



Community Unit School District 303

Date: March 13, 2020

To: Kane County Regional Office of Education

From: Dr. Jason Pearson, Superintendent St. Charles Community Unit District 303

RE: eLearning Plan

This memo contains the following steps to enact a eLearning plan in Community Unit School District 303, a historical context for implementing eLearning days in Community Unit School District 303, the eLearning plan for consideration, the general structure for implementation, general education expectations, and special education/related services expectations, and staff expectations.

Required Steps to Enact Community Unit School District 303 eLearning Plan:

- March 10, 2020 - District Senior Leadership meeting regarding the proposal of an eLearning application and eLearning plan to the Kane County Regional Office of Education
- March 13, 2020 - Meeting with the St. Charles Education Association (SCEA), St. Charles Educational Support Professionals (SCESP), and St. Charles Transportation & Maintenance (SCT&M) to discuss the eLearning plans and state requirements.
- March 13, 2020 - Meeting with principals to discuss eLearning.
- March 16-20, 2020 - Meeting with all staff to discuss eLearning including an implementation overview, guidelines, and support.

Historical Context

In 2015, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) approved three districts to pilot eLearning days as a trial for potential expansion throughout the state. Then, in November 2018, ISBE issued a letter with new guidelines regarding the school day. The outcome of the letter allowed districts to begin using eLearning because the districts were able to define learning and the school day unilaterally. Recently, the challenge by the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) and Illinois Education Association (IEA) was successful in legislating the 5 hour school day, but the caveat is that districts will be able to utilize eLearning for the purposes of emergency days.

In May of 2019, the State Board of Education further refined the guidelines for emergency days indicating that they need to be made up on the day of the weather/emergency event. While the administration considered three different options for making up emergency days, the guidance from the State Board of Education makes the choice to exercise makeup days on the date of the event or at the end of the year the only option to exercise.

At this time, Community Unit School District 303 is proposing the below eLearning plan that, when approved, will be implemented when deemed necessary. Community Unit School District 303 will maintain the option to make up inclement weather/emergency days at the end of the year, and/or implement an eLearning day to make up the attendance day.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) requires districts to approve an eLearning plan per the statute set forth in Public Act 101-0012 of the 101st Illinois General Assembly. In order to move forward with an eLearning plan for emergency days, Community Unit School District 303 must approve eLearning days and submit the plan to the Kane County Regional Office for approval.

The adoption of an eLearning plan permits Community Unit School District 303 to utilize eLearning for up to 3 years and is a necessary step to implementing the formal plan for eLearning on emergency days. Currently, there is no plan to utilize eLearning days for any days other than emergency days. If this was ever considered for anything other than emergency circumstances, it would go through the normal calendar adoption procedures in the district and with the school board.

The eLearning Plan below outlines the manner in which administration will address the ISBE requirements, which are outlined in the attached [eLearning Program Verification Form \(PVF\)](#). The PVF is a stock form from ISBE and NCISC. Approving this form permits St. Charles District 303 schools to move forward with the eLearning Resolution for Emergency Days.

Request

The request is that the Kane County Regional Office of Education and ISBE approve the eLearning Verification Form to move the Community Unit School District 303 eLearning plan for emergency days forward.

Community Unit School District 303 eLearning Plan, 2019-2020

Rationale

The rationale for this request is that it will provide Community Unit School District 303 schools further flexibility in its learning environment and it will further codify the school year without adding emergency days to the end of the year.

Recommendation

The recommendation is that the Kane County Regional Office of Education approve the eLearning Verification Form for a period of up to three years.

Introduction

[Public Act 101-0012](#) permits local school districts to establish an eLearning plan to address student learning in a remote environment. Community Unit School District 303 will utilize eLearning as a part of the plan to utilize eLearning on emergency days. Since students in Community Unit School District 303 are familiar with digital learning experiences in the classroom, this enables our teachers to take educational experiences beyond the walls of the classroom, while still complying with statutory requirements.

[Due to the recent state legislation](#) and our current technology infrastructure, Community Unit School District 303 can meet the statutory stipulations to use eLearning days in a manner that permits students to use digital tools to access learning opportunities from remote locations. The approval of the eLearning Verification Form allows Community Unit School District 303 to move forward with the eLearning plan for emergency days.

