



MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

DIGITAL LEARNING

DISTRICT GUIDANCE

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DIGITAL LEARNING

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

The purpose of this “Digital Learning District Guidance” document is to support local efforts to leverage the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds to implement digital learning programs. Providing teachers and students with better access to technology to enhance instruction will benefit all, whether the current state of emergency is extended, there is a second wave of COVID-19 in the fall, or circumstances return to normal. The future of education in Mississippi and continued growth in student performance depends on the effectiveness of digital learning programs in all communities across the state.

The current state of emergency, the threat of COVID-19, and the availability of unprecedented funding and flexibility have created an opportunity to advance digital learning regardless of what the future holds, and to create a lasting benefit for our students and our teachers. Whether students continue to learn at home or are able to return to the classroom, all districts have an opportunity to leverage these funds to accelerate the development of digital learning programs. Whether a district already has a strong program or is starting with no program at all, every district can reach more students, expand to more grade levels, cover more of the curriculum, and increase quality, rigor, and effectiveness.

This document outlines a broad array of topics related to digital learning, but it does not anticipate a one-size-fits-all solution. MDE encourages districts to take stock of their strengths, as well as their needs, and to plan a path forward that is both realistic and sustainable. The MDE is committed to supporting districts as they implement robust, comprehensive digital learning programs that support the strategic goals of the State Board of Education: to ensure that all students become proficient and show growth in all assessed areas and that every student graduates from high school ready for college and career.

ASSEMBLE YOUR TEAM

Digital Learning is complicated in part because it touches so many aspects of district operations and instructional practices. MDE’s first suggestion is to assemble a team from across the district: from administration, curriculum and content, teachers, technology, and budget/procurement. Each perspective is important and will be needed for the district to develop a workable, comprehensive plan.

FIVE STAGES OF DIGITAL LEARNING

MDE has broken down digital learning into five hierarchical stages described below.



01 BUILDING BLOCKS

This foundational stage focuses on the raw materials of digital learning, namely having laptops/tablets for students and staff to use at home or school, having the learning management system (LMS) to support remote instruction, and having the team in place to support teachers, students and families.

NOTE: An LMS provides teachers with an online tool to create and deliver content, monitor student participation and assess student performance. It may also provide students with the ability to use interactive features such as video conferencing and discussion forums.



02 ASSEMBLE THE PIECES

Before teachers, students and families take laptops/tablets home, the next stage focuses on the local policies that will need to be in place, the configuration of the laptops/tablets (and software) to be usable and safe, and the program's accessibility to all students, including those with disabilities.



03 MOBILIZE YOUR TEAM

Handing students properly configured laptops/tablets is just a beginning. The next stage focuses on providing virtual training and support to teacher and students working remotely. Training and support will be critically important to the implementation of a program as complex as digital learning.



04 DEVELOP CONTENT

The next stage addresses what teachers will be delivering to students through the digital learning program. Acquiring and curating instructional content, as well as grading/assessing student work/performance is a large undertaking. How individual teachers use the content and performance measures must align to the district's curriculum and goals.



05 DELIVER AND EVALUATE INSTRUCTION

The fifth stage focuses on ensuring that the digital learning program is working for teachers and students, especially for students with special needs. Student readiness for the challenges inherent in digital learning must be addressed, along with addressing expectations for how students and teachers will interact remotely.

USING THE FOUR PARTS OF THIS GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

PART ONE ▶ **Digital Learning Capacity Assessment**

This document breaks down the Five Stages of Digital Learning into distinctive elements and defines five levels of readiness:

- Level 1 – No Real Strategy for Digital Learning
- Level 2 – Initial Steps into Digital Learning
- Level 3 – Basic Digital Learning
- Level 4 – Comprehensive Digital Learning
- Level 5 – Exceptional Digital Learning

The purpose of the Capacity Assessment is to help districts determine how far they may need to go, and to see how their efforts might progress towards having in place an Exceptional Digital Learning program.

PART TWO ▶ **Digital Learning Guiding Questions**

Once a district has assessed its progress against the Capacity Assessment, the next section presents a set of questions to guide planning on where there is both need and opportunity to move forward under each of the Five Stages of Digital Learning. The questions are meant to break down the broad topics under each of the Five Stages into clear digestible components that should help the district consider all aspects of its plan and how they fit together.

PART THREE ▶ **Digital Learning Next Steps and Supports**

Moving beyond broad topics and more specific components, the third section lays out concrete steps a district may take to move from planning to implementation, as well as a set of supports MDE will offer districts throughout implementation, including providing optional procurement vehicles, best practice guidance and a platform to support collaboration among districts. Again, one size will not fit all, and the next steps and supports will depend greatly on districts' starting points and progress toward goals.

PART FOUR ▶ **Digital Learning Questionnaire and Budget Form**

As districts begin to compile costs and develop their plan to utilize the federal CARES Act funds, this spreadsheet offers very basic guidance for districts planning to concentrate their early work on acquiring Digital Learning "Building Blocks" that include laptops/tablets, a learning management system (LMS) and extra contractor support to lay the foundation for their digital learning program.

