TEA

STRONG START 2020-21

Planning for Back to School: On-campus Middle School Model with Blended Learning

Objectives

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

Provide guidance to plan for **an on-campus middle school model with blended 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 an on-campus middle school model with blended learning
- 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

Note: Local (and national) health guidance should be prioritized relative to any of the examples included

This school model is an on-campus school model

On-campus	Remote	Hybrid
Student plans to participate in on-campus instruction 100% of the time	Student plans to participate in remote learning 100% of the time	Student plans to participate in an intentionally designed mix of on-campus and remote learning

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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.**

Curriculum and Progress Monitoring

- **What instructional materials will be used?**
- How will student learning progress be monitored?

Academic Delivery

- **What method or method(s) of academic delivery will be used?** (Synchronous, asynchronous, a mix of the two)

Schedule

- **How will school schedules for structured?**
- From the student perspective?
- From the teacher perspective?

Staff Deployment

- **How will educators and staff be deployed?**
- What roles will educators and staff play?
- How will educators be supported?

Family Engagement

- **How will families be engaged in supporting remote learning?**
- How will engagement be differentiated?
- How will schools get feedback?

Student experience

- **How are we supporting students' learning progress and also student mental health without in-person interactions?**
- How will schools create a positive learning environment and maintain culture when all student are remote?

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Blended learning, as an on-campus approach, offers flexibility

Benefits of blended learning approaches

- **Individualize instruction** to accommodate for different degrees of COVID slide and different learning paths that are necessary as a result
- Deliver a **consistent instructional experience** in situations where students are mixed between at-home and on-campus learning
- Enables greater **staffing efficiency** where personnel are reduced, either due to spending cuts or staff staying home for health reasons
- Achieves greater **social distancing** in classrooms

Note: Local (and national) health guidance should be prioritized relative to any of the examples included

This model solves for

- Family desires for students to return fully on-campus
- Emphasis on accelerating learning to account for learning losses in SY19-20
  - Utilizes blended learning which allows students to receive both face-to-face instruction by teachers and leverage technology for adaptive and more personalized instruction
- Foster deeper connections between students and teachers

Note: Local (and national) health guidance should be prioritized relative to any of the examples included

This model qualifies for

- Traditional Average Daily Attendance (ADA) funding – submit attendance as per usual
- *Note: For families / students that participate in remote funding, you will need to submit Method A or B funding. See more detail at the TEA SY20-21 Attendance and Enrollment FAQ (linked here)*

A note on space use

- Schools anticipating reduced levels of on-campus attendance may consider actions to increase social distancing such as:
  - Dedicating a wing or a floor to specific classes of students, and identifying a designated entrance / exit door for these students
  - Creating smaller classes or pods of students that remain together throughout the day
  - Creating greater space between desks in classrooms
  - Staggering lunch periods or reducing number of students who dine in the cafeteria
  - Staggering recess and/or playground use
- This list is not exhaustive, but may provide a starting point for school space use and planning

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Objectives

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

Provide guidance to plan for **an on-campus middle school model with blended learning**

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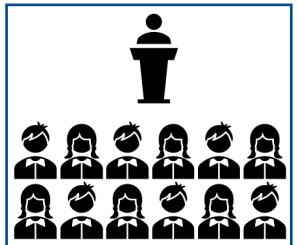
On-campus middle school model: Overview

This model supports a district aiming to: Accelerate learning to account for losses from the COVID-19 slide, while creating an individualized yet consistent experience for learners in all settings

Learning environment



Direct smaller instruction for block RLA/history and math/science

Learning labs for self-paced math and RLA instruction

All students are on-campus

Academics

Direct teacher-led instruction

Online, technology-led instruction

Blended learning combines the power and heart of **direct instruction** with the real-time capabilities of **software** to meet the needs of all students in a sustainable and scalable way

Review TEA public health planning guidance and consider which mitigation steps may make sense for your local context

Dimensions

Curriculum & Progress Monitoring

- Existing district-wide adopted curriculum **adapted for blended-learning** or **new district adopted curriculum** designed for blended-learning
- **Technology platform** and **formative assessments** inform students' **personalized learning plans**

Academic Delivery

- Students engage in **blended learning** in which they receive **both face-to-face instruction by teachers** and leverage **technology** for more personalized instruction
- **Eligible funding methods:** Traditional ADA

Student Schedule

- Students receive **270 minutes of direct instruction**
- Students spend **~90 minutes engaged in online learning** for math/RLA daily

