the BC education system.

ESTABLISHING YOUR REMOTE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

When developing your remote learning environment, you may wish to consider the following:

- How will you group your teaching? Cross-curricular? Subject-specific?
- How often will you connect with learners? What are the expectations set by the district for learner and parent contact? It is suggested that contact take place regularly and, on a schedule that learners can count on. Now more than ever learners will be relying on you, both as an outside contact with a trusted adult, and a way to facilitate contact with their peers.
- How will you meet learners and families where they are at when setting schedules and expectations to minimize unnecessary stressors and foster sustainability?
- How will you monitor engagement and task/assignment expectations?
- How will you plan for accessibility needs for both low-tech and high-tech-activities and demonstration of learning?

While schools will use digital technology to reach many students and enable remote learning, this should not be the only way to support student engagement. Access to computers and/or individual or community internet connectivity may be limited for some students and families. Many districts are devising plans to loan equipment to students who need access. However, when internet access and/or equipment are not available, learning may be supported through low-tech options such as books or teacher-created print materials. In combination with regular phone contact, the use of print materials can be an effective way to support continuity of learning. Districts will determine how materials will be made available, in order to ensure safety and promote timely access.

SELECTING AND USING DIGITAL LEARNING TOOLS

It's easy to get overwhelmed by the perceived need to seek out new digital resources. But new is not always needed. Start by leveraging the resources and tools that you are familiar and comfortable with. Where you find you have gaps, look for materials to augment what you have.

Digital Tools and Resources

Given that the current suspension of in-class instruction is happening across the world, there will be many sources of materials and strategies being offered through educator networks and social media connections. Some suggestions are listed below as starting points. Check with your school or district to see if they have any lists of recommended resources and tools.

- Many digital collaboration and teaching tools are available and in use by teachers. Examples include Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, Moodle, Canvas, MyEducationBC, and FreshGrade. Your school or district may access others as well, so it is useful to check with your information technology staff to find out what tools are available and what support and training opportunities may be offered.
    - Zoom is an audio/video platform used for video conferencing, hosting webinars, chat and web conferencing. Focused Education has procured a provincial license for Zoom and will be onboarding districts in the coming weeks.
    - Learning management systems (LMS) can provide robust environments for teaching and learning. Many schools and districts have LMS agreements in place for online and distributed learning programs and may leverage them for remote learning at this time. In addition, the Ministry of Education has provided several options for districts to allow for no-cost access to three learning management systems (Canvas, D2L and Moodle) and the online courses in those platforms.

- Through ShareEdBC, teachers across the province will have access to curated content **aligned to BC's** redesigned curriculum. ShareEdBC aims to help users across the province connect with each other, and to find and share resources.
Currently, an early release of ShareEdBC is being made available, enabling educators to onboard easily. School districts will be contacted by the ShareEdBC team in the coming weeks to provide instructions and support for the onboarding process. For more information, you are welcome to contact ShareEdBC@gov.bc.ca directly.
- TeachBC is an online resource of teaching materials, lessons, and research relevant to the K-12 BC curriculum. The website is public and open to everyone through the generosity of BC public school teachers. Teachers and organizations can share their teaching resources or educational research by registering and uploading their materials

or providing links. Anyone can browse and download the resources for classroom or professional use. Browsing is easy. Users can search by subject, grade level, resource type, title, description, language, and more.

- At Focused Education, teachers can access the BC Digital Classroom, a core collection of digital resources for information, lessons, and activities. These resources are available to students also. Focused Education has archived webinars highlighting use of the tools, and is scheduling additional webinars this spring. Teachers can find information on peer-reviewed digital and print resources in the K12 Evaluated Resource Collection, Indigenous authors and content, and curated collections featuring free websites for instructional use.

- Keep Learning BC is a central place where families can find ideas for everyday educational activities, annotated links to free learning resources, as well as how to help children keep **well and learn while they're at home.** You may want to direct parents and/or caregivers to this site if they are looking for activities or strategies to support **their child's learning.**

When selecting and using digital tools, always consider information privacy and security and online safety. Your school or district should have processes and guidelines in place for the selection of new digital resources, tools or apps; check with your information technology staff. You may also find the following resources helpful.

- The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for BC recently published a guidance document, FIPPA and online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Safer Schools Together has created a set of resources for administrators, teachers, and parents with information and guidance on establishing the safest possible digital learning environments.
  - Increasing Safety in a Remote Learning World – Guidelines *(pdf)*
  - Increasing Safety in a Remote Learning World – Using Zoom, MS Teams and Google Classroom *(pdf)*
  - Zoom - Creating Safe Remote Teaching & Learning Spaces *(video)*
  - Zoom – Keeping it Private and Practical Tips for Remote Teaching *(video)*
  - Zoom Settings for Education - Quick Reference Sheet *(pdf)*

Selecting Resources

It is essential to always fully review online resources or lessons before assigning them to learners—even if they are from a trusted source. This is an excellent opportunity for collaboration among staff within a school and across a district as teachers provide their observations and recommendations to other educators.