PART ONE ▶

DIGITAL LEARNING

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT



01 BUILDING BLOCKS

		LEVEL 1 No Real Strategy for Digital Learning	LEVEL 2 Initial Steps into Digital Learning	LEVEL 3 Basic Digital Learning	LEVEL 4 Comprehensive Digital Learning	LEVEL 5 Exceptional Digital Learning
DEVICES & NETWORK EQUIPMENT	Access to Laptops/Tables	No students have access to laptops/tablets for digital learning	Some, but not all, students have access to a laptop/tablet	Every student has access to a laptop/tablet but may be shared among other household members	Every student has a laptop/tablet, but the laptop/tablet might not be age appropriate	Every student has their own, age-appropriate, internet-connected laptop/tablet
	Internet Connectivity	No students have the ability to connect to the internet	Some, but not all, students have connectivity to the internet	Every student has access to the internet, but some may need to travel for access (to school parking lot, library, fast food restaurant, school bus with a wifi access point parked in neighborhood, etc.)	Every student has access to the internet from home	Every student has access to broadband internet from home (Currently defined by the FCC as 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream)
SOFTWARE & ONLINE TOOLS	Learning Management System (LMS)	There is no LMS in place	There is no LMS in place, but teachers utilize teacher web pages or other electronic communication to post/share classroom material	District has a single LMS, but it may not be appropriate for all ages	LMS(s) are age appropriate but are utilized infrequently in classroom instruction	LMS(s) are age appropriate and utilized regularly in classroom instruction Parents have access to the LMS
	Vetting and Integrating Software and Online Tools	The district or school lacks the capacity and/or a process for vetting/evaluating and approving the use of online tools	The district or school has a policy and process for vetting software, online tools, and mobile applications	The district or school regularly follows its policy and process for vetting software, online tools, and mobile applications	The district has a robust methodology for evaluating and assigning risk to security and privacy, and evaluating educational effectiveness Teachers are fully trained in the methodology of evaluating online tools	The district regularly vets its software, online tools, and mobile applications against the Student Data Privacy Consortium data sharing agreement database, the student privacy pledge signatories, and Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP) compliance

01

CONTINUED

		LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
PERSONNEL (CAPACITY)	End User Support Laptops/Tablets, Connectivity, Access, Instructional Platform, User Training	District or school lacks capacity to support teachers, students, and families	District has a central drop off for laptops/tablets Typical turn around for repair: one week or more	District has multiple drop off locations Typical turn around for repair: a few days	District has multiple drop off locations and limited remote support Typical turn around for repair: less than 24 hours	District has a robust remote support system; all non-hardware related issues can be fixed remotely Typical turn around for repair: a few hours
	Support for Technical Staff Network, Access, Filtering, Security, Connectivity	District or school lacks capacity to provide network/tech support for digital learning infrastructure	Staff have a basic understanding of the infrastructure and can perform minor tasks	Staff have a fair understanding of district infrastructure and can align basic functionality to meet some of the needs of the district	Staff have a reasonable understanding of the district infrastructure and can partially customize features to meet some of the district's needs	Staff are very knowledgeable in the components of the district's infrastructure and can fully customize solutions to meet the needs of the district



02 ASSEMBLE THE PIECES

		LEVEL 1 No Real Strategy for Digital Learning	LEVEL 2 Initial Steps into Digital Learning	LEVEL 3 Basic Digital Learning	LEVEL 4 Comprehensive Digital Learning	LEVEL 5 Exceptional Digital Learning
POLICIES	Digital Learning Policies	District has not adopted policies or created a plan to support digital learning, including internal/external communication, leadership development, management of devices, procurement procedures and vendor relations, and equitable access for all students	District has drafted board policies to support the digital learning	District has adopted board-approved policies to support digital learning, but has not developed or implemented an action plan	District has adopted board-approved policies to support digital learning, and has partially implemented an action plan	District has adopted board-approved policies to support digital learning, and has effectively implemented an action plan to provide internal/external communication, effective leadership, management of devices, procurement procedures and vendor relations, and equitable access for all students

02

CONTINUED

		LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
CONFIGURATION	Laptop/Tablet Filtering	No filtering is in place	District laptops/tablets are filtered on campus, but no remote filtering	Basic filtering of district laptops/tablets Filtering is based on broad categories with a single, district wide policy No white listing/black listing of websites are available	Good filtering of district laptops/tablets with limited reporting Filtering is based on broad categories White listing/black listing of websites are available	District owned laptops/tablets are well filtered and reporting traffic logs to a central location Filtering is based on fine grained categories Filters are age appropriate and dependent on who is logged into the laptop/tablet
	Laptop/Tablet Management	District or school lacks capacity to manage laptops/tablets District laptops/tablets are managed on campus, but no remote management	Basic management of district laptops/tablets A few changes can be pushed out district wide No reporting on health or status.	Good management of district laptops/tablets with limited reporting Laptop/tablet configurations are managed in large groups Limited reporting on health and status.	District owned laptops/tablets are fully managed remotely and reporting health and status to a central location	Configurations are tailored to the user who is currently logged into the laptop/tablet
ACCESSIBILITY	Accessibility of Digital Content	Neither student laptops/tablets nor online resources provide accessibility features (e.g., text-to-speech, speech-to-text, enlarged font sizes or spacing, color contrast, dictionaries, translations)	Laptops/tablets provide accessibility features and students have limited training on the use of those features Little consideration is given to the accessibility features of online content and resources	Laptops/tablets provide accessibility features and students have training on the use of those features Online content and resources, including the LMS, contain limited accessibility features	Laptops/tablets provide accessibility features and students are fully trained on the use of those features Online content and resources contain accessibility features but students have limited training in their use	Laptops/tablets provide accessibility features and students are fully trained on the use of those features Online content and resources, including the LMS, contain accessibility features and students are fully trained on their use



