Supporting Student Engagement in Remote and Hybrid Learning Environments

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Today’s presenters

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Introductory remarks
Agenda

- Background for this work
- Six factors behind student engagement in remote and hybrid learning
- Lessons from a superintendent on supporting student engagement
- Questions and answers
Background for this work
This work aims to better understand which strategies hold promise for supporting student engagement in remote and hybrid settings

• The spread of COVID-19 has caused states, districts, and schools to reconsider how to safely and effectively meet the needs of their students and staff.

• When students are not in school buildings every day, promoting and maintaining student engagement is particularly challenging—with implications for academic achievement and social-emotional competencies.

• NJDOE and REL staff closely partnered to address the following question to guide this work: **What are promising strategies to promote student engagement in remote and hybrid learning environments?**
We used a three-pronged approach to collect information

- Search the literature
- Talk with district and state staff
- Scan the environment
We first identified key factors related to student engagement in the context of remote/hybrid learning environments.

- Instructional delivery
- Technology access and use
- Staffing and professional development
- Family engagement
- Extracurricular activities
- Social-emotional learning

By better understanding promising strategies related to each of these factors, we hope to better understand how to promote student engagement.
With rigorous studies not yet available, we sought to identify promising strategies

• We generated findings across the three sources of information, and then identified themes across each of these findings.

• There is little rigorous evidence about supporting K-12 student engagement in remote settings, especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

• As a result, the promising strategies included in this presentation primarily highlight “bright spots” raised through interviews, conversations, and the environmental scan.
Instructional delivery
Promising strategies build space for and connect learning activities beyond direct instruction

- Focus on activities that support student involvement, leadership, and collaboration
- Limit teacher-led lessons offered through virtual environments to less than 10 minutes
- Develop clear interactions between synchronous and asynchronous learning activities

Relevant citations that informed instructional delivery findings: Kim, Ke, and Paek (2017); Harris (2018); Long and Szabo (2016); Schubert (2012); Ahn and McEachin (2017); Carpenter et al. (2015)
Technology access and use
Promising strategies prioritize tech access, investments, and support

- Make technology access and use the primary responsibility of at least one district-level employee
- Set goals and invest in technology associated with supporting these goals
- Create a seamless technological experience for students, families, and staff

Relevant citations that informed technology access and use findings: Lynch and Kim (2017); Haselhorst (2017); Whiteside (2013)
Staffing and professional development
Promising strategies promote continuity, identify and develop new skills, and signal support

• Implement staffing models that better facilitate continuity for students in the face of ongoing changes

• Identify professional development needs for teachers and offer ample opportunities to address them

• Signal support to teachers by emphasizing their leadership and investing in their success

Relevant citation that informed staffing and professional development findings: Shaffer, Nash, and Ruis (2015)
Family engagement
Promising strategies promote multiple touchpoints with families to provide information, seek feedback, and connect them with resources

- Use multiple touchpoints consistently to inform and connect with students’ families
- Seek feedback from families to inform ongoing plans
- Build trust and support families by building connections with community resources

Relevant citation that informed family engagement findings: Boyd (2018)
Extracurricular activities
Promising strategies encourage innovation from students and staff

• Use innovative scheduling solutions and existing resources to support participation in non-classroom activities

• Allow for student and staff-led innovation to foster extracurricular offerings

Relevant citations that informed extracurricular activities findings: Barkley (2010); Harrell and Kotecki (2015)
Supporting students’ social-emotional learning
Promising strategies create safe spaces for students and develop partnerships to address growing needs

- Include supports for students’ social-emotional needs in remote/hybrid environments
- Create safe spaces for students to share their perspectives and grow as individuals
- Invest in trainings and partnerships

Relevant citation that informed supporting students’ social and emotional learning findings: Arguedas, Daradoumis, and Xhafa (2016)
Lessons from a superintendent on supporting student engagement

Tracey Marinelli, Superintendent, Little Falls Township Public Schools
What questions do you have for our panelists?

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New Jersey Department of Education

Tonya Breland
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Thank you!

Thank you for taking time to join us today!

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