Remote Learning Plan: Continuing our learning and services in a fully remote environment

Given the possibility that communities may experience spikes in COVID-19 cases at any point during the school year, which may prompt short or long-term school closures, our Questar III BOCES has developed a remote learning model and schedule that takes this into consideration. Our plan for student learning is built upon each students' strengths, interests, and needs.

Our goal is for student instruction and service delivery schedules to remain largely the same to avoid conflicts especially for courses offering synchronous (distance learning that happens in real-time) lessons. Teachers will work with students to create consistent daily schedules to access and participate in asynchronous instruction. To the greatest extent possible, students will be assigned to classroom groups that are consistent and are within the appropriate staff to student ratio.

In certain instances where self-contained cohorts are not possible, the introduction of additional classroom personnel will be minimized. These groups will remain for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Understanding that there are challenges with remote instruction that are particular to certain school communities as well as individual students, we will ensure teachers have daily contact with students in some format in order to support both their academic needs and social emotional well-being. Similar to our implemented plan during the 2019-2020 school year, staff will keep a log to track these interactions regardless of the instructional setting.

Our Continued Vision and Guiding Principles

During these uncertain times we appreciate your continued feedback and support as we navigate health guidelines, instructional goals, and the social and emotional well-being of the entire Questar III community. As the situation develops we pledge to stay committed to our vision and guiding principles:

- We will be transparent in our communication.
- We will share what we know and what we do not know.
- We will be clear about what we can control and what is outside of our control.
- We will be intentional about matters of equity and begin by addressing the needs of our most vulnerable populations.
- We will center decisions on what is best for all students, families, and educators, especially those most impacted by educational inequalities and COVID-19.
Technology and Connectivity

Access to technology is essential for the successful roll-out of this plan. Questar III BOCES is committed to ongoing planning and will implement and/or expand the use of technologies to ensure equitable access for staff and students. Essential to Remote Instruction is internet access and device availability. Questar III has initiated the following plan, which is mindful of student and staff home access to reliable internet and computers.

1. Questar III BOCES, in conjunction with our component districts, will ensure that all students have access to a tablet/laptop. A limited number of HotSpots are also available for deployment to those students who do not have internet service in their home.

2. Questar III BOCES will maintain, manage, and support equipment and other assets or resources by (1) documenting which students, families, and staff have organization assets in their possession, (2) procuring, managing, and/or maintaining hardware, software, licenses, learning management systems, etc. that support and improve virtual instruction and student engagement, (3) putting in place a technology “Helpdesk” system for parents, students, and teachers to report technical issues that affect remote learning.

3. Protocols for (1) the care of Questar III equipment, (2) picking up or returning equipment, (3) accessing technical assistance will be communicated to teachers and families according to the guidelines described in the “Communications” section of our Reopening Plan.

4. Questar III will provide resources and virtual workshops that are specific to family access to remote and blended learning. This may include how to navigate the emerging technologies or commonly used educational platforms (i.e. Google Classroom tools, SeeSaw, Zoom, etc.).

5. Questar III BOCES will provide all students with access to learning materials and resources in multiple formats, whenever possible. In the event students do not have sufficient access to devices and/or high-speed internet, the organization will provide the students with alternate methods to access materials and instruction.

General Guidelines

I. Instructional Delivery (K-12)

Remote Instruction Model

To prepare a seamless transition between models, Questar III administrators and staff identified the following best-practices and lessons learned to improve outcomes for remote instruction:

- Adapt lesson delivery from providing direct instruction (i.e. direct lecture by teacher) to more of a student-directed (i.e. student led discussion) instructional approach.
- Provide synchronous learning opportunities (distance learning that happens in real-time) with opportunities for asynchronous learning as much as possible; record lessons to provide to students who may not have access in real time.
- Continue the use of Google Classroom and/or SeeSaw and look at the use of additional platforms/extensions to improve digital instruction: breakout rooms (Zoom or Google Meet), conversation, Poll Everywhere, etc.
Set up clear expectations for students - schedule (start and end times for each class), live conferencing with teachers, amount of work, required work, required classes, communication, etc. (explicit details of what is expected).

Provide individualized online counseling, tutoring, skills classes, and IEP services.

Weekly staff meetings will include professional development on digital success, techniques, case management, student support, etc.

Provide professional development and training for parents/guardians on use of Google Classroom and SchoolTool. Parents/guardians will be provided with their child’s account info as well as the ability to sign-up for daily parent/guardian summaries.

Divide school into small social-emotional support/advisory groups - make sure students are supported.

Provide support that may include home visits for students who are absent during distance learning (due to possible social-emotional issues) to discuss needs with families - to increase engagement; more at home intervention and counseling; use of TAs to structure and engage students; and tutoring.

Reduce language barriers by having bilingual staff available for student and parent phone calls, if needed.

