



COLORADO
Department of Education

BLI Variance Waiver Totals, Comparisons, and Findings

2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024 School Years

Prepared by the CDE Schools of Choice Unit,
Office of Online and Blended Learning

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The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) facilitated the [Blended Learning Initiative](#) (BLI) from 2021-2024 following 100% emergency remote learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The BLI allowed CDE to collaborate directly with the field of Colorado K-12 school districts and schools on need for and best practices with flexible learning models.

Within the BLI's activities, the blended learning (BL) and supplemental online (SO) variance waiver was developed to allow for continued flexibilities with blended and online courses and instruction available to K-12 students throughout Colorado. Those utilizing the waiver were required to submit a Data Form and Narrative Answer Form to CDE with data on the model(s) and students participating in that model(s).

Waiver Overview



The BL/SO Variance Waiver from the CDE was available for any Colorado school district and school implementing a learning model(s) outside of the posted guidance in the annual Student October Count Audit Resource Guide during the 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 school years. School districts and schools could use the waiver for any or all of those school years.

The purpose of this waiver was for full-time funding purposes for remote learning flexibilities separate from 100% remote learning programs. Since the [Rules for the Administration of the Public School Finance Act \(1 CCR 301-39\) changes were adopted by the State Board of Education in March 2024](#), CDE concluded the variance waiver beyond the three years offered.

Total Waivers and Course Requirements Waived

Total Waiver Requests



	21-22 SY	22-23 SY	23-24 SY
District waivers	29	24	34
School waivers	14	10	10
Total waivers	43	34	44

For the BL/SO Variance Waiver, two waiver types were available to request. The District Waiver allowed the waiver to be applied to all schools within that school district. The School Waiver allowed the waiver to only be applied to that specific school.



Course Requirements Waived



The BL/SO Variance Waiver allowed for participating school districts and schools to waive either or both of the following course requirements outlined in the Student October Count Resource Guide for funding purposes.

Course Requirement #1: Limits on the number of allowable blended learning and/or supplemental online courses a traditional brick-and-mortar student may be enrolled in during a given semester

Course Requirement #3: In-person and/or synchronous instruction of at least 20% per week (if the course is not offered through an existing CDE- approved or recognized online school or program)

Total Requirements Types Waived



	Waived Course Requirement 1 Only	Waived Course Requirement 3 Only	Waived Both Course Requirements
21-22 SY	15	6	22
22-23 SY	9	4	21
23-24 SY	9	4	29