03 MOBILIZE YOUR TEAM

		LEVEL 1 No Real Strategy for Digital Learning	LEVEL 2 Initial Steps into Digital Learning	LEVEL 3 Basic Digital Learning	LEVEL 4 Comprehensive Digital Learning	LEVEL 5 Exceptional Digital Learning
PLAN & PROCESSES	District and School Level Implementation Communications, Oversight, Leadership, Procurement and Vendor/Partnership Engagement	District has not adopted policies or created a plan to support the continuity of learning, including internal/external communication, leadership development, management of laptops/tablets, procurement procedures and vendor relations, and equitable access for all students	District has drafted board policies to support the continuity of student learning	District has adopted board-approved policies to support the continuity of student learning, but has not developed or implemented an action plan	District has adopted board-approved policies to support the continuity of student learning, and has partially implemented an action plan	District has adopted board-approved policies to support the continuity of student learning, and has effectively implemented an action plan
TRAINING & SUPPORT	Support for Teachers Technical, Professional Development, and Content	There is no training or support available for teachers on the use of laptops/tablets, curation of content, or evaluation of online resources	Teachers have limited training on the use of laptops/tablets, curation of content and the evaluation of online resources Limited helpdesk services are available	Teachers have been trained on the use of laptops/tablets and the LMS, but have limited training on the curation of content and evaluation of online resources Limited helpdesk services are available	Teachers have been trained on the use of laptops/tablets and the LMS, as well as the curation of content and evaluation of online resources Teachers have access to helpdesk services	Teachers are fully trained and experienced in the use of laptops/tablets, developing and delivering engaging, relevant, and effective online instruction Teachers have access to helpdesk services



04 DEVELOP CONTENT

		LEVEL 1 No Real Strategy for Digital Learning	LEVEL 2 Initial Steps into Digital Learning	LEVEL 3 Basic Digital Learning	LEVEL 4 Comprehensive Digital Learning	LEVEL 5 Exceptional Digital Learning
MEASURE STUDENT PERFORMANCE	Assessment and Grading	The district has no means to remotely assess students or to evaluate student performance	Teachers have been introduced to the use of digital assessments There is no district grading policy for digital learning	Teachers utilize limited digital assessments to gauge mastery of content Data is not used to shape future instruction District is developing a grading policy for digital learning	Teachers utilize digital assessments to gauge mastery of content Data is used to shape future instruction Grades are assigned based on district policies for digital learning	Teachers utilize authentic digital assessments to gauge mastery of content and shape future instruction Assessments allow for student choice where appropriate
	Data and Reporting	The district or school has no way to collect or report data related to digital learning	Basic information such as enrollment and demographics are collected, but rely on existing registration systems or paperwork	Data regarding participation and grading through LMS can be collected, but is not standardized or complete across grade levels or within schools and district	Data regarding instruction, grading, and assessments are available through LMS Daily attendance may be tracked through utilization of technology or interaction with instructors Data streams from the LMS can report out to state system	Data systems are in place to collect a broad array of elements, including course/block attendance, performance, discipline, meal service utilization, interventions and supports, and special program services Data is fed to SIS for state reporting capabilities.
FIND & CURATE CONTENT	Curation of Digital Content	Teachers do not have access to digital high quality instructional materials	Teachers do not have access to digital high quality instructional materials Online resources are not utilized in classroom instruction	Teachers have limited access to digital high quality instructional materials Online resources are age appropriate but not utilized regularly in classroom instruction	Teachers have access to digital high quality instructional materials Online resources are age appropriate and utilized somewhat regularly in classroom instruction Content does not allow for student choice	Teachers have access to digital high quality instructional materials Content allows for student choice where appropriate Online resources are age appropriate and utilized regularly in classroom instruction

04

CONTINUED

		LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
FIND & CURATE CONTENT	Student Access to Digital Content	No content is available to distribute students or there is no means to distribute content to students	Learning materials available online, but are designed for classroom consumption Packets are available for pickup for students who do not have internet access	Learning materials are available online and can be downloaded to be worked offline Packets are available for pickup for students who do not have internet access Third party online resources are available, but the teacher gets no feedback on students' progress	Learning materials are available online and work is submitted online Lessons are available to the student, tailored to the classes the student is enrolled in	Learning materials are high quality, designed for digital consumption, and well aligned to the district's curriculum Lessons for the day are presented to the student in each of their classes



05 DELIVER AND EVALUATE INSTRUCTION

		LEVEL 1 No Real Strategy for Digital Learning	LEVEL 2 Initial Steps into Digital Learning	LEVEL 3 Basic Digital Learning	LEVEL 4 Comprehensive Digital Learning	LEVEL 5 Exceptional Digital Learning
TEACHER TRAINING & EVALUATION	Teacher Training and Evaluation	Teachers are not experienced in the development or delivery of digital instruction	Teachers have been introduced to the development and delivery of digital instruction	Teachers have some experience in the development of digital instruction Teachers and administrators have limited training on the delivery of digital instruction Teachers and administrators have limited training in the evaluation of effective digital instruction	Teachers are experienced in the development of digital instruction Teachers and administrators are fully trained on the delivery of digital instruction Teachers and administrators are fully trained in the evaluation of effective digital instruction	Teachers are experienced in the development and delivery engaging, relevant, and effective digital instruction Teachers have a community of support with administrators and other teachers

