

TEA

**STRONG
START**

2020-21

**Planning for
Back to School:
Middle School
Grades
Synchronous
Learning**



Objectives



Overview of **school-level model design considerations**



Provide guidance to plan for a **Middle School Synchronous Learning**

The situation surrounding COVID-19 is dynamic and rapidly evolving, on a daily basis. This document is not and is not intended to: (i) constitute medical or safety advice, nor be a substitute for the same; nor (ii) be seen as a formal endorsement or recommendation of a particular response. As such you are advised to make your own assessment as to the appropriate course of action to take, using this document as guidance. Please carefully consider local laws and guidance in your area, particularly the most recent advice issued by your local (and national) health authorities, before making any decision.



The purpose of this document is

- To be a launch pad for the design of school models
- It is most useful to use as you consider student schedules, staff deployment, academic delivery, curriculum, staff deployment, family engagement, and student experience decisions for this specific type of school model



This document aims to support Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in their design of the ‘best-fit’ school models for their community in SY20-21



This school model is a remote model

On-campus

Student plans to participate in on-campus instruction 100% of the time

Remote

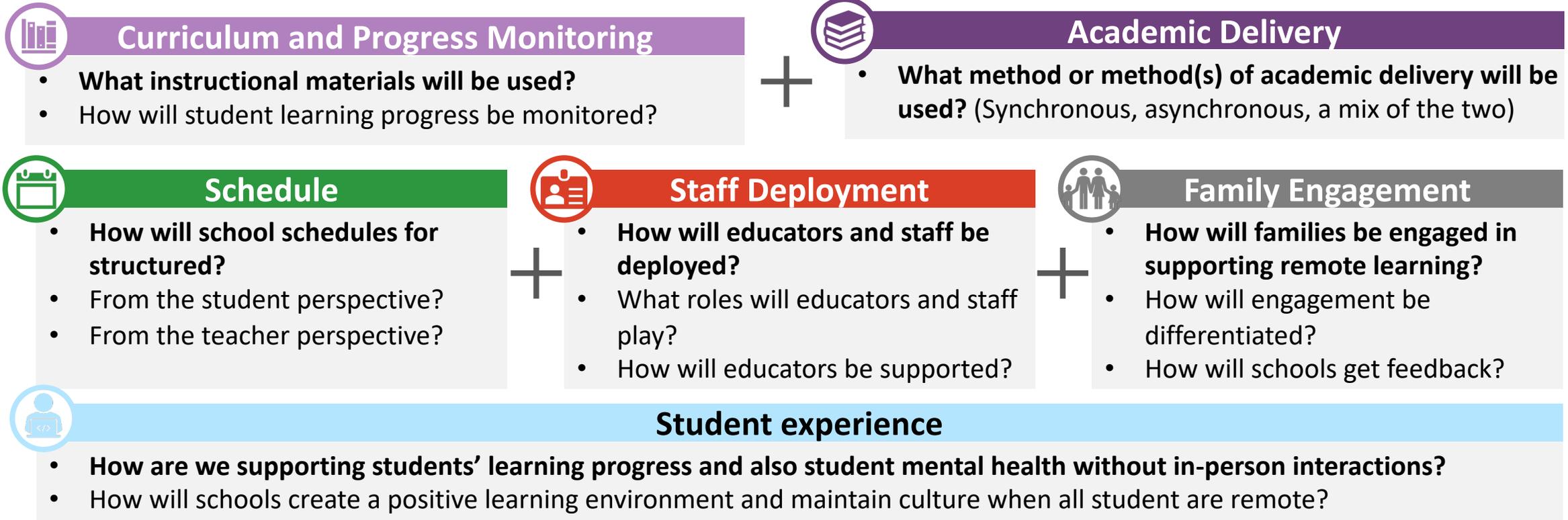
Student plans to participate in remote learning 100% of the time

Hybrid

Student plans to participate in an intentionally designed mix of on-campus and remote learning

School model dimensions

A school model has multiple dimensions, each of which impact the student experience. **Critical to all remote models is robust, equitable access to technology.**



This model solves for

- Family desires to have students remain fully remote
- Staffing shortages or constraints
- LEA aims to deliver mostly synchronous instruction, complemented by asynchronous coursework