Reported Data in Waiver Forms



Data Form

Instructional model(s) structure and total students

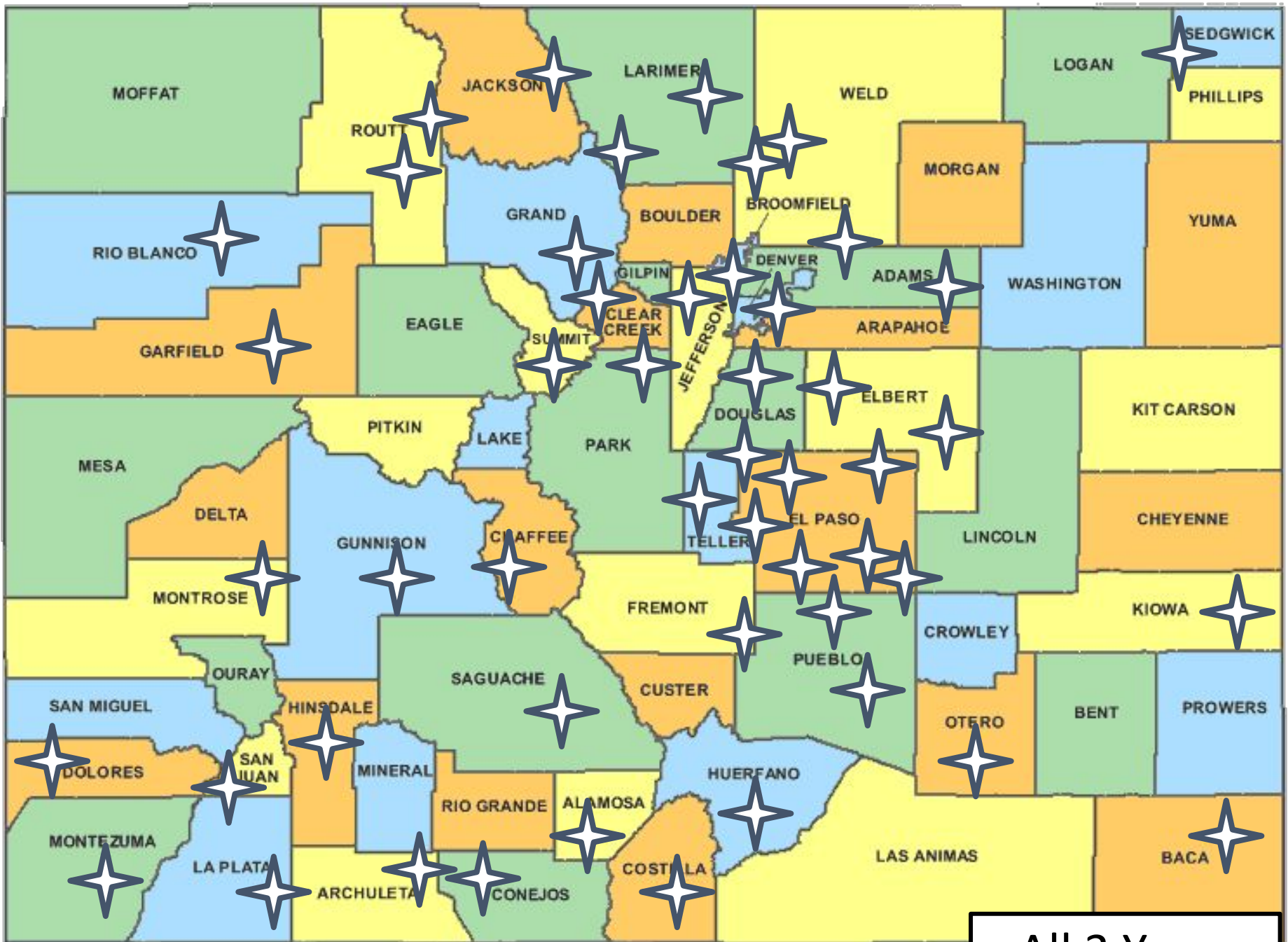
- District/school information
- Requestor information
- Total amount of different instructional models (up to 6)
 - Unique student type(s) per Student October Audit
 - % of synchronous instruction
 - Type of courses
- Student Data
 - CDE School Code, SASID, Instructional Model