05

CONTINUED

		LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
STUDENT READINESS	Student Issues Readiness, digital citizenship, attitudes, discipline	Students are not ready to use the laptop/tablet or internet responsibly	Students have limited training on the use of the laptop/tablet District is developing policy for appropriate use of the laptop/tablet and internet	Students are trained on the use of the laptop/tablet Students have limited understanding of the responsibilities and expectations of caring for and appropriate use of the laptop/tablet Students have limited digital citizenship training appropriate for their age level District policy is in place for appropriate use of the laptop/tablet and internet	Students are fully trained on the use of the laptops/tablets Students have some understanding of the responsibilities and expectations of caring for and appropriate use of the laptop/tablet Students have some digital citizenship training appropriate for their age level	Students are fully trained on the use of the laptops/tablets and understand the responsibilities and expectations of caring for and appropriate use of the laptop/tablet Students have completed digital citizenship training appropriate for their age level District policy is in place for appropriate use of the laptop/tablet and internet and parents acknowledge the policy
STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTION	Student-Teacher Interaction	There is no way for teachers to communicate with students or for students to communicate with one another	Teacher feedback and student-to-student interaction is limited	Teachers provide feedback to students within a week Student-to-student interaction is limited	Teachers provide feedback within a day Students can engage in age appropriate two-way communication	Teachers and students interact in real time Students can engage in age appropriate, real-time communication with one another

05

CONTINUED

		LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
SPECIAL POPULATION STUDENTS		The district or school lacks the capacity to provide support services in a digital learning setting for special needs populations (special education, English Learners, migrant, homeless/foster care)	Assistive technology devices are not available for at-home use Schools provide little to no Special Education and related services for students with disabilities in a digital learning setting	Limited assistive technology devices are available for at-home use Schools provide limited Special Education and related services for students with disabilities in a digital learning setting Schools provide little to no support to English Learners, migrant students, and those students in homeless/foster care to allow them access to academic content in a digital learning setting	Assistive technology devices are available for at-home use Students and families have limited training on the use of the assistive devices Schools provide appropriate Special Education and related services for students with disabilities in a digital learning setting Schools provide limited tools, equipment and resources needed to effectively support English Learners, migrant students, and those students in homeless/foster care to allow them access to academic content in a digital learning setting Schools have limited network connections with the caseload service providers	Students and families are fully trained on the use of the assistive devices used both in school and at home Schools provide appropriate services, tools, equipment, and resources to all special population students and their families in a digital learning setting Schools establish network connections with the caseload service provider to ensure continuity of human support services
	Supports to Special Populations					

PART TWO ▶ DIGITAL LEARNING

GUIDING QUESTIONS



01 Do you have the necessary **BUILDING BLOCKS?**

DEVICES & NETWORK EQUIPMENT

- What laptops/tablets and how many do you need for your students and teachers? How stable are the laptops/tablets you currently have? Do you have a laptop/tablet refresh plan?
- Do you have the network equipment you need to support technology in the classroom? To support technology needs when students and teachers are working from home?
- Do you know whether each of your students has internet access at home? How many do not have access? How many hotspots would you need to connect all students to the internet?

SOFTWARE & ONLINE TOOLS

- How are you communicating with students, families and teachers at home?
- Do you have a LMS or other tools to support digital learning?
- Does your district have an approved list of software and other online tools that support digital learning?
- How does your district vet tools and negotiate/set/approve terms and conditions? Do the teachers know district policies and how to propose tools for vetting?
- Can you collect student work from or deliver student assessments to students at home or school?
- Does your district expect teachers to connect with students using an online video conferencing platform?

PERSONNEL (CAPACITY)

- What is your plan for end user support?
- Who do you have on staff to support teachers and student learning when their laptops/tablets, software or internet connect do not work as expected? Who will your students or families call when they have a question or need support?
- Do you have access to support contractors/vendors you need to augment your team? What skills or capacities need to be augmented? How will you acquire such additional resources?



02 Are you ready to **ASSEMBLE THE PIECES?**

POLICIES

- Do you have digital learning policies? Which district policies will be impacted (or complicated) by switching to digital learning? Do your policies need to be updated to align with the challenges of digital learning?
- Do your security and privacy policies reflect the needs and risks of students and teachers working from home?
- How does your district ensure procurement rules are being followed?

CONFIGURATION

- Are your laptops/tablets configured to work remotely and connect to your network via the internet (versus working within your network)? How will your students access your network and systems from home?
- Are all software packages up to date, and how will you keep them up to date?
- How do you manage the security of your laptops/tablets and the privacy of your students? Do you have content filters configured to protect students whether they are at home or at school?

ACCESSIBILITY

- Will each of your students be able to view/interact with your laptops/tablets, software, content, communication tools, your website?
- Do you have accessibility standards and do your laptops/tablets issued to students and all software/platforms comply with these standards?



03 What will it take to MOBILIZE YOUR TEAM?

PLAN

- Do you have a digital learning plan? Do you have a continuity of instruction/operations plan?
- How does your team stay connected – and manage digital learning – during a prolonged school closure or throughout the duration of a state of emergency? How will you use available time together in person to prepare for such an occurrence?
- How are decisions made and communicated out?
- Who has what responsibilities and how will they change during a prolonged school closure or throughout the duration of a state of emergency?
- How will your district engage parents and other caregivers who will be supporting students at home?

PROCESSES

- How will your districts govern digital learning processes? How will issues be identified, escalated and resolved?
- How are all instructional functions carried forward – or adjusted – once schools close, but digital learning continues? Are you able to continue essential functions remotely, including instruction, technical operations, child nutrition, and leadership (including school board meetings)?
- How will your district integrate parents and care givers into key processes essential to digital learning?

TRAINING & SUPPORT

- What training do your teachers need to carry out digital learning? How prepared are they to use the technology you have in place?
- What else will teachers be expected to do differently, and have they received the training they need to carry out those responsibilities?
- Do they know how to teach through a digital learning program?
- What skills does your technical staff possess? What training do they need?
- What training and support do they need to provide your administrative staff, teachers, students and their families?



