

Transitioning to remote learning: Resources and guidance

The Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest has identified considerations for districts transitioning to remote learning, strategies to provide continuity in social and emotional learning (SEL), considerations when selecting virtual learning tools, and resources to support remote learning.

What are key considerations for districts transitioning to remote learning?

Focus area	Considerations for transitioning
Collaborative leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a vision for remote learning • Gather stakeholder input • Streamline messaging to students and parents
Personalized student learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop learning plans unconstrained by the brick and mortar school environment • Offer “plugged” and “unplugged” options • Host virtual class meetings to “see” students • Differentiate activities to accommodate student needs
Robust infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather anonymous data about student access • Loan out devices to those in need, where available • Limit online learning activities in consideration for families with multiple students
Personalized professional learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with colleagues to support and share knowledge • Align work by codeveloping learning plans with grade-level or subject-area peers • Build a virtual learning network through social media • Offer districtwide professional development online

Source: See the [U.S. Department of Education Characteristics of Future Ready Leadership](#) for more information.

How can educators incorporate SEL in remote learning?

- SEL can engage students in exploring and expressing emotions, building developmental relationships, and supporting each other. In a remote learning environment, the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#) recommends that educators incorporate SEL by doing the following:
 - Provide consistency in daily routines to reduce stress and promote positive learning conditions.
 - Use SEL programs, groups, and individualized supports developed in the “brick and mortar” setting to engage students and connect them to tools and resources for remote learning.
 - Offer opportunities for students to share and process their emotions.
 - Focus on the sequence and flow of the remote learning content, incorporating pauses and allowing time for students to gather their thoughts and share out.
- Check out AIR’s [SEL Solutions at AIR](#) for a suite of SEL resources and guidance for policymakers and educators and their [SEL online learning module: Creating a Well-Rounded Educational Experience](#).
- Explore the Search Institute Checklist: [Building Developmental Relationships During the COVID-19 Crisis](#) for a list of relationship-building steps: Express Care, Challenge Growth, Provide Support, Share Power, Expand Possibilities.

What are key considerations when selecting tools to enhance remote learning?

Virtual learning tool overall considerations	Virtual learning tool technical considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What tools has the district and state approved for use? • What are the primary components of the virtual tool? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Privacy settings (student safety measures), online diagnostics, tutorials • How do the resources in each online resource “map” onto curricular content? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Facilitation of preparation, group discussion, individual projects • What is the cost and ease of use for instructional staff and students? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Requirement of subscriptions, availability of meeting invites and toll-free numbers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost, subscription plans, and ease of use to educators, students, and families <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Data rates, Wi-Fi access, user learning curve • Consent and privacy concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Parent and youth consent, encryption, compliance with HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) and FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) • Accessibility and capacity of virtual meetings • Archival or recording need

Where can educators look for resources to support remote learning?

- Comprehensive Center Network: [Resources for Continuity of Learning](#): Provides resources and tools developed by federal, state, and private organizations, including policy guidance, curricular materials, and grading and credit policies.
- [Learning Keeps Going](#): Provides resources and support for educators and parents as they keep the learning going during extended school closures.
- [International Society for Technology in Education](#): Provides practical guidance, evidence-based professional learning, virtual networks, and public events.
- [Digital Promise](#): This organization is working to close the digital learning gap and ensure equitable access to learning technology.
- For supporting [early learners](#): Provides U.S. Department of Education guidance on the developmentally appropriate use of technology with young children.
- For supporting [students with disabilities](#): Provides U.S. Department of Education policy guidance and links to resources for serving students with disabilities.
- For supporting [students with disabilities](#): Provides lesson plans, articles, and other resources for educators serving students with disabilities.
- For supporting [English Language Learners and immigrant students](#): Provides resources for educators, including bilingual remote lessons and links to organizations supporting English learner students and immigrant families.

About REL Midwest

REL Midwest is part of a network of 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences. REL Midwest works in partnership with practitioners in seven Midwest states to conduct applied research and provide training, coaching, and technical support to create a more evidence-based education system. Visit the REL Midwest website at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/default.aspx> to learn more.

This work was funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences (IES) under contract ED IES 17 C 0007, administered by the American Institutes for Research. The content of the publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.