Narrative Answer Form

Instructional model description with questions

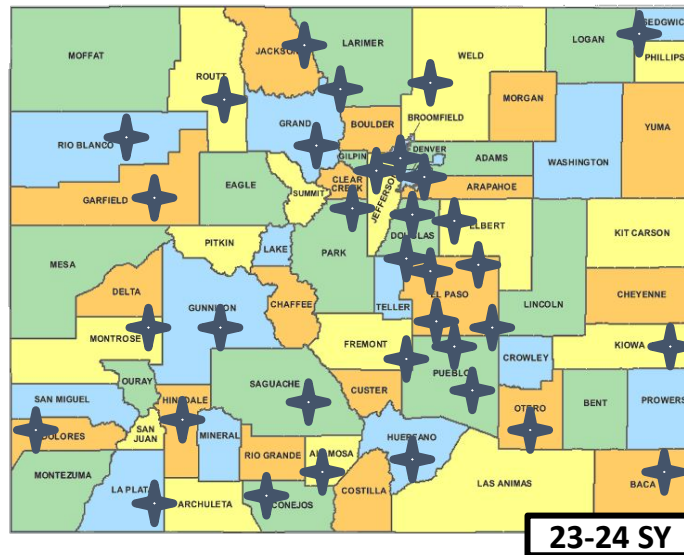
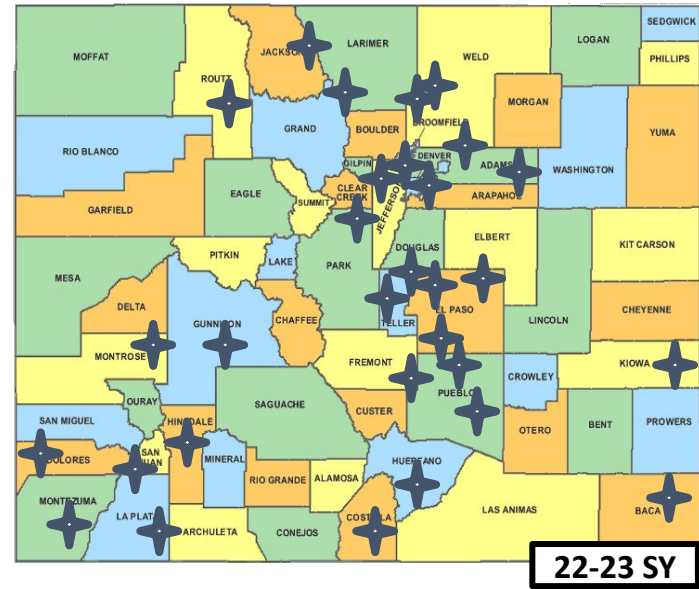
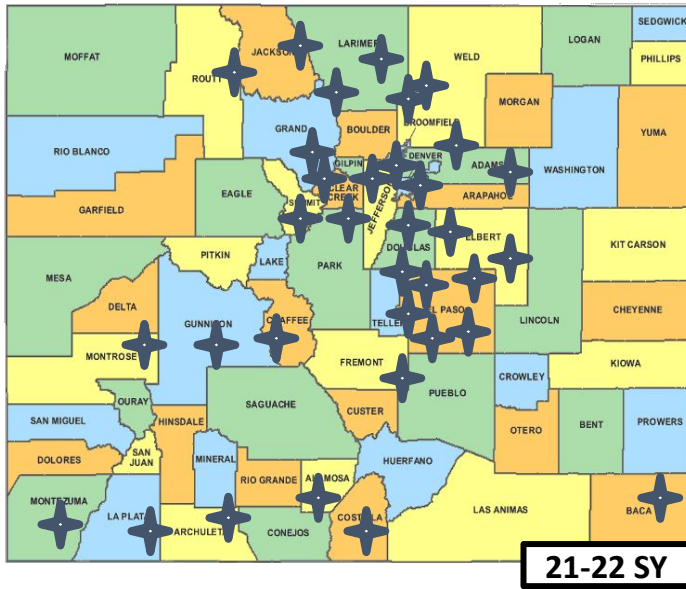
1. Describe the instructional model (activities, courses, instruction)
2. Staffing
3. Target student population
4. Explain student needs being met
5. Problem the model solves for students
6. Data/evidence of model's effectiveness
7. Other options explored
8. Equitable access provided

Locations of Colorado Districts and Schools Using the Waiver



All 3 Years

Participants by County per School Year



Student Totals and Types Accessing the Instructional Models

Student Totals



2021-2022 Absolute Total	3,074 students
2022-2023 Absolute Total	4,091 students
2023-2024 Absolute Total	4,896 students

Students found in Student October Count in 2021 (2021-2022), 2022 (2022-2023) and 2023 (2023-2024) as reported by participating school districts and schools with SASIDs in submitted Data Forms.