This model qualifies for

- On remote instruction days students are eligible for **Method A synchronous funding**. This requires submitting an attestation to TEA
- *See more detail at the [TEA SY20-21 Attendance and Enrollment FAQ](#) (linked here)*



Objectives



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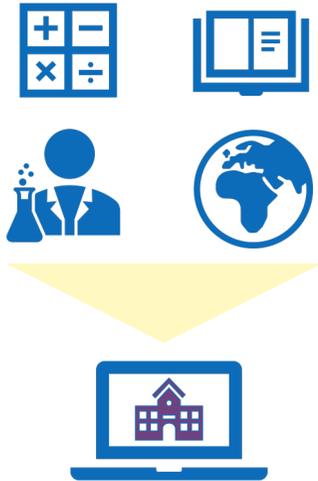
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Middle School Synchronous

This model supports a district aiming to:

Deliver a consistent synchronous schedule of instruction in all core content areas for students by having teacher teams serve specific cohorts of students within each grade level

Synchronous



Students receive synchronous daily core instruction

Asynchronous



Academic Interventions



Electives



Practice work

Students take electives, complete practice work and adaptive interventions asynchronously

Dimensions

Curriculum & Progress Monitoring

- Adapted existing curriculum or adopt new curriculum designed for remote setting
- Curriculum includes all subject areas, supplemented with high-quality, vetted online resources and intervention programs

Academic Delivery

- Synchronous instruction for most classes and advising
- Asynchronous for select classes
- Eligible funding methods: Method A, Synchronous

Student Schedule

- Regular school hours dedicated to primarily synchronous core instruction
- Afterschool used for asynchronous work and adaptive intervention

Staff Deployment

- Staff work in teams to serve cohorts of students
- Teams cover the core content areas and include additional staff as student advisors

Family Engagement

- Student advisors serve as the primary contact for families
- Families view student progress in Learning Management System (LMS)

Student experience

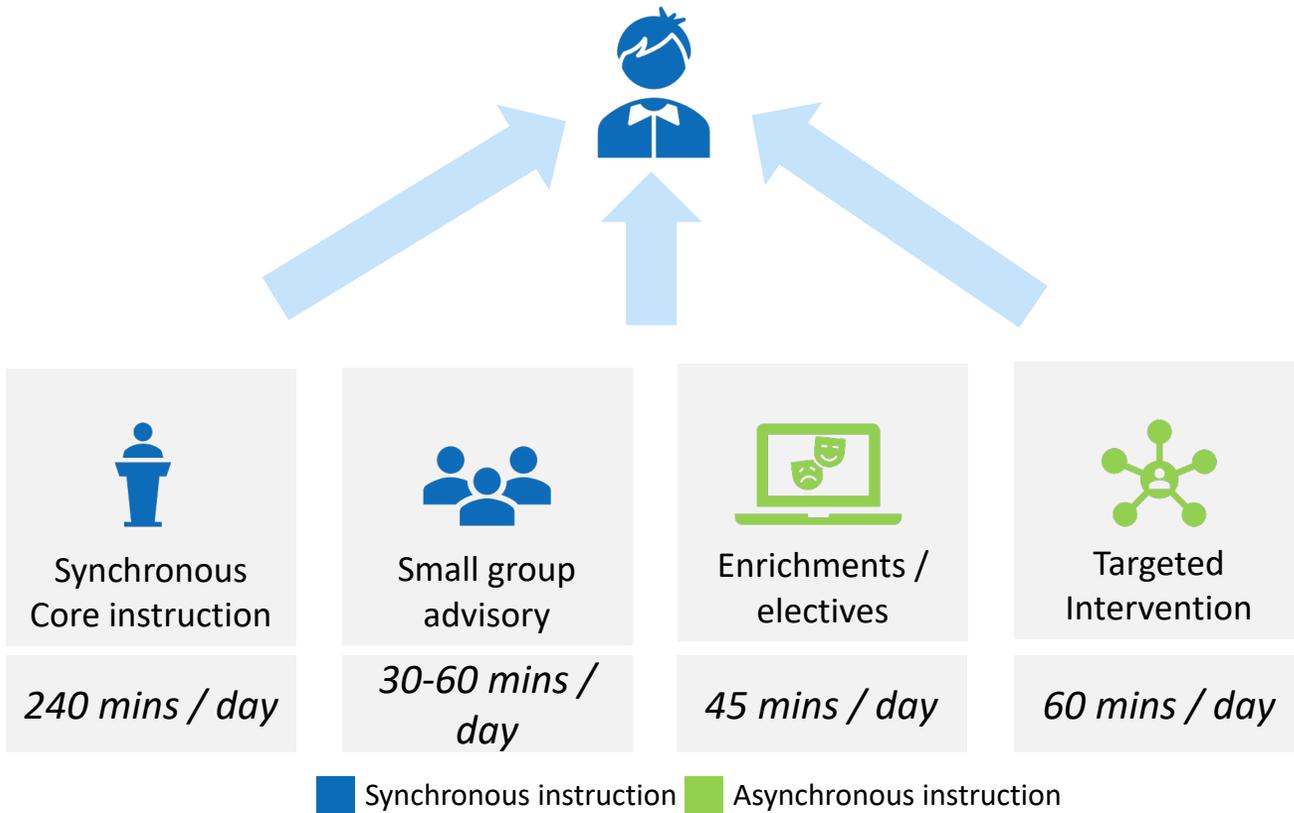
- Students form strong bonds in their homerooms and with their advisories
- Families feel connected to the school through regular, predictable communication



