

# **West Central Education District**

## **Distance Learning Plan**

### **March 30, 2020**



#### **Overview of WCED**

West Central Education District (WCED) is a service organization with 4 member school districts including Albany, Melrose, Sauk Centre and Paynesville. WCED operates 3 programs including Birth to 3 Early Intervention, Beacon Setting IV Behavioral Program and an Area Learning Center.

WCED also employs staff who provide services to the students within the member district schools including: School Psychologists, School Social Workers, Motor Team of Occupational Therapists, Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant and a Physical Therapist, Teachers for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Audiologist and a Vision Consultant.

Distance Learning defined: Students engaging in distance learning have access to appropriate educational materials and receive daily interaction with their licensed teacher/s. It is important to note that distance learning does not always mean e-learning or online learning. It is critical to provide this learning in a format that can be equitably accessed by all students.

The WCED Distance Learning Plan will primarily address the students who attend the Beacon and ALC programs. Other programs and services will be addressed and labeled if the section pertains to them.

#### **Access to appropriate educational materials, including technology**

The primary platform for Beacon and ALC will be via google suite. Each student/family has been contacted to determine internet and computer needs. WCED is working with member districts to assist in providing internet for the families indicating they don't have access. Students in need of a computer were provided one from WCED. Other educational materials such as textbooks, workbooks, and/or manipulatives were delivered to homes. In situations that materials are delivered to the home, guardians are notified to confirm the time works for them.

Students will have opportunities for classroom instruction as well as personalized learning; one on one support as needed. Live lessons, recorded lessons, FaceTime, email, phone calls are some of the examples that will be utilized to support students and families at different levels.

The learning model will be secure in student data. Student work samples, grades, private information will not be in view of the camera or verbally shared when other people are in the chat. Private student/family data will only be shared with the student/family it pertains to; separate from instruction.

Related service providers including School Social Workers, the Motor Team, D/HH teachers, Audiologist and Vision Consultant will be using e-platforms such as google meet, zoom and see-saw for instructional methods along with phone calls and email. Related service providers work closely with member district staff to consult on individual student cases and determine progress and effectiveness of instruction. Services will be provided based on the Individual Distance Learning Plan and materials will be delivered to families homes through member district transportation or directly by the related service provider. They will communicate with families through phone and email and families are also able to connect with providers regarding questions or input.

### **Daily interaction with licensed teacher**

Beacon and ALC teachers are providing daily instruction. Teachers will be providing live instruction, video instruction, and/or posting new assignments each day. Teachers will connect with each student on an individual basis at a minimum of 2 times per week; live teaching lesson, FaceTime, email, Remind, and/or phone call. Students are encouraged to participate in the live lessons and ask questions as needed. Remind, email, or phone calls will be the main communication with families; however FaceTime is an option as well.

Support staff will join classes through google classroom to have current information to follow up with students and provide individualized support. They may reach out to students prior to the class to assist in transitioning. Staff will work with students to troubleshoot technology.

### **Mental health needs of students**

The school social worker is working closely with all staff to meet the needs of students and families. The school social worker will have resources available that staff can offer to students/families. The school social worker will also meet with students on an individual basis and small group instruction. Communication will continue between therapists and the school social worker to support the mental health needs of students attending Beacon and ALC.

All school social workers in the member districts are providing resources to families as well as connecting as often as needed to support the students mental health needs. School social workers are aware of community resources to connect families to if extra support is needed.

### **Students with IEPs/504s**

Lessons will be delivered through e-platforms (such as google classroom, google meet, zoom, etc.), email, and hard copies of documents being delivered to families. Case managers will connect with parents to discuss and review all IEPs and propose the alternative distance learning model for service delivery. Individual Distance Learning Plans will be created to outline the IEP service delivery model during Distance Learning and be sent home to parents along with a Prior Written Notice. Beacon students are all on IEPs. ALC has no students currently on a 504 Plan. If a student on a 504 Plan is

enrolled in the ALC during a Distance Learning Day, administration would consult with the family regarding any possible accommodations which should be implemented during Distance Learning.

Students will have access to their teachers through email and during the direct instruction time. Parents and students will be informed of times and contact methods for their teachers.

The Individual Distance Learning Plan will indicate the method for measuring progress on goals during Distance Learning days. Data will be collected through the work completed by students and tracked by the case manager.