Student Totals Reported



2021-2022 SY	
35%	<10 students
35%	10-49 students
11%	50-99 students
9%	100-199 students
5%	200-299 students
2%	300-999 students
2%	1,000+ students

2022-2023 SY	
26.5%	<10 students
26.5%	10-49 students
12%	50-99 students
15%	100-199 students
9%	200-299 students
6%	300-999 students
3%	1,000+ students

2023-2024 SY	
41%	<10 students
29%	10-49 students
7%	50-99 students
9%	100-199 students
2%	200-299 students
9%	300-999 students
3%	1,000+ students

Percentage of total waivers for each school year within range of total amount of students utilizing the flexible instructional model reported by each participating school districts and schools. (For example: *In the 21-22 school year, 35% of waivers were for a range of less than 10 students.*)



Unique Student Types Reported



	21-22 SY	22-23 SY	23-24 SY
Other	41% of waivers	37% of waivers	32% of waivers
None	21% of waivers	26% of waivers	23% of waivers
Home-school	21% of waivers	16% of waivers	16% of waivers
Expelled	7% of waivers	10% of waivers	17% of waivers
HS Equivalency Diploma	5% of waivers	8% of waivers	11% of waivers
Homebound	3% of waivers	3% of waivers	1% of waivers
Transition or SPED	2% of waivers	0% of waivers	0% of waivers

Other: COVID Concerns, Postsecondary or CTE, Internship or Work-based Experience, Other Special Population, Elite Extracurriculars, Enrollment Retention, General Intervention/MTSS, Health Issues, Family Preference, GED Program, At-Risk, STEM, Entrepreneurship, Active Military Family, Habitually Disruptive, Behavior Issues



Design of Reported Instructional Models Using the Waiver

Instructional Model Needs

Narrative Form Questions 4 & 5

What are the reasons for the instructional models?

- Instructional and log-in flexibilities
- Self-paced environment
- Online education benefits
- Limited rural community options
- Unreliable internet and services
- COVID concerns of family
- District program capacity met
- Limited FTE or staff capacity
- Student needs and interests
- Limited transportation
- Reductions in budget
- Student financial supports family
- Personal or religious reasons
- Work-study and project-based learning
- Online accessibility to coursework
- Access outside of school hours
- Over-age, under-credit, drop-out students
- Recent family migration
- Device, internet, or hotspot provided
- Selection of third-party courses
- Access to technology
- Homelessness
- Access to volunteer opportunities
- Weekly-pacing schedules
- Technology platform options
- Safety at home

Instructional Model Needs Cont.

Narrative Form Questions 4 & 5

What are the reasons for the instructional models?

- Unsuccessful in traditional model
- Lack of online options through district
- Student safety and disobedience
- Explore life outside of community
- Economically disadvantaged
- Mental health needs
- Student autonomy and independence
- Student engagement in education
- Individualized support received
- Continued access to courses
- Referral from school administration
- Alleviate prior learning barriers
- Real-life learning experiences
- Detained or in detention center
- Student legal requirements and orders
- Chronically absent and truant
- Student employment
- Equitable access to opportunities
- Teachers and instructors trained
- Access to diverse course catalog
- Ability to learn and relearn content
- Deeper understanding of content
- Enhanced executive functioning skills
- Personalization

Instructional Model Tools

Narrative Form Question 1

What is the curriculum or platform and how is it delivered?

- Fuel Education
- Apex
- Remote Learning Academy
- Kaplan GED Prep
- iReady
- Edgenuity
- IXL
- Colorado Digital Learning Solutions
- SEL's Base curriculum
- Aztec
- Waldorf Main Lesson courses
- Accelerate Education
- PLP Online curriculum
- PLP Online curriculum
- GradPoint
- Stride Learning
- Canvas
- Wonders
- Scholastic
- GED Flash and Practice
- CNCC online courses
- ALEKS courses
- BYU Credit Recovery
- My Colorado Journey assessments
- district-created enrichment courses
- other “vetted curriculum resources”

Learning Management System, Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Schoology, Edustar, Learning Board, PowerSchool, APEX Classrooms, Alma, Infinite Campus, GoGuardian, MashMe, OWL, email, phone call, text message



Instructional Model Staff

Narrative Form Question 2

Who is supporting the student in their instructional model?