Instruction, Learning, and Curricular Connections: Student learning activities and tasks will be aligned to the existing curriculum of Community Unit School District 303. Learning targets will align with the standards and skills of School Board approved curricula. Teachers will collaborate on their course and grade-level teams to develop activities/tasks aligned with the curriculum and current instructional unit. Suggested activities include formative assessment, student collaboration, and/or activities that provide an extension of learning. It is the expectation that the eLearning activities will be approximately the length of a class period on a 5-hour day.

Student & Staff Access and Connectivity: Student learning will be implemented utilizing a District supported Learning Management System (LMS) such as Google Classroom, Schoology, or Seesaw, and can be completed on any device, including a district-issued Chromebook, iPad, or a home device. Learning experiences may be non-digital in nature if that makes educational sense for the unit and/or grade-level. Teachers will be available to interact with their students

digitally during contractual time on the eLearning day, and students may also have the opportunity to engage with their peers via digital tools.

Student Attendance: Student attendance will be taken on eLearning days via the district approved methods.

IEP, 504 and EL Students: eLearning will be afforded to students with a focus on their identified needs. Many of the digital resources that we use to support instruction address the four domains of English language development: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They additionally include built-in accessibility features such as options to translate into a variety of languages or to have texts read-aloud to students. Materials will be provided in Spanish to students in the bilingual program in accordance with the district's language and content allocation. We are working alongside organizations at the local, state and national level in how to best support our students in the case of declared emergencies. We will be taking the lead from our state in how these decisions apply to IDEA. Ultimately, the IEP involves individual-based decisions. Our students will remain at the center of any decisions we make, recognizing individuals' needs will need to be acknowledged and addressed. If your child attends a school outside of D303, you should receive communication from them. If not, please contact the Director of Instructional Interventions.

Notice to Bargainings Unit: Discussions with the St. Charles Education Association (SCEA), St. Charles Educational Support Professionals (SCESP), and St. Charles Transportation & Maintenance (SCT&M) began in August 2019 related to forgoing eLearning; however, given the possibility of a prolonged school closure, discussion resumed in March 2020. At that time the eLearning plan was drafted by the Administration followed by a review with the SCEA, SCESP, and SCT&M.

Staff Professional Learning: Continual professional learning on technology use occurs throughout the year for all staff in Community Unit School District 303. Similarly, the staff understands how to use age-appropriate digital resources for student work and collaboration. As all staff have a role in supporting each other, staff within various roles such as Technology Integration Specialists, Instructional Support Coaches, Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs), interventionists, LRC Directors (Librarians), Reading and Math Specialists, Team Leaders, Lead Teachers, and district technology support will be available to support staff in the implementation of eLearning and on eLearning days.

Benefits of eLearning for Emergency Days:

- Provides uninterrupted learning for our students
- It supports educators with families while maintaining the long-term fidelity of course/class scope and sequence, in that, educators will have a reasonable amount of time to post assignments and are not expected to be available at all times, yet they can still provide meaningful educational experiences.
- Allows for the end of the school year to be predictable and constant as it regulates the number of emergency days.
- As structured, it allows educators to advance learning more effectively, given the ability to plan within the normal school year.
- Promotes flexible learning and operations in the digital age.
- Promotes learning beyond the school walls.

eLearning Structures & Rationale:

There are a number of different ways to implement eLearning within a school district. The proposal for Community Unit School District 303 seeks to offer a meaningful learning experience for all students that advances learning within each class/course. Students in the Early Childhood Program and Kindergarten will participate in eLearning, with information being shared to parents via Seesaw and/or email, and if needed, students may receive printed materials. These learning experiences will not require a device unless adequate notice is given in preparation for the emergency day. The eLearning day shall be made up on the day of the emergency day. This plan will maintain a truer end to the school year while ensuring that educational time is compensated for with fidelity.

The procedure for making up school after an emergency day will be to alert parents, students and staff that the emergency day is commencing and that assignments and/or activities will be posted by no later than 9:00 a.m. This will allow parents, students, and educators to make eLearning plans that advance their classes/courses. It allows for the process of developing and implementing lessons for the day to be collaborative, via educator devices, so that students have a higher degree of continuity.

It is important to note that attendance on the eLearning day will be taken and that students will be expected to complete the assigned work. Student attendance on the eLearning day will count as a regular attendance day for all students.

Communication will be a critical piece in implementing eLearning on emergency days. To begin with, the district will develop a communication plan prior to April 6, 2020 that introduces families to the concept of eLearning on emergency days, and provides some infrastructure to what this experience will look like for their children at different levels. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document will be developed to support parents, students and staff with the implementation of the final plan. Administrators and teachers will have support in implementing this plan, prior to any potential eLearning day. Finally, families can have access to supports and FAQs in advance of any eLearning day.