Middle School Synchronous



Student Experience



- Students have a consistent daily academic schedule, receiving core subject instruction synchronously via a team of grade-level content instructors
- Every student is part of a small advisory group that meets every morning to check in as a community. The staff member leading that group serves as the student's advisor, responsible for their progress and providing the student and family feedback
- Students will complete elective and enrichment courses asynchronously daily
- As part of their afterschool work, students use adaptive computer-based math and English intervention programs

Middle School Synchronous



Student Schedule

Illustrative daily schedule for 6th grade students

Time	HR 1	HR 2	HR 3	HR 4
:30 min	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory
:30 min	Math	History	Science	RLA
:60 min	Reading/ Language Arts (RLA)	Math	History	Science
:15 min	Morning break			
:60 min	Science	RLA	Math	History
:30 min	Lunch			
:60 min	History	Science	RLA	Math
:10 min	Stretch break			
:45 min	Electives			
:6 min	Small group / 1:1			
After school	After school intervention			

Synchronous instruction
 Asynchronous instruction

- Every day all students receive **240 min of core synchronous instruction**, plus **60 min of synchronous advisory** and access to **synchronous small group / 1:1 support** as needed
- Students are divided into cohorts made up of four homerooms (HR 1, 2, 3, and 4) for the number of teachers on each team
- Each cohort's schedule rotates through the **same team of core content teachers**, all of whom also help serve as advisors for students within the cohort
- Student **schedules are the same for the entire HR**, allowing for class cohesion and consistency in the virtual setting
- Daily Advisory Check-ins** are focused on wellbeing and mental health
- Asynchronous daily electives** allow students to pursue their individual interests