Staff Deployment

- Teachers are deployed based on **subject and qualification**
- Teachers may have **multiple roles**, i.e. direct instruction, small group support, content creation, lab supervisor

Family Engagement

- Families receive **training** on blended learning, **back-to-school nights**, and weekly **progress reports**
- Families **provide feedback** via **quarterly surveys**

Student experience

- Students receive daily on-campus instruction
- Daily homeroom includes wellness practices and life skills such as yoga and speaking
- Students can take two electives ranging from computer science to art

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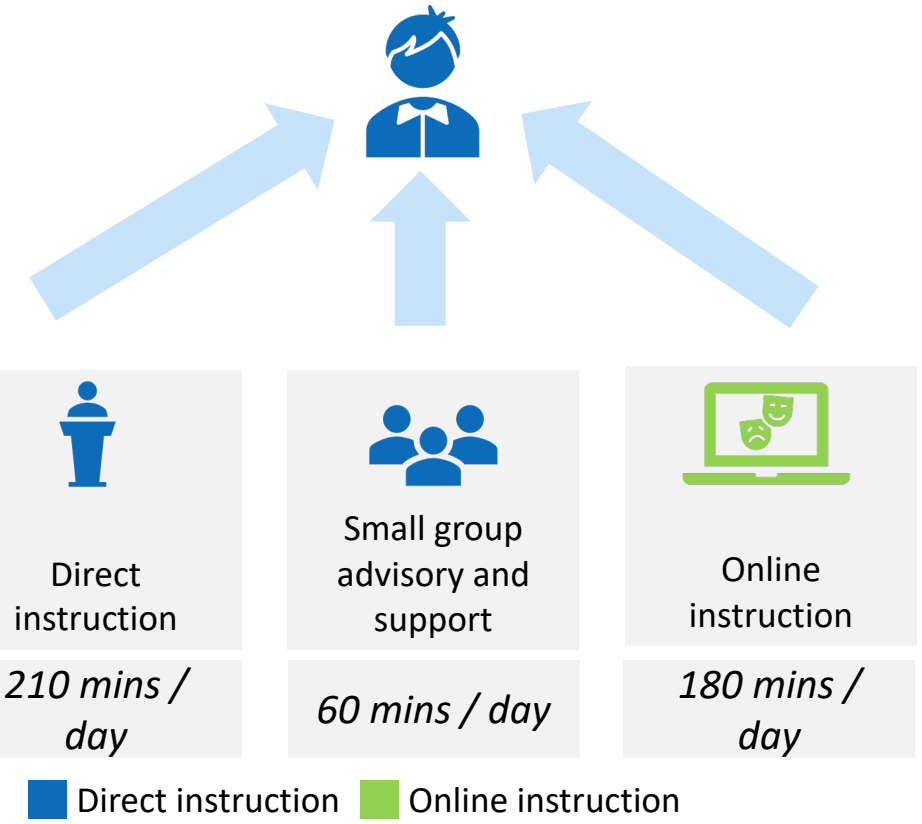
On-campus middle school model

Student Experience



- All students are **on-campus every day**, unless families choose otherwise
  - Students rotate between classes, as per traditional middle schools
  - Block periods aim to keep student groups together
- Students engage in **blended-learning** for math and RLA
  - Students receive a combination of teacher-led instruction and learning utilizing technology
  - This allows for increased personalized learning for students, enabling them to progress at their own pace and receive more targeted interventions
  - Additionally, this better prepares students for a transition to remote learning, should this be needed due to dynamic local health conditions
- Students have the same teacher for math/science and RLA/history

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On-campus middle school model

Student Schedule

Illustrative student schedule

Time	Subject	Learning method
:30 min	Homeroom advisory with well-being	Direct instruction
:05 min	Passing period	
:45 min	RLA & history block	Blend of direct instruction and online practice
:05 min		
:45 min		
:05 min	Passing period	
:45 min	RLA lab	Online instruction
:05 min	Passing period	
:45 min	Small group support	Direct instruction
:30 min	Lunch	
:45 min	Math & science block	Blend of direct instruction and online practice
:05 min		
:45 min		
:05 min	Passing period	
:45 min	Math lab	Online instruction
:05 min	Passing period	
:45 min	Elective	Direct instruction