When reviewing resources, use established criteria to assess suitability, such as the criteria used by Focused Education Resources. For more information about resource selection check out the [Learning Resource Selection for K-12 Educators online course](#).

Consider whether resources **support B.C.'s concept**-based, competency-driven curriculum and meet other criteria as listed below:

- Concept-based: focused on the key concepts, principles, and generalizations within and across disciplines; emphasis on conceptual understanding and transfer of learning; focus on in-depth exploration of topics to gain deeper understanding.
- Competency driven: focused on the ability of learners to perform a task as expected within a specific discipline or area of learning…that ability represents a combination of skills, processes, behaviors, and habits of the mind.
- provides opportunity for the learners to develop and use targeted curricular competencies.
- appropriate for the target grade level.
- provides the opportunity for cross-curricular learning. (It will be more difficult for parents and/or caregivers to manage lessons for all areas of learning each day so this means that cross-curricular learning should be a priority.)
- provides opportunities for *all* learners to engage in learning and explicitly incorporates differentiated learning opportunities.
- Follows effective instructional and learning practices.
- For younger learners, prepare the information that you will provide to parents and care givers along with the lesson/activity/resource. A similar framework is also appropriate for older, more independent learners with information and context being shared directly with them. The amount and type of information you provide will depend on the expectations you have set with individual families. For each lesson/activity/resource you provide, consider providing the following:
  - Identify which learning areas and which learning standards (curricular competencies and content) are being worked on
  - Provide them with any background or contextual information about the lesson/activity/resource (how long will it take, what is included (i.e. video resource, writing activity, etc.), any additional materials that might be needed, etc.)
  - Connections to previous learning. For younger learners, let parents know what their child has been working on and already knows in relation to the lesson. Encourage parents to talk to their child about this previous learning prior to doing the lesson. For older and more independent learners, have learners refer to previous content or learning activities that will assist them in their task.

When you are selecting resources, it is also important to consider restrictions and permissions under the Canadian Copyright Act. In a remote learning environment, you may be using and distributing resources in different ways than you did in the classroom. Below are some resources you may consider using.

- **Through the Ministry of Education's partnership with Access Copyright, B.C. educators** and staff can:
    - o search for resources listed in **Access Copyright's datab**ase. This database includes more than 100 million copyrighted works by artists, authors and creators.
    - o **make immediate uses of Access Copyright's rich, broad repertoire of digital works** to be shared with students through learning management systems (LMS), Google Classrooms, document sharing, email, and other electronic communication portals;
    - o use up to 20% of a published work, provided that this limit may be exceeded in respect of an entire newspaper article, or page or an entire single short story, play, essay, poem or one full chapter of a textbook or an entire entry from an encyclopedia or similar reference work;
    - o assemble a course collection consisting of works from different books/sources copy worksheets/consumables.
- Provided by the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC), the Fair Dealing Decision Tool helps teachers decide whether "fair dealing" permits classroom use of print materials, artistic works, or audiovisual materials without first getting copyright permission. The tool helps teachers determine whether a specific intended classroom use is allowed by the Fair Dealing Guidelines.

ASSESSING IN A REMOTE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The focus is on determining if, and how, sufficient learning has taken place during these exceptional circumstances. Sufficient learning will be determined by teachers using their professional judgement. Grounded in the curriculum, teachers will assess what individual students know, understand, and are able to demonstrate to determine whether sufficient learning has taken place to enable the student to pursue further learning in the curricular and content area.

During this time, teachers should prioritize which learning standards can be learned from home, **with emphasis on the development of a student's literacy, numeracy, and Core Competencies.**

This can be done in consultation with students and their families in order to determine their needs, goals, resources available to them and overall ability to engage in learning during this unique situation.

The BC curriculum allows for significant flexibility over topics that students study and the methods by which students demonstrate their learning. Encouraging student involvement and ownership over their learning will help to maintain their interest, engagement and motivation.

Because students may face challenges accessing online communications tools, it will be important to design activities and assessments that are not solely dependent on technology-based solutions. While there may be options to have all students logged on at the same time, having alternatives will be essential for those students who are not computer-connected and for all students if technology solutions not performing as expected.

As teachers create learning experiences and assessment processes, it will be helpful to maximize student ownership and engagement by employing self-assessment opportunities. Resources for supporting self-assessment are available on the [Ministry of Education website](#).