04 Are teachers equipped to find and DEVELOP CONTENT?

MEASURE STUDENT PERFORMANCE

- What does district testing look like in a digital learning context?
- Do existing assessments and platforms work in digital learning?
- How are assignments distributed, collected, graded and recorded?
- How do teachers and schools treat security and integrity of student work remotely?
- How will your district determine or ensure the reliability of its approach to digital learning evaluation and assessment?

FIND & CURATE CONTENT

- Where do the high quality instructional materials come from (beyond district approved software and other online discussed above)? How are they vetted and approved? Who is responsible for vetting/approving material? How will state and federal/national high quality instructional materials be incorporated into your digital learning program?
- Do you have a feedback loop to allow teachers to collaborate to strengthen their ability identify and utilize high quality instructional material? Is the content being used aligned to state standards and support the instructional goals for the unit, quarter, year?
- How do teachers identify and utilize instructional content differently than if used for in-person instruction?



05 Are teachers and administrators trained to DELIVER AND EVALUATE INSTRUCTION?

TEACHER TRAINING & EVALUATION

- What standards-based professional development for effective technology-enhanced instruction can you provide for teachers?
- How will your district observe, support, guide, and evaluate teachers as they deliver digital learning?
- Other than student grades, what measures will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the technology-enhanced instruction?
- Classroom instruction can be an isolating experience for teachers, therefore, how will your district ensure that teachers remain connected to each other, to the administration, to the support systems and professional development opportunities?
- How can you maximize time in school to prepare for prolonged school closures?

STUDENT READINESS

- Are your students ready to fully engage in digital learning? How will they navigate through their course materials (will your students know where to start, what to do next, and when the work is successfully completed/submitted)?
- Do they have the attitudes (motivation for learning) and discipline (effective time management) at all grade levels?
- Do your students understand the responsibilities of digital citizenship?
- How will you support students who are not ready for digital learning?

STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTION

- How do students interact with their teachers? As a class or individually?
- How often and for how long do student-teacher interactions occur?
- How do students reach out to their teachers for additional support or to ask questions?

SPECIAL POPULATION STUDENTS

- How are appropriate services provided to special education students? What access and support issues require special attention or accommodation?
- How do special education coordinators manage caseloads?
- When is it appropriate to lean on parents or outside providers to support special education students, to provide direct services, or gather data/information regarding student services?
- Do special populations have appropriate tools, equipment, supports, and access to academic content?
- Do network connections exist with caseload service providers, including telehealth services, to ensure continuity of human support services?

PART THREE ▶ DIGITAL LEARNING

NEXT STEPS & SUPPORTS



01

BUILDING BLOCKS

DEVICES & NETWORK EQUIPMENT

NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICTS...

- Inventory laptops/tablets and hotspots to determine need
- Leverage CARES Act federal funds to procure needed laptops/tablets and hotspots
- Develop a laptop/tablet refresh and sustainability plan
- Leverage E-Rate funded opportunities to upgrade district network

SUPPORT FROM MDE WITH...

- ▶ Communicating with districts regarding new COVID-19 related funding opportunities, including E-Rate
- ▶ Creating “express product/service lists” and/or “no cost” contracts
- ▶ Establishing a new network engineering support contract aligned to digital learning challenges
- ▶ Coordinating with state leaders and telecommunications industry to deliver short-term connectivity solutions while efforts to deliver broadband to rural Mississippi move forward

SOFTWARE & ONLINE TOOLS

NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICTS...

- Inventory software licenses to determine need
- Leverage CARES Act federal funds to procure needed software licenses, expanding availability to all students as appropriate
- Participate in the Student Data Privacy Consortium where districts can access model contract terms and conditions for software and online tools that ensure student privacy
- Organize instructional, technical and/or legal staff to govern the use of software and online tools
- Leverage model contract language from the Student Data Privacy Consortium to create standardized contracts and Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) for software and online tool vendors
- Train teachers, students and families to use online video conferencing platform

SUPPORT FROM MDE WITH...

- ▶ Creating “express product/service lists” and/or “no cost” contracts
- ▶ Providing best practices guidance and direct support to districts regarding vetting new software and online tool vendors
- ▶ Continuing to fund Mississippi’s participation in the Student Data Privacy Consortium (providing a no-cost membership to all districts)
- ▶ Encouraging districts to use industry standards such as FedRAMP and validate requested tool vendors against the student privacy pledge signatories

PERSONNEL (CAPACITY)

NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICTS...

- Review capacity staff and vendor staff under contract to determine whether existing capacity is adequate
- Leverage CARES Act federal funds to procure expert assistance from vendors to supplement existing staff capacity

SUPPORT FROM MDE WITH...

- ▶ Creating “express product/service lists” and/or “no cost” contracts
- ▶ Providing guidance and direct support to districts, using Office of Technology and Strategic Services (OTSS) staff and engineering support contractors

PERSONNEL (CAPACITY) CONTINUED**NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICTS...**

- Coordinate with other districts to share resources and supplement capacity
- Provide standards-based professional development opportunities to staff

SUPPORT FROM MDE WITH...