- Instructional Staff or Coach
- Content/Core/Licensed Teacher
- School or BOCES Support Staff
- Administrator
- Enrichment Teacher
- Program or Learning Coordinator
- Expulsion Lead
- Tutor
- School Counselor
- Social Worker
- School Nurse
- Paraprofessional
- Special Education Teacher
- Special Service Provider
- ELL Provider
- Gifted and Talented Provider
- Student Academic Advisor
- Student Support Partner
- Registrar
- Librarian
- Test Center Administrator
- Native American Liaison
- Parent/Learner-Advocate
- Parent/Guardian
- Success Coach
- Concept Coach On Demand Tutoring
- SSSD Online Mentor
- SWC eSchool Staff
- Stride Learning Instructors
- Next GED Instructional Staff
- CDLS Staff

What are indicators for success in the instructional models?

- Course success in previous year
- Credits earned in previous year
- Student self-report of support
- Grade data from third-party
- Completion rate from third-party
- Attendance rates
- Time spent evidence
- Established program
- Parent/guardian surveys
- On-track rate for graduation
- Past participation for re-enrollment
- Participation and performance rates
- Teacher feedback
- Student feedback
- On-pace completion in courses
- Passing grades in courses
- Benchmark assessments
- Graduation rates
- Increased GED completion
- PSAT and SAT improvement data
- High school credits recovered
- PWR preparation scores
- Academic growth
- Achievement data
- Scholarly articles and journals
- Research institutions and centers

Instructional Model Data/Evidence

Narrative Form Questions 6

What data, research, evidence citations are available?

According to the 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024 feedback from Colorado districts and schools in the BLI waiver forms, the following data sources were reported for why flexible instructional models through the variance waivers would be successful through use of CDE's variance waiver: [International Center for Leadership in Education](#), [Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning](#), Journal of Innovation & Knowledge (JIK), [DAN Institute](#), [National Home Education Research Institute](#), [U.S. Census Bureau](#), [U.S. Department of Education](#), U.S. Census Bureau, Colorado Department of Education, [Colorado General Assembly](#), [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#), and other national surveys, studies, scholarly articles, and scholarly journals from research institutions and centers.

Family Roles in the Reported Instructional Models

Student Responsibilities

Narrative Form Questions

Where are students in these instructional models located?

Varies Per Model

- Off-campus, not in-person at their home school
- Fully remote homebound, off-site
- In-person on campus
- From school in supervised classroom or home
- In-person in community (library or center)
- Remote at home
- Anywhere as long as they can log on during scheduled instructional hours
- In-person for CMAS, PSAT/SAT, state assessments only
- On campus for intensive interventions and for all assessments
- Campus for structured social interaction
- Individual break room away from peers due to safety concerns
- In community, outside of traditional classroom
- Digitally, off-site, fully remote, online setting
- Half of courses in-person, other half online
- Home environment or separate in-person environment
- Home-based

Student Responsibilities Cont.

Narrative Form Questions

How are parents/guardians involved in the instructional model?

Goals and Expectations

- Homeschooling the student
- Family-supervised learning
- Consent for student to participate in model
- Agree to adhere to district policies, procedures, and rules, including but not limited to the district's policy on student use of the Internet
- Adhere to the district's attendance requirements

Responsibilities

- Access instructor-supervised project kits for parent-supervised completion
- Document instructional time, progress, and seat-time
- Record online login, course progress, lesson and assignment completion reports
- Primary educators, in charge and in control of, their education
- Supplement their child's education through part-time enrichment
- Communicate with counselor about student progress in learning plan and co-update plan, pacing guide, communication log, and weekly academic progress reports
- Support alongside student with accounts on school devices
- Communicate about student progress and concerns as they come up
- Meeting with administration as needed

Staff Role in the Reported Instructional Models

Staff Responsibilities

Narrative Form Questions

How are staff preparing for the instructional models?

Training

- Proper use of LMS
- State expectations for online courses
- Current best practices with online teaching and learning
- Child Find and mandatory reporter compliance
- Best practices for instructing in online learning
- How to work with families in a remote learning environment

Technology

- Set-up remote learning lab for computer and headphone access
- Automatic laptop computer, Chromebook, internet and hotspot
- Give each student access to the online learning platform

Student Family Supports

- Provide school and free public transit bus passes
- Provide access to a childcare center
- Meet with families to review expectations
- Offer in-person and office hour appointments



Staff Responsibilities Cont.