Some key assessment strategies during this time include:

- Emphasize learner self-assessment by continuing to ensure students are actively engaged and take ownership in the learning process:
  - Example 1: if learners in your class generally co-construct self-assessment rubrics, you can give them a teacher created, self-assessment rubric with directions to add some of their own criteria.
  - Example 2: Continue the discussion of what meaningful self-assessment looks like by providing exemplars for the teacher-created, self-assessment rubrics;
- Have virtual or telephone conferences with your students to determine where they are in the learning, provide descriptive feedback, and discuss next steps;
- Find creative ways for learners to share with you what they are doing at home and encourage them to come up with their own ideas to demonstrate their learning. (Examples may include: creating a classroom blog where learners document their daily activities and self-assessment; encouraging learners to record themselves reading out loud; or having learners talk to peers about their learning via text or social media and then send their conversation to their teacher.)

All students will receive a report card based on where they were at prior to spring break, plus **the learning opportunities they're engaging in at home during the suspension of in**-person

classes. Teachers are able to use their professional judgement in determining if a student has demonstrated sufficient evidence of learning. This means there is freedom in how teachers assign marks and communicate them to students and families.

The Ministry of Education recognizes the need to be flexible and accommodating in these unprecedented times. B.C has not moved to a pass/fail approach, but teachers have the professional autonomy to decide how grades are determined for their students using both pre- and post springbreak learning. For many students, the majority of evidence of student learning will have occurred before spring break. We also understand that reports prepared under these circumstances may not provide the amount of rich, detailed feedback that usually goes on a report card.

K-9

During these exceptional circumstances, teachers will continue to use their professional judgement in determining how best to support students in a remote learning environment. Teachers will identify essential learning priorities for their students, and what can be learned from home, and then base their assessments on these priorities. Teachers will continue to provide feedback on an on-going basis in relation to literacy-related and numeracy-related learning standards.

For all grades, teachers may wish to establish individual literacy and numeracy goals for students. These goals will help form a roadmap for both learning and assessment. In many cases, these goals can be co-constructed with students (and parents/caregivers when appropriate) during a virtual chat or phone conversation and should take into consideration student ability, interest, current access to resources, and availability of adult assistance at home. Progress toward goals can be shared with parents/caregivers regularly, so they are up to date with the current learning priorities. Students can then reflect on and provide self-assessment comments regarding their progress in meeting their goals.

It is important to have realistic expectations for students and families. Learners are expected to engage in learning opportunities, and educators will play key roles in helping students and parents/caregivers to maintain a positive outlook on learning. Many students will struggle with the loss of normal routines and interactions with their friends, so assessment feedback should focus on encouragement and positive, strength-based achievements.

Based on student work prior to the suspension of in-class instruction, and the assessment of participation in learning opportunities during the coming months, teachers will report on student learning as outlined in the K-9 Student Reporting Policy.

10-12

The Ministry of Education is not mandating or specifying the minimum number of hours that must be completed for a student to receive credit for a grade 10, 11, or 12 course. Hours do not necessarily reflect the actual learning that occurs. The focus is on determining if, and how, *sufficient learning* has taken place during these exceptional circumstances. *Sufficient learning* will be determined by teachers using their professional judgement. Grounded in the big ideas, curricular competencies, and content areas, teachers will assess what individual students know, understand, and are able to demonstrate to determine whether sufficient learning has taken place to enable the student to pursue further learning in the curricular and content area.

Student learning priorities will be determined by teachers using their professional judgement. For graduation program subject teachers, there are many assessment strategies that fit best within the subject area depending on the way your course materials, activities and assessments were planned and being delivered prior to spring break. Your assessments of individuals and groups can be maintained or adjusted based on the degree to which regular, in-class activities and assessments can be adapted for home-based learning.

Teachers should work with Grade 12 students, and their parents/caregivers when appropriate, to identify priority learning topics to support their post-secondary studies and career opportunities. Students who are graduating may be experiencing extra levels of stress and anxiety about the interruptions in their regular learning. For these students, providing additional support towards achieving their learning goals is especially important.

Along with having significant input into the content they are studying, students in the graduation years should be encouraged to use both self-assessment and peer-assessment as a large part of their learning. In many cases, grades 10-12 teachers may not be able to provide continual guidance and feedback to all of their students on a daily basis, so students should be encouraged to use other methods for gathering feedback. Students should also be encouraged to initiate contact with their teachers for support.

Teachers will determine a final grade for students based on work completed to-date and the assessment of participation in learning opportunities that will occur over the coming months. Teachers will work with students to fulfill course requirements according to their district and school plans during the suspension of in-class instruction. The evaluation of learning taking place after the suspension of in-class instruction should be in relation to a prioritized selection of learning standards which students are able to complete at home. In doing so, they will consider the unique needs or circumstances of individual students and differentiate as appropriate.