- ▶ Identifying professional development opportunities aligned to instructional and technical capacity needs
- ▶ Establishing a collaboration platform for districts to discuss their challenges, implementation solutions and lessons learned

**02****ASSEMBLE THE PIECES****POLICIES****NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICTS...**

- Review all existing policies to ensure that they are current and well aligned to digital learning challenges (e.g., acceptable use policies and digital-learning grading policies)
- Create new or amend existing policies to align to digital learning challenges
- Gather feedback from stakeholders regarding clarity and effectiveness of digital learning policies
- Determine how district will ensure compliance with policies and address new challenges as they arise
- Share policies and lessons learned with each other

SUPPORT FROM MDE WITH...

- ▶ Providing best practices guidance, sample policies, and direct support to districts
- ▶ Establishing a collaboration platform for districts to discuss their challenges, implementation solutions and lessons learned – being sure to include instructional, technical and/or legal staff at different levels of implementation of and governance over software and online tool vendors

CONFIGURATION**NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICTS...**

- Ensure all laptops/tablets are fully/properly configured/set up to interact with district networks, LMS and other district platforms
- Upgrade or fully implement the features provided in the web filter to block obscene material to district owned laptops/tablets, both on and off campus
- Consider what platform(s) – e.g., Windows, Mac, Chrome OS, iOS, Android – your district currently has and how will your district manage that platform to push software updates and patches to laptops/tablets connecting remotely

SUPPORT FROM MDE WITH...

- ▶ Providing best practices guidance and direct support to districts
- ▶ Training and information sharing opportunities for districts to interact with OTSS and with each other, to grow expertise and collaborate as a community
- ▶ Engineering support for district staff as they install and configure filters and other software to ensure that all protections and supports are in place for digital learning
- ▶ Establishing a collaboration platform for districts to discuss their challenges, implementation solutions and lessons learned

ACCESSIBILITY

NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICTS...

- Ensure teacher and student laptops/tablets contain accessibility features and those features are turned on (students and teachers can begin training on the use of accessibility features found in the laptop/tablet utilized in the classroom setting)
- Consider the accessibility of laptops/tablets, online tools, content, and supports used to deliver digital instruction

SUPPORT FROM MDE WITH...

- ▶ Providing best practices guidance and direct support to districts regarding National Accessibility Standards/Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), and other accessibility considerations
- ▶ Training and information sharing opportunities for districts to interact with OTSS and with each other, to grow expertise and collaborate as a community
- ▶ Establishing a collaboration platform for districts to discuss their challenges, implementation solutions and lessons learned



03

MOBILIZE YOUR TEAM

PLAN

NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICTS...

- Use an existing leadership team or form a new steering committee (cross-sectional) to begin developing a strategic plan for establishing digital learning
- Engage stakeholders from parents to teachers to local board members

SUPPORT FROM MDE WITH...

- ▶ Developing Framework and Guidance for districts, and providing best practices guidance and direct support to districts
- ▶ Leveraging CARES Act federal funds to encourage, guide or support specific local efforts in critical needs districts
- ▶ Establishing a collaboration platform for districts to discuss their challenges, implementation solutions and lessons learned

PROCESSES

NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICTS...

- Review all existing processes to ensure that they are current and well aligned to digital learning challenges
- Create new or amend existing processes to align to digital learning challenges
- Gather feedback from stakeholders regarding clarify and effectiveness of digital learning processes
- Share processes and lessons learned with each other

SUPPORT FROM MDE WITH...

- ▶ Providing best practices guidance and direct support to districts
- ▶ Establishing a collaboration platform for districts to discuss their challenges, implementation solutions and lessons learned

TRAINING & SUPPORT

NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICTS...

- Begin standards-based professional development for teachers in the use of laptops/tablets, LMS, online tools, and for moving through degrees of technology integration to find more meaningful uses of technology in instruction
- Begin standards-based training/professional development for technology staff
- Begin training and provide resources for students and their families
- Develop comprehensive onboarding for new teachers and technical staff in systems and tools
- Invest in developing good documentation of existing networks, systems and software

SUPPORT FROM MDE WITH...

- ▶ Developing standards for a high quality virtual professional development program to support teachers and administrators
- ▶ Providing best practices guidance and direct support to districts regarding digital learning and standards-based technology training
- ▶ Establishing a collaboration platform for districts to discuss their challenges, implementation solutions and lessons learned – being sure to connect tech coordinators at different levels of implementation



04

DEVELOP CONTENT

FIND & CURATE CONTENT

NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICTS...

- Form/expand role of curriculum committee to oversee the implementation of a LMS and the content of courses offered through the LMS
- Establish process to find, review, and approve high quality instructional materials and digital tools (this will be more efficient and comprehensive, rather than the development of original content)
- Utilize the state approved list of high quality instructional materials
- Review available high quality instructional material already in use at the district, school or classroom level to determine if the providers have digital formats available for possible approval
- Invest in standards-based professional development opportunities, and enrolling teachers in curriculum and digital learning certification programs

SUPPORT FROM MDE WITH...

- ▶ Helping districts identify possible sources of high quality distant learning content and standards-based professional development
- ▶ Providing best practices guidance and direct support to districts regarding locating, vetting and approving high quality instructional material that include digital learning content
- ▶ Establishing a collaboration platform for districts to discuss their challenges, implementation solutions and lessons learned – being sure to connect curriculum specialists and committee members

MEASURE STUDENT PERFORMANCE

NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICTS...

- Explore age-appropriate forms of digital assessments that can be utilized in the classroom setting
- Explore authentic forms of digital assessment that allow for student choice (e.g., real-world projects, essays, multi-media presentations)
- Utilize a district-wide online grade book
- Provide standards-based professional development and collaborative opportunities for teachers to achieve a desired level of consistency and reliability

SUPPORT FROM MDE WITH...