Narrative Form Questions

How are staff preparing for the instructional models?

Program

- Identify the list of students
- Confirm the student possesses the maturity level needed to function effectively in an online learning environment
- Complete a needs assessment to determine student needs
- Build online course offerings based on learning outcomes
- Provide information regarding the online course(s)
- Course selection support with students
- Create online course schedule for each student
- Assign courses in consultation with student
- Individualize each student's schedule to meet their needs and goals
- Create and communicate weekly student schedules
- Create a plan with student to ensure attendance requirement for learning

Instruction

- Make instructional decisions
- Pre-record guidance for weekly learning opportunities to provide students
- Set up open dates for courses based on needs of the student
- Co-planning and planning times

Staff Responsibilities Cont.

Narrative Form Questions

How are staff supporting and monitoring the students?

Rapport

- Build positive connections between teachers and students
- Maintain personal relationship/connection with the student
- Provide positive reinforcement
- Provide students structure, coaching, accountability, relationship and inspiration
- Support and check-in with students
- Case management for SEPD, ELL, GT, 504, etc.
- Increase education success with personal connections
- Support students with study skills, time management, and other skills to be successful online

Attendance

- Take attendance during scheduled synchronous time
- Formally take attendance to document student engagement
- Check online attendance survey and software logs
- Monitor time spent in online learning platform
- Document instruction time
- Collect data/evidence including amount of minutes/hours completed

Staff Responsibilities Cont.

Narrative Form Questions

How are staff supporting and monitoring the students?

Progress

- Provide all instruction, modifications, and adjustments to the coursework
- Supervise remote learning students
- Monitor independent, remote work time and classes
- Grade learning logs and work to rubric, post weekly grades
- Check grades
- Provide timely, individualized feedback on assignments
- Provide timely, individualized support for early intervention
- Available for instructional support
- Frequent check ins with students to see expected progress is being made
- Holding students accountable
- Accountability and review on student work on a weekly basis
- Weekly contact with parents about student progress and parent concerns
- Administration to periodically review instructional materials of online courses to ensure they meet program standards
- Administration oversees the program

Staff Responsibilities Cont.

Narrative Form Questions

How are staff supporting and monitoring students?

Data

- Collect data/evidence including student grades and tasks/assignments/assessments completed
- Data for students on-pace to complete work

Mastery

- Measure competencies
- Routinely check for understanding with immediate feedback on mastery
- Reassign work until program expectations met
- Progress reports with information on student progress

Staff Responsibilities Cont.

Narrative Form Questions

How are staff contacting and connecting with students?

Delivery

- In-person check-ins
- Virtual check-ins
- Immediate response times per communication guidelines
- Scheduled time
- Designated daily office hours to reach out to students and families
- Optional office hours
- Daily via in-person, email, text, or phone conversation
- Phone call, email, or Google Meet with students weekly
- Weekly contact with parents and students
- Meet with the student via online platform
- Through LSM, email, phone, and video conferences
- Meet with students in-person on campus

Staff Responsibilities Cont.

Narrative Form Questions

Why are staff contacting and connecting with students?

Goals

- Ensure academic success
- Relationship-building, one to one connection
- Communicate with families if students are struggling
- Substantial, personal, and timely interactions between online instructors and student
- Presence during in-person instruction; Assignments completed; Logging into the online learning platform; Student demonstration of learning; Responding to teacher emails or communication

Technology

- Support course access and help troubleshoot issues
- Available for tech troubleshooting

Synchronous Learning in the Reported Instructional Models

Staff Responsibilities Cont.

Narrative Form Questions

How are staff approaching synchronous instruction?

Goals

- Teach courses and support the instructional program
- Offer daily synchronous learning sessions
- Afterhours tutoring
- Respond to student needs and personalize instruction
- Interactive and engaging

Delivery

- Provide in-person instruction
- Provide face-to-face synchronous sessions
- Provide one-on-one sessions as needed
- Deliver instruction electronically
- Live stream of in-person classes
- In-person or live online video for support

Staff Responsibilities Cont.