Proposed eLearning structures for General Education, Special Education/Related Services personnel, and classified personnel:

General Educator Expectations

Purpose: To define the expectations of an eLearning day for general education teachers so that they can adequately plan and implement lesson plans that align with the Community Unit School District 303 curricula.

Definition: If the eLearning option is exercised, the day shall be made up on the date of the emergency event.

Communication:

- It is expected that educators are notified of the emergency day per the usual District 303 communication protocols prior to the end of the school day on the day before the eLearning day is called, except in the case of extreme emergencies.
- Educators will post their learning experiences by no later than 9:00 a.m. on the eLearning day.

Learning Experiences

Expectations:

- Learning target(s) and experiences are posted by 9:00 a.m. on the eLearning day.
- Certified staff will respond in a timely manner during the normal work hours on the actual eLearning day.
- Students shall have a reasonable amount of time to complete the learning experience.

Expectations by level of instruction:

- Grades 6-12: every class shall have a reasonable plan posted.
- Elementary: Learning experiences from 2 core subject areas shall be developed; and each special should post an experience from which the students can choose. Elementary students will complete an experience in 2 core subject areas and 2 specials of their choice.
- Must be authentic, meaningful learning directly connected to the curriculum.
- Must have the ability to demonstrate or provide evidence that learning occurred.
- A product is not required for evidence of learning to occur, nor for attendance purposes.

Special Educator Expectations

General IEP Procedures:

1. The IEP team must determine whether and what level of eLearning supports will provide an individual student a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
2. The IEP team should discuss these plans at the annual review each year. The provision of special education and related services on eLearning days should be pre-established in the IEP.
3. The Department of Instructional Interventions is working to create a form that will be added to students' IEPs delineating the discussion surrounding plans for individual students along with the actual plans.

District Responsibilities:

1. If the eLearning day option is exercised, it is the District's responsibility to make sure the students and parents can access the eLearning activities/assignments and understand the expectations on a date prior to the actual eLearning day.
2. Provide special training for parents and students. They will likely need special training days outside of the actual work day to learn about the eLearning days.
3. It is also the District's responsibility to ensure that students have the relevant assistive technology available when an eLearning day is implemented.

Special Education Teacher/Student Services Staff Responsibilities:

A teacher should create activities/assignments with individual students in mind. These activities/assignments may include PDFs, podcasts, presentations, multimedia, Google Docs, and any combination of the above.

If the student typically receives intensive support throughout the school day or one-on-one adult support, the same level of support should be available through direct and indirect special education services, including telephone contact, email, or Google docs. Our plan is to ask for individuals to be available on eLearning days, via email, to answer student and parent questions regarding the modules.

Related Service Responsibilities:

Related services providers, should operate as consultants when the teachers are putting together the modules for students who receive student services. Although the services may not be replicated through an online platform, there should be plans for the parents to implement some of the services at home under the guidance of the related service provider. If the student does not have access to the related service over multiple days due to inclement weather, or other emergency closing, the students team will convene to determine compensatory services upon return to school.

Non-Certified Staff Expectations

Purpose: To define the expectations of a eLearning day for non-certified personnel so that they can adequately plan and make proper use of their work time and professional development within the Community Unit School District 303 framework.

Definition: If the eLearning option is exercised, the day shall be made up on the date of the emergency event, and it will count as a day of work for non-certified personnel. There are many different and essential roles that non-certified personnel serve within Community Unit School District 303, and depending on the role, the experience will be differentiated to better meet the needs of these employees.

Work Plan(s): There will be different expectations for non-certified employees depending on the nature and timing of their work. It is important that supervisors communicate the expectations on these days clearly to their employees. The supervisor's expectations will be the most important piece in defining the workday for non-certified D303 employees. In general, employees will have three different plans for work on these days, and again, the supervisors will communicate and approve work plans on the actual eLearning day. The three general work plans for eLearning days are as follows:

1. Employees who are required to be on site due to maintenance, technology, and potential snow removal will have timing and expectations communicated to them via normal channels before and on the date of the emergency event. Standard operating procedures will remain in place for this group of employees.
2. Employees who require student presence (such as classroom associates) will either have clearly defined responsibilities during the work day, as prescribed by the students' IEPs, or they may have a professional development opportunity.
3. Employees that can effectively work from home on their traditional tasks will have the option to exercise this on a eLearning day, and it will only be pending District approval and agreement from the SCESP.