Special education case managers will contact parents when evaluations are due to discuss the evaluation plan. If any face-to-face evaluations are required, the evaluation will be put on hold until which time students are back at school. If the evaluation can be completed as a file review only, the team will complete the evaluation and report.

### **Meal delivery or distribution**

All students enrolled in a West Central Education District program live within one of our member districts. Beacon and ALC Program Administrator shared contact information for each family with the respective member district. The member district is providing meals for any WCED program student/family who indicates a need.

### **Support for English Learners**

At this time, there are no students attending Beacon or ALC who have been accessing or are in need of English Language Learning support. There are parents/guardians who do not fluently speak English. In those situations, google translate and/or a translator assists with the communication.

Birth to 3 families will have an interpreter available during virtual home visits.

### **Students experiencing homelessness**

Currently there is one situation with a student/family experiencing homelessness. Communication has been established so continued contact can be made. The district in which this student resides, is aware of the situation as is assisting in accessing resources. The school social worker from the Beacon program and the district of residence are working together for this ongoing support. At this time, virtual learning has been set up. The plan is to continue to monitor the success and will adjust as needed; to change virtual supports and/or provide independent learning opportunities in paper/pencil format. The support within this situation will be accessed should other students within our programs experience homelessness during this distance learning time.

## **Early Learning B-3 services**

Case managers for the students/families receiving services through Birth to 3 programming are communicating with families regarding the model for instruction/services during Distance Learning. Service will continue to be provided the same number of times a month as the current IFSP indicates. Home visits will be conducted through video options such as google meet or facetime if families or through phone calls. Families will continue to have access to case managers and service providers through the same format as previously used: email, texting, or phone calls.

All timelines for IFSPs will continue to be met through Distance Learning although through virtual meetings or conference calls. Any evaluations which require face to face with the child will be on hold until Distance Learning is done and home visits will be conducted in the home.

Materials such as toys, packets, activities will be dropped off at families homes with coordination and permission from families. Staff are not allowed to be in the home and encouraged to drop off items at the doorstep. All items will be wiped off prior to dropping off for the family and once picked up from the family, materials will be cleaned and handled based on MDH guidelines.

## **Assessment**

Various forms of assessment; such as but not limited to, teacher/staff observation, online tests, and verbal discussion will be used to gather information regarding knowledge of a skill. Student progress on 4th quarter grades will be pass/fail. Progress reports will be completed for students receiving special education.

## **Regular communication with families**

Remind has been and will continue to be the main platform for communicating with parents; email and phone calls will also be options. Prior to the distance learning plan being implemented, the student/family expectations will be shared with all students and families via Remind. Parents/guardians whose primary language is not English, will have this information translated using Google Translate and shared through Remind. The administrator and/or teachers will reach out to parents/guardians for support during this time.

## **Support for staff**

WCED administrators will reach out to all employees by program or service within the 1st week of Distance Learning to inquire and reflect on the implementation of instruction, how technology is working for families, students and staff. Changes will be made as needed to be as effective as possible. WCED administrators will also stay connected with staff regularly for check ins on their mental health and support. Professional development opportunities will be initiated into the 2nd or 3rd week of

Distance Learning to provide time for staff to learn professionally and connect with colleagues for reflection, learning and support.

### **Tracking attendance of students and staff**

Students will be recorded as “in attendance” when they have completed at least one school task prior to 3:30 pm each day. Students will be responsible to complete the assigned work to earn the credit. If students are unable to connect via the internet, they will be given independent work to do. Attendance will be taken on a weekly basis for those students; if they completed any of the independent work provided, they will be counted as “in attendance for the week”. If they did not complete any independent work during the week, they will be counted as “absent for the week”.

Staff will be expected to follow normal sick leave procedures if they are unable to complete their typical 7.5 hour work day. Beacon and ALC staff will follow normal procedures to communicate with their administrator if absent. Service delivery staff will also follow normal procedures and inform families and/or teachers in the member district if they are unable to complete their instruction due to illness. All staff use an online sick leave form to submit any sick time off.

### **Adjustment of distance learning plan during implementation**

WCED administration team will review the Distance Learning Plan at regular admin meetings to determine its effectiveness in implementation. Adjustments will be made as needed and the Plan will be reposted on the website. Programs will have discussions at regular meetings on whether the Distance Learning Plan is benefitting students and presenting learning barriers to others.