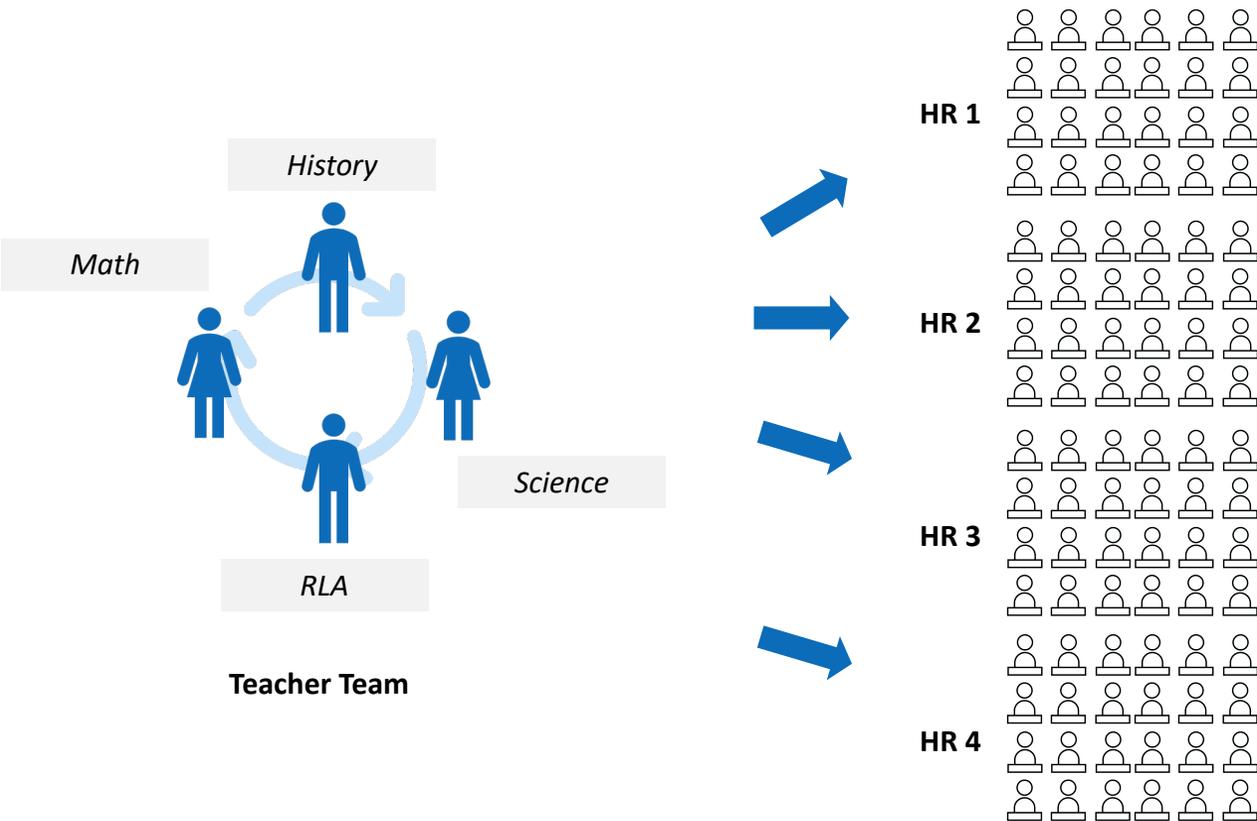


Middle School Synchronous



Staff Deployment (1/2)

Teacher Team Staffing



- Staff members are grouped in teams which serve the same cohort of students, split into four homerooms
 - Teams include one of each core instructional staff (RLA, Math, Science and History)
 - Non-core staff (e.g. music, PE, art, counselor) act separately from the core staff and work with multiple teaching teams
- All staff members serve as advisors, meeting daily with a small group of students; strongest remote learning teachers deliver instruction where possible

- Teachers need to ensure that within 60 minute blocks, it is appropriate for students to engage in 3-4 different but related activities that may include:
 - Introduction or development of new content
 - Independent practice/application or reading
 - Review or fluency
 - Progress check



Middle School Synchronous



Staff Deployment and Roles (2/2)

Illustrative daily schedule for middle school teacher team

Time	Math Teacher	RLA Teacher	Science Teacher	History Teacher
:30 min	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory
:60 min	HR 1	HR 4	HR 3	HR 2
:60 min	HR 2	HR 1	HR 4	HR 3
:15 min	Morning break			
:60 min	HR 3	HR 2	HR 1	HR 4
:30 min	Lunch			
:60 min	HR 4	HR 3	HR 2	HR 1
:45 min	PLC / Conference (during students' asynchronous elective time)			
:60 min	Small group / 1:1 / Afterschool			

 Time with students

PLC / Conference

- Teachers have ~45 mins planning period per day; can be used for PLC meetings, conferences, or independent planning

Teacher team meetings

- Teachers on the same team meet twice weekly to discuss individual students in their HRs, particularly to identify any who may need additional support academically, emotionally, and/or socially

Advisory / progress monitoring

- All teachers serve as advisors for a small group of students whom they teach, checking in with these students daily, monitoring their overall progress

Office hours

- Teacher teams rotate office hours for students during small group / 1:1 dedicated time



Middle School Synchronous

■ Synchronous instruction
■ Asynchronous instruction



Academic Delivery

Synchronous



Core Instruction



Advisory



Academic Support

Asynchronous



Academic Practice



Electives



Targeted Intervention

■ Synchronous instruction ■ Asynchronous instruction

Synchronous activities:

- Students receive **synchronous instruction for 4 core classes / day**
 - Students log on to attend live classes at home
 - 240 minutes / day for ADA approval
- Students also receive **synchronous daily advisory** in smaller group virtual setting, and can access 1-1 academic support via office hours

Asynchronous activities:

- Students attend **electives at a set time** in their schedule, but the classes are taught **asynchronously**
- Targeted computer-based interventions and homework are accessed **asynchronously** after school hours



Middle School Synchronous



Curriculum and Progress Monitoring

Adapted/Adopted Curriculum specific to Remote



Fit to local
needs



Fully
Customizable



Dedicated
Educator PD

Progress monitoring



Formative
Assessments



One-on-one
Sessions



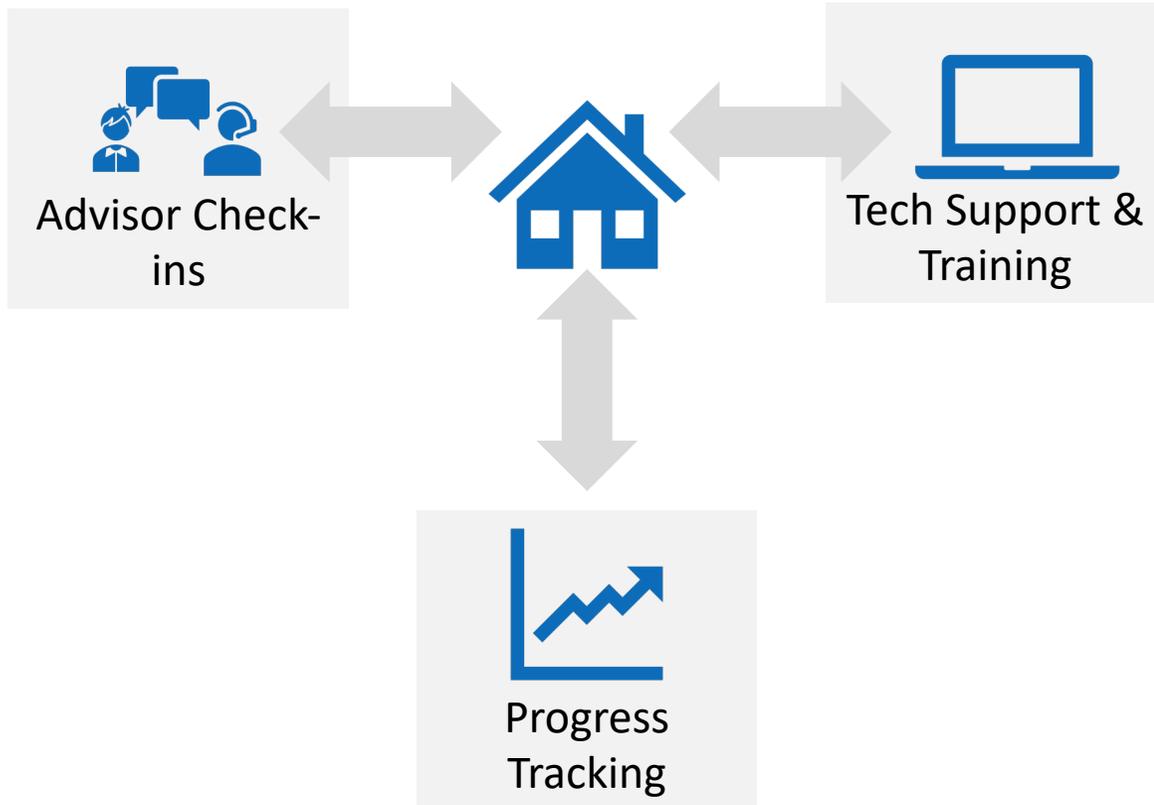
Team meetings

- District **adapts existing curriculum for remote learning** or the district **adopts a new curriculum specific to a remote learning environment** for all instructional material
- School uses **formative, interim and unit assessments, weekly quizzes, and exit tickets** regularly to monitor progress
- Team meetings are used to **reflect on student outcomes** and adjust scopes and sequences as necessary
- Students receive **weekly feedback** on assignments and have regular progress check-ins with their advisory group
- Dedicated **educator professional development (PD)** will take place to support the implementation and execution of curriculum that the school has adapted

Middle School Synchronous



Family Engagement



- Student advisors are the primary point of contact for families
 - Advisors make bi-weekly (every two weeks) calls to families to provide holistic updates on student progress
- Families can track academic progress and attendance via an LMS portal that staff update daily for attendance, and at least weekly for academic progress
- Families receive tutorials and login information for student intervention programs in order to facilitate student support

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