- ▶ Providing best practices guidance and direct support to districts regarding student performance and assessment
- ▶ Establishing a collaboration platform for districts to discuss their challenges, implementation solutions and lessons learned – being sure to connect assessment directors and teachers



05

DELIVER AND EVALUATE INSTRUCTION

STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTION

NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICTS...

- Ensure that contact information for families is up-to-date and accurate, and that families have access to contact information for teachers and other school staff
- When age appropriate, ensure students know the email addresses of their teacher(s)
- Utilize digital assessment tools and rubrics that allow for immediate feedback
- Utilize comment (audio, video, or written) and collaboration features within the LMS, as well as classroom communication tools such as Remind for students to communicate with teacher
- Utilize a video conferencing tool to provide real time interaction with individual students or allow for student interaction with teacher and other students

SUPPORT FROM MDE WITH...

- ▶ Providing best practices guidance and direct support to districts regarding student-teacher interaction
- ▶ Establishing a collaboration platform for districts to discuss their challenges, implementation solutions and lessons learned

TEACHER TRAINING & EVALUATION

NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICTS...

- Use an existing leadership team or form a new steering committee (cross-sectional) to begin developing a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of digital learning
- Gather feedback from stakeholders regarding clarity and effectiveness of the district's digital learning program
- Invest in standards-based professional development opportunities, and enrolling teachers in program evaluation and digital learning certification programs

SUPPORT FROM MDE WITH...

- ▶ Providing best practices guidance and direct support to districts regarding methods to determine the effectiveness of digital learning programs
- ▶ Establishing a collaboration platform for districts to discuss their challenges, implementation solutions and lessons learned

SPECIAL POPULATION STUDENTS

NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICTS...

- Ensure that IEP committees begin exploring digital solutions to all requirements in the IEP
- Ensure that Language Service Plan (LSP) committees begin exploring digital solutions to all aspects of the LSP for both state and classroom assessments for English learners
- Work with cultural liaisons and caseload service providers to ensure services are provided in an online setting, including access to telehealth providers
- Provide assistive technology devices for use at school and at home
- Provide training for teachers, students, and families on the use of assistive technologies

SUPPORT FROM MDE WITH...

- ▶ Clarify federal expectations regarding special population students and digital learning
- ▶ Providing best practices guidance and direct support to districts regarding special populations students
- ▶ Establishing a collaboration platform for districts to discuss their challenges, implementation solutions and lessons learned

STUDENT READINESS

NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICTS...

- Establish student readiness standards/expectations, and gauge student readiness or preparedness for successful digital learning
- Assess student readiness for digital learning, such as technical skills, computer/internet self-efficacy, online communication self-efficacy, and other learning-related attributes
- Review all existing policies and available training to ensure that they are current and well aligned to digital learning challenges related to student readiness
- Create new or amend existing policies to address challenges in student readiness for digital learning
- Gather feedback from stakeholders regarding clarity and effectiveness of digital learning preparation
- Share strategies and lessons learned with each other

SUPPORT FROM MDE WITH...

- ▶ Develop Digital Citizenship curriculum options and professional development for teachers
- ▶ Providing best practices guidance and direct support for districts to gauge student readiness for digital learning and related instruments to measure student readiness, and recommendations for increasing the level of student readiness of digital learning
- ▶ Encouraging districts to plan for remote learning that respects the needs and readiness levels of all students with age-appropriate thresholds
- ▶ Establishing a collaboration platform for districts to discuss their challenges, implementation solutions and lessons learned

PART FOUR ▶ DIGITAL LEARNING

QUESTIONNAIRE & BUDGET FORM

INSTRUCTIONS

FOR USE OF THE DIGITAL LEARNING QUESTIONNAIRE & BUDGET FORM

The fillable Questionnaire and Budget Form can be found at https://mdek12.org/sites/default/files/documents/questionnaire_and_budget_form.xlsx.

The Questionnaire and Budget Form was created to help districts as they prepare plans and budgets for using available funds to address gaps in their Digital Learning “Building Blocks”: laptops/tablets, an LMS and extra contractor support to lay the foundation for their digital learning program.

A. STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND ADMINISTRATORS

In Section A, simply enter the following five values [Column C, Rows 7-11]:

1. How many students are enrolled in your district?
2. How many households are your district’s students members of?

NOTE: How many families send children to your district schools? If there are three school aged children in a family and your district is providing one laptop/tablet to each family or household, then in this example your district needs to supply one laptop/tablet. However, if your district is providing one computer to each student, then in this example your district needs to supply three laptops or tablets.)

3. How many of your district students are eligible for Title I?
4. How many teachers does your district employ?
5. How many administrators and other staff does your district employ?

The values your district enters in Section A will inform formulas programmed in the next section of the Questionnaire and Budget Form.

B. LAPTOPS/TABLETS

Section B begins with three questions related to your district’s approach to supplying laptops/tablets for use at home or school [Column C, Rows 15-17]:

6. Will your district provide laptops/tablets to each student in all grades (“one-to-one”) or will your district provide one to each family (“one per family”)?

7. Will your district also supply laptops/tablets to each of your district teachers for use at home or school?
8. Will your district also supply laptops/tablets to each of your district administrators and other staff for use at home or school?

The neighboring cells in Column D will use the data supplied in Section A to calculate counts in Section B.

Section B continues with five questions [Column C, Rows 18-22] regarding your district supply of laptops/tablets available to be assigned to students, families, teachers and/or administrators and other staff. There is also a question regarding whether any of your district laptops/tablets are over four years old and may need to be replaced. The last two questions in Section B ask which type of laptops/tablets your district currently uses and also the cost per individual laptop/tablet.