II. Grades 7–12: Units of Study

The New York State Education Department regulations outline specific time/unit of study requirements for various subject areas. The unit of study definition (180 minutes per week or the equivalent) provides a framework for the instructional entitlement for our students in these grades. However, it is also noted that instructional experiences are not defined solely as a student’s time spent in front of a teacher or in front of a screen, but time engaged in standards-based learning under the guidance and direction of a teacher.

These experiences might include, but are not limited to: completing online modules or tasks; viewing instructional videos; responding to posts or instructor questions; engaging with other class participants in an online or phone discussion; conducting research; doing projects; or meeting with an instructor face-to-face, via an online platform or by phone. In order for this flexibility to be available to students, Questar III must ensure that the learning is supported, and students have access to assistance from their teacher when they need it.

Remote learning opportunities for secondary students will include a greater emphasis on synchronous instruction, with teachers finding ways to provide live instruction and lessons to students. While the recording of live lessons is still essential for students unable to attend at a scheduled time, teachers will ensure that their students are directly engaged with them and their class peers in experiential learning on a regular basis.

A. Science Laboratory Requirements

Per Commissioner’s Regulations, courses that culminate in a Regents examination in science must include 1,200 minutes of laboratory experiences. Due to the possibility of a hybrid or fully remote model of instruction as a result of COVID-19, the 1,200-minute lab requirement can be met through hands-on laboratory experiences, virtual laboratory experiences, or a combination of virtual and hands-on laboratory experiences coupled with satisfactory lab reports for the 2020-21 school year.

Laboratory experiences will be aligned to each science course. Students will be offered laboratory experiences selected from vetted, acceptable virtual or hands on options adjusted to the mode of instructional delivery allowing for the completion of the required lab component for courses that culminate in a Regents exam.
B. Visual and Performing Arts

Due to the hands-on nature of Arts instruction, additional considerations have been given to both the management of Arts instructional spaces, as well as the development of instructional methods to teach the Arts via the remote models.

**Remote Instructional Model**

- Students will complete individualized projects that can connect and reinforce in-person classroom learning.
- Students assignments, feedback, and progress/success will be tracked.
- Students will be provided with materials to complete art projects while receiving remote instruction.
- Students will be given opportunities to collaborate on specific arts projects by accessing resources on google meets or zoom breakout rooms.
- Students will use Individualized rubrics when completing an art project remotely.
- Students will work with the instructor to develop the methods to complete the project while remote.

Grading practices will follow a framework designed to provide direct feedback regarding students’ mastery of course content.

Queslar III will:

- prepare students with the skills and knowledge they will need when working remotely (e.g., online platforms, tools, available resources, etc.).
- Use digital platforms and other methodologies that will enable students to collaborate on group projects even if at home.
- Focus on personalized learning.
- Utilize resources such as digital field trips and online arts collections.

C. Physical Education

Queslar III’s school remote learning plan will include students participating in physical activity under the direction and supervision of a certified physical education teacher.

- Students can share and connect with one another through daily on line connections using platforms such as Google Classroom and SeeSaw. Recorded lessons will be made available to students.
- Special events or activities can be done remotely (e.g., Family Hike, At-Home Family Field Day, Yard Work).
- Videos or images demonstrating activities or skills can be provided.

**School Nurses**

- School Nurses will consult with classroom teachers and assist them in preparing lessons that would be designed to promote a healthy lifestyle.
Social Workers, Psychologists, School Counselors, and Crisis Intervention Workers

- Social Workers, Psychologists, School Counselors and Crisis Intervention Workers will be available during school day hours to provide social-emotional support activities and be available for conferencing.
- Mental health tips will be prepared and shared with students and parents on a regular basis for the duration of the 2020-2021 school year.

Collaboration: Preparing, delivering, and managing remote instruction learning is a complex and difficult endeavor. The work our collaborative teams do is essential for the development of meaningful remote instruction learning. Special Education as well as Integrated Content teachers will continue to work collaboratively with the general education teachers. This collaboration will assure that the instructional resources include any necessary accommodations, modifications, or assistive technology needs for our students with disabilities.

Communication with Families

- **Responding to Emails:** Parents/Guardians can email staff, who will provide a response to emails (or other contact methods) within 24-48 hours on established school days.
- **Video Conferencing:** Individual video conferencing with students and their families may be used if permissible to help teachers assess student needs.
- **How often?**
  - Teachers will provide virtual “connecting” time with students daily.
  - Teachers will communicate with families on a weekly basis. This communication can be done through Google Classroom, email, etc.
  - Learning expectations and due dates should be clearly communicated on a daily or weekly basis.

Student Attendance

Daily attendance and engagement will be required and will be entered into SchoolTool. Students in remote instruction will participate in instructional activities on a daily basis. Daily attendance in a remote environment is connected to this participation.

