

ENSURING EQUITY ONLINE

10 Principles for Equity in Remote Learning



The Education Trust—New York

The school year that is now approximately halfway complete has been exceptionally challenging for New York students and educators — with the ongoing effects of the pandemic, ever-evolving adjustments to teaching and learning, and the continued national reckoning with the impact of systemic racism. We remain concerned that the same students who were subject to educational inequity *before* the pandemic are experiencing, first-hand, the exacerbated inequities that have resulted because of the pandemic.

Teaching and learning looks much different than it did before the pandemic. While not ideal because of connectivity and device challenges as well as disruptions to teacher-student relationships, remote learning is the primary modality of learning this year for most students of color and those from low-income backgrounds. In addition, it seems that remote and blended learning will be a part of education into the future. Ed Trust—NY and other

equity advocates have therefore called for schools and districts to improve the quality of remote learning.

With this new virtual reality at play, many educators have met the moment with creativity, enthusiasm, and ingenuity, and by elevating their stories we can consider the implications for state policy changes to support students throughout the state. The principles highlighted here can build upon the equity-focused reopening guidance provided by the New York State Education Department this past summer and set a path to clear expectations for remote instruction.

Educators are innovating in these virtual classrooms and taking clear steps that align to the approaches outlined in the *10 Principles for Equity in Remote Learning*. Their experiences provide a glimpse of what remote learning expectations can be prioritized to promote equity in classrooms and school communities throughout the state.

10 Principles for Equity in Remote Learning:

1



Daily live instruction engages students and promotes the achievement of grade-level

standards. Educators prioritize live instruction and use tools for students to experience familiar elements from excellent in-person pedagogy — rich discussions, shared readings, student choice, quality relationships, and fun.

2



Regular assessment drives changes and interventions in the classroom. Spring school closures and remote instruction of varying quality this fall and winter have caused a significant amount of instructional loss for students. In order to understand the academic strengths and needs of students, some schools and school districts are assessing student progress on learning standards and making adjustments to their instruction, providing interventions and extended learning opportunities, and making sure that students have what they need to be successful and best prepared for the next grade level.

3



Schools engage students who are challenging to contact.

Limited state and national data, bolstered by the experience of parent- and student-serving organizations across New York, indicate that many students have not successfully engaged in remote learning. To engage all students, it is important to go beyond traditional phone calls home, emails, and text messages. Some schools leverage new tools and methods to make sure that the hardest to reach students are engaged. Home visits, virtual interest clubs, award ceremonies, and connecting with community-based organizations are a few of the strategies that schools across the state are using to reach out and connect with every student.

4



Every child has an ally.

Schools ensure that every student has a school staff member who they speak to regularly and who has established trust in order to support the student (or their family) when they need it. Educators make proactive contact with students to make sure that they have access to academic and social-emotional resources.

5



Students receive regular and meaningful feedback on assignments that help them to adjust and strengthen their work.

Educators set clear and consistent expectations for assignments and follow up with steps on how students can improve. Regular, high-quality feedback comes from many sources, including one-on-one conversations, assignment grades, and peers. Educators invite students to self-assess and make sure that students are aware of how they can improve their work.

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6



Students have social-emotional support and access to a culturally responsive, anti-racist, restorative learning environment.

Teachers, counselors, and school leadership work together to ensure that students have what they need to be successful. District and school leadership prioritizes professional development in social-emotional learning to ensure that educators are equipped with supportive tools. Support is unique for each student, and staff is taking the time to understand what students require and how to effectively support them in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways.

7



The unique needs of students — especially multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students experiencing homelessness — are prioritized.

Teachers, counselors, and other school personnel are connected and aligned on how to support students with unique needs. School staff develop and implement comprehensive systems of academic and non-academic support and maintain open lines of communication in order to ensure that students have resources that are directly aligned to their needs.

8



Innovative professional learning invigorates and inspires teachers to try new things.

Schools and educators are engaging in professional learning that is making the transition to remote learning better for everyone — students, educators, and families.

Students are experiencing remote learning tools in an integrated way that makes communication and assignments easy to manage.

9



Community stakeholders and community-based organizations provide programming for students during or outside of the school day. Schools leverage relationships with community-based organizations to provide services like afterschool programming, tutoring, and recreation.

10



Student experiences — in and out of the remote classroom — build school community and culture.

Schools find innovative ways to continue to have community events like spirit week, morning assemblies, performances, and award nights. Educators develop new ways to design interest clubs and even athletic events.

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Across New York State, educators are meeting this year's myriad of challenges with innovation, ingenuity, and tenacity. Read their stories at edtrustny.org.