9. How many laptops/tablets does your district have?
10. How many of your district devices are no longer supported by the manufacturer or operating system vendor?

NOTE: Older machines may not be compatible with newer software, may not be stable, may have security vulnerabilities, and may no longer be supported by the manufacturer. Your district may have (or may need) a technology refresh policy to guide these questions regarding your district inventory of laptops or tablets available for use at home or school.

11. How many laptops/tablets does your district need?
12. What type of laptops/tablets does your district currently support?
13. What is the cost per laptops/tablets?

The MDE estimates the cost of a laptop/tablet to be \$500. This is only an estimated price. The district's actual cost may vary on factors such as the results of a reverse auction and what type of device the district is purchasing. For instance, a Macbook is typically more expensive than a Chromebook. Your district can replace this estimated cost in Column C, Row 22 with the actual cost.

The neighboring cells in Column D will use the data entered in Column C, Section B, and values from Column C, Section A, to calculate the cost of needed laptops/tablets. **This will be the first Subtotal for the Final Budget Total.**

C. INTERNET

Section C begins with four questions related to the need across your district related to internet connectivity [Column C, Rows 26-29]. It is important to remember that access to the internet may come through a broadband connection in a home or through a hotspot (or a smart phone that can serve as a hotspot):

14. How many of your district student households **LACK** access to broadband internet at home?
15. How many of these student households have access to hotspots or smart phones?
16. How many of your district teachers, administrators, and other staff **LACK** access to broadband internet at home?
17. How many of these teachers, administrators, and other staff have access to hotspots or smart phones?

NOTE: Families that **LACK** an internet access may face challenges related the availability of access (even with the hotspot) or the monthly cost of a connection. Your district may need to consider other options, such as mobile wifi or finding other available wifi connection points in your district community. Always consider student safety if your district plan includes student accessing the internet in places other than the home or school.

Column D, Row 30 will calculate the number of hotspots your district needs based on adding those who **LACK** access while subtracting those who already have access to hotspots or smart phones.

18. How many hotspots would your district need to ensure that all student households, teachers, administrators, and other staff have internet access at home?

NOTE: If your students and their families can already watch NETFLIX, YouTube or other streaming service at home, then they have enough access to connect a laptop or tablet to your district's LMS.

The final question in [Section C, Row 31] asks for the total annual cost of a hotspot (or for the duration of the school year). Include twelve months of subscription service and the cost, if any, of the device itself.

19. What is the cost per hotspot for the duration of the 2020-21 school year?

The MDE estimates the annual cost of a Kajeet Smartspot (200MB per day and filtered), for instance, to be \$180 for 12 months of service. Alternatively, a hotspot purchased off of the state contract (with unlimited data, but unfiltered) costs \$480 for 12 months of service. Your district can replace this estimated cost in Column C, Row 31 with the actual cost.

The neighboring cells in Column D will use the data entered in Section C to calculate the cost of needed internet access. **This will be the second Subtotal for the Final Budget Total.**

D. LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS)

Section D begins with a basic question related to your district's LMS [Column C, Row 35]:

20. Does your district have an LMS?

NOTE: An LMS provides teachers with an online tool to create and deliver content, monitor student participation and assess student performance. It may also provide students with the ability to use interactive features such as video conferencing and discussion forums.

NOTE: When choosing an LMS (or expanding one), determine how students are in all grade levels might use it, or whether a different platform would be more appropriate for different grade levels.

If your district answer to Question #20 is "yes" then your district will also need to answer questions #21 and 22. If your district answer to Question #20 is "no" then your district can skip to question #23.

21. If so, how many students/grade levels/courses are NOT covered by your district contract/license? [Enter Percentage]

- If your district has an LMS only for your high school(s), and if (for instance) 30% of your district total enrollment, then your district can assume that 70% of your district students are not covered by your district LMS contract.

22. How much more expensive would it be for your district LMS to expand coverage to all students/grade levels/courses?
- If your district is paying \$60,000 for your district LMS, but only covering 30% of your district students, then divide \$60,000 by 30% (what your district has) and multiply by 70% (what your district needs) to determine the cost for your district LMS expansion.
23. If your district does not have an LMS, how much funding would it need to establish an LMS for your districts that could provide coverage to all students/grade levels/courses?
- Enter the estimated per student cost of your district LMS.

If your district does not have an LMS, the MDE estimates a cost of \$20 per student per year. This figure could be lower for larger districts and potentially higher for smaller districts. Your district can replace this estimated per student cost in Column C, Row 38 with the actual cost. The neighboring cell in Column D will multiply the rate entered in Row 38 by the enrollment data from Section A to calculate the cost of an LMS.

Based on your district answer to Question #20 and your district answers to either Questions #21 and 22, or Question #23, your district LMS Subtotal will appear in Column D, Row 39. **This will be the third Subtotal for the Final Budget Total.**

OTHER COST SUBTOTAL

If your district is planning to use your CARES Act funds for other eligible expenses, please describe those expenses in Column B, Row 42 and the cost of these expenses in Column C, Row 42.

This cost will appear in Column D, Row 42. This will be the fourth Subtotal for the Final Budget Total.

FINAL BUDGET TOTAL

The Final Budget Total will appear in Column D, Row 44. Once you have the Questionnaire and Budget Form completed, you will have a working total for the needed funds to address gaps in their Digital Learning “Building Blocks”: laptops/ tablets, an LMS and extra contractor support to put lay the foundation for their digital learning program – along with other costs you have listed.

NOTES ▾