Student Engagement: Student engagement is essential for remote instruction learning to be successful. Teachers will regularly monitor student engagement in remote instruction learning activities. Student engagement is not measured solely by their attendance. Examples of successful student engagement can take the following forms:

- Students are actively asking and answering questions
- Students are taking notes or completing graphic organizers during instruction
- Students are participating in activities
- Assignments are being completed to a satisfactory level
- Students are interacting and collaborating with other students either in breakout rooms or during whole class instruction
- Student interaction could include participation in instructional activities and the completion of an assignment.

If students are not engaged: The building level teams will evaluate the situation and develop a multitiered approach to address student’s needs including the following:
Teachers will encourage student re-engagement by utilizing e-mail, phone calls, and/or schedule parent conferences to provide assistance and resources.

School support team will contact families. Members of this team will include (social workers, school psychologist, school counselor, school nurses etc.) to offer assistance in meeting expectations or to refer the family to possible community support.

Program administrators will contact families to review remote learning expectations and assist families in removing barriers to student success.

The program principal will contact the home district principal and/or CSE Directors.

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**CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

**K-12 & CTE**

**Essential Standards and Curriculum Development:** Because comprehensive coverage of all standards is even more difficult in a remote instruction environment, deliberately targeting priority standards and delivering an attainable curriculum becomes paramount for the success of students.

- **Assessment and Intervention:** Teachers will routinely assess student learning and provide targeted interventions to address learning gaps.
- **Enrichment:** Teachers can explore virtual field trip opportunities as well as inviting guest speakers to present remotely to classes to provide enrichment opportunities in a digital setting.

**Learning Management Platform:** A Learning Management Platform is meant to help teachers facilitate meaningful instruction, intervention, assessment, grading, discussion, collaboration, and relationship building. Google Classroom and SeeSaw will be used by all Questar III educators during the 2020-2021 school year.

- **Why Google Classroom/SeeSaw?** Using these platforms significantly simplifies the educational experience for students and families.
- **Parent/Family Access to Google Classroom:** Parents are expected to monitor their child’s Google Classroom and/or SeeSaw accounts on a regular basis. Questar III will provide Google classroom and SeeSaw training for parents/guardians throughout the school year.
- **Grades:** SchoolTool will remain the official system for recording grades and will be updated weekly.

**Synchronous and Asynchronous Instruction**

Students participating in remote learning will use both Synchronous and Asynchronous Instructional models (see graphic below). Students will be grouped as a class cohort. The cohort may include a combination of in-person and remote students, or may only include remote students. To the greatest extent possible, class schedules will remain largely the same whether instruction is in-person or remote so that students do not encounter scheduling conflicts. Consideration has been given to prioritize project based learning and integrate virtual lab experiences when appropriate. All instruction will continue to be aligned to the New York State Learning Standards.
Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning: Remote instruction learning will be synchronous and asynchronous, teachers will provide opportunities for regular face to face interactions with students. Personal interaction contributes to student well-being and supports learning.

- **Synchronous learning** (done at a set schedule; such as a video conference) is a valuable teaching method in a remote instruction setting.
  - **Scheduling:** When teachers lecture or provide direct instruction, that instruction will be scheduled in advance, and recorded when possible to allow for maximum student access. Live direct instruction will happen during school hours and in conjunction with schedules developed by individual schools.
  - **Frequency:** Teachers will aim to provide virtual face-to-face interactions with students daily.
  - **Teacher Availability:** Teachers will be available during specific school hours throughout the week to help students process learning delivered during direct instruction time. These times will be established by the teachers and communicated with the student and parents.
  - **Small Group Work:** Small group instruction is encouraged. Students value interaction with their peers and teacher. These interactions will take place both on Google Meets and Zoom breakout rooms.
- **Asynchronous learning** (students learn at different times) will also be used during times of remote instruction, and teachers will be involved in the learning process.
  - **Student Feedback and Assignment Deadlines:** Regular feedback is crucial if learning is primarily asynchronous. Feedback should be given weekly.
- Teachers of college courses should follow instructions they receive from the college/university.

### GRADING

**K-12 & CTE**

Given the flexible instructional models, Questar III BOCES’ grading policies will be applicable to each model and will remain clear and transparent to students, parents, and guardians. The grading practices for remote instruction will mirror those used during in-person instruction.
K-12 Instructional Resources

- **Google Classroom Tutorial**
- **Questar III SLS Resources For remote instruction Learning** This Smore offers several options for digital learning.
- **Questar III Grade Leveled Shared Resources** This Google folder set contains many resources for educators, organized by content and grade level.
- **Essential Curriculum Resource** Resource for K-12 educators to support them with remote learning. This site houses high-quality educational resources and lessons mapped to priority curriculum standards for K-8 math and ELA, middle school science and social studies, and Regents courses.

- **Digital Tools**
- **Career and Technical Education Teacher Resources**
- **Educator Resources**

- **CTE Learn**
- **CTE Resources** Hands on resources for our CTE students and teachers can be found here.