Narrative Form Questions

What are staff delivering during synchronous instruction?

Areas

- Direct instruction in skills for courses
- Gen Ed Teacher-directed lessons on academic skill development
- Direct support in areas of struggle
- Content acquisition (intervention)
- Advisory and targeted intervention
- Provide support and re-instruction as needed
- Academic support during instructional time
- Academic guidance and assistance through courses
- Targeted tutoring support

Student Responsibilities

Narrative Form Questions

What are students completing during synchronous instruction?

Responsibilities

- Access teachers and supplemental instruction
- Participate in virtual classroom learning experiences
- Attend office hours with instructor for 1:1 support
- Log-on (Chromebook, headphones) with instructor
- Discuss content and build connections
- Weekly class meetings on Google Meet
- Attend daily morning meeting for social time and to address social-emotional needs

When

- Pre-work, lunchtime, and evening sessions
- Access after-hours tutoring for support and success

Student Responsibilities Cont.

Narrative Form Questions

What are students completing during synchronous instruction?

Areas

- Required amount of hours and daily coursework per day and week
- Daily guided content with instructor and other students
- Seminar classes weekly for team building
- Synchronous activities outlined on Learning Board
- Co-created project-based learning
- College-level research and real-world learning
- In-person learning activities, conversation, and assessment
- Classes with an in-person or blended option for all courses
- Completion of 5 or more 100% supplemental online courses
- Synchronous intervention each day for most at risk students
- Synchronous intervention at least twice a week for excelling students
- Service hour requirements for IEP or ALP
- Scheduled daily synchronous instruction support
- Tutoring, support, and feedback on student work on a weekly basis
- Required face-to-face, onsite instruction specific days per week in school building

Asynchronous Learning in the Reported Instructional Models

Staff Responsibilities Cont.

Narrative Form Questions

What are staff delivering during asynchronous instruction?

Areas

- Social/emotional programming, services, and supports offered
- College and career readiness programming
- Tutoring supports
- 1:1 feedback through screencasts, voice recordings, voice comments and collaboration on student projects
- Individual teacher/student interactions through LMS
- Finish online coursework on own time
- Weekly enrichment activities (virtual field trips) that focuser collaboration, hands-on and interactive learning
- Specialized supports to address student needs in education plans
- Small group tutoring and intervention sessions
- Tutoring support
- Guide students through their coursework
- Assign new classes as student finishes prior classes

Student Responsibilities Cont.

Narrative Form Questions

What are students completing during asynchronous instruction?

Areas

- Complete work and assignments independently
- Additional instruction and support from the teacher as needed
- All service hours for students with IEPs
- Enrolled and engaged in courses
- Goal-setting
- Studying
- Completing assessments, tests, exams
- Exploring college and career opportunities
- Create informational videos
- Play live trivia and games
- Independent, remote work time
- Students choose from learning opportunities aligned with weekly instructional objectives
- Work on assigned independently paced courses during online tab time
- Individual or small group instruction with instructor or tutor

Student Responsibilities Cont.

Narrative Form Questions

What are students completing during asynchronous instruction?

Areas Cont.

- Practice tests for placement in the program and courses
- Independent study
- Supplemental courses individualized to student
- Asynchronous activities outlined on Learning Board
- In-person or virtual tutoring
- Virtual classroom learning experiences (wellness session, career days, etc.)
- Attend office hours with instructor for 1:1 support
- Access all written and audio course materials, videos, notes, assignments, course discussions
- Weekly asynchronous instruction time based on elementary or secondary level
- Support and additional feedback during B&M lunch, recess, and transition times
- Access on-demand live tutors
- Tutoring, support, and feedback on student work on a weekly basis
- Meet with staff members or mentor about courses and progress
- Supplemental work on-site with adult supervision
- Work through tutorials and courses at own pace
- Complete online course content during in-person class time remotely on online digital platform

For any questions regarding this document, please contact:

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