Direct instruction Online instruction

- Students start their day in a **homeroom advisory** with a focus on mental health, wellbeing and life skills such as yoga, meditation, public speaking, etc.
- Students receive **210 minutes of direct instruction daily across all subject areas**, plus an additional 30 minutes of homeroom
- Reading / Language Arts (RLA)/history and math/science direct instruction are blocked with the same teacher
- Students participate in **180 minutes of online instruction daily for math and RLA**
- There is a **5 minute break** between each 45 minute block of time, this may be used as a passing period or a break in a block class
- During 60+ minute direct instruction 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, and a progress check.
- Electives may include art, music, computer science, etc.; students select two electives which they take on alternating days

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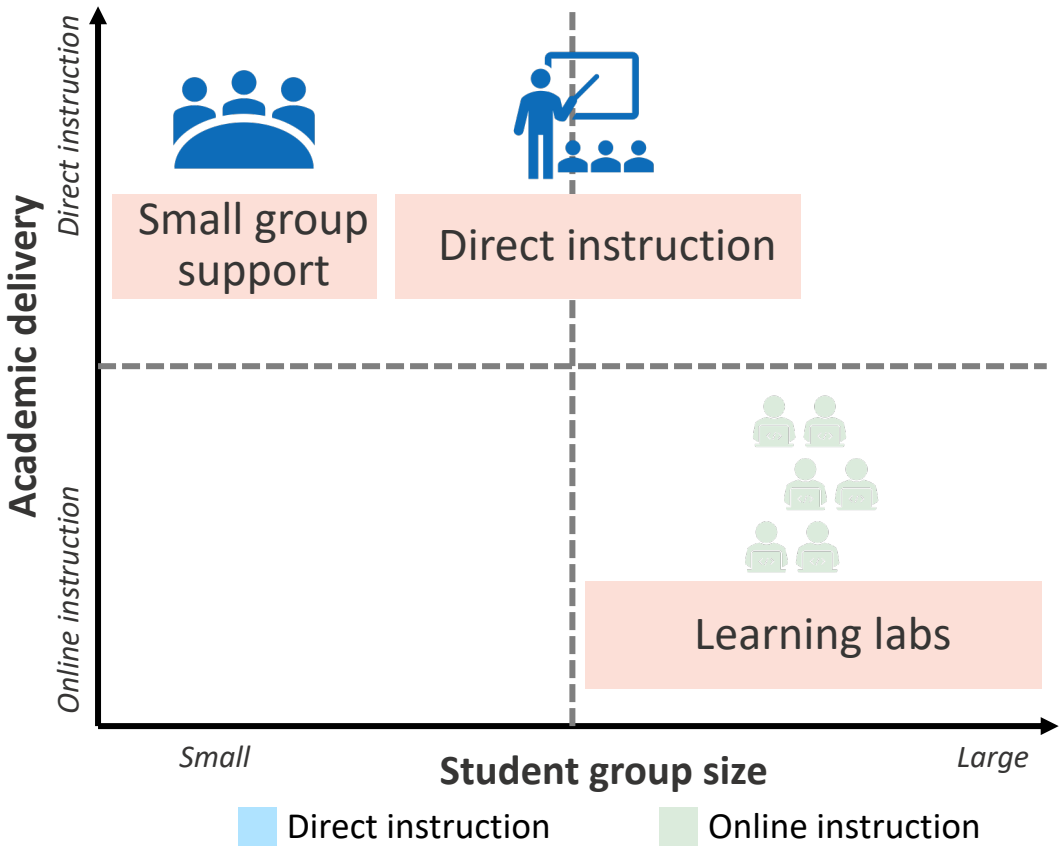
On-campus middle school model

Staff Deployment & Roles (1/2)

School-level staffing by strength



- Teachers are **staffed according to subject and qualification**:
  - Subject: teachers **departmentalized by subject pairings** (e.g., science and math, RLA and history); electives teachers are not paired by subjects
  - Qualification: paraprofessionals and elective teachers will staff learning labs whereas certified teachers will provide small group support and direct instruction
- Based on their staffing, teachers have **various roles and responsibilities**:
  - Content adaptation and support: a subset of teachers will be assigned as content adaptation and support specialists per subject based on their level of expertise and success teaching in the subject (likely PLC leads)
  - Small group instruction: teachers strongest in providing targeted content instruction to small student groups
  - Direct instruction: teachers effective at direct instruction
  - Learning labs: paraprofessionals and elective teachers may staff learning labs, which allow for small group support and smaller direct learning classes to be delivered in parallel
  - *Note: some teachers/staff may have multiple roles*

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On-campus middle school model

Staff Deployment & Roles (2/2)

Illustrative teacher schedules

Time	Math/science direct teacher	ELA/history direct teacher	Elective direct teacher
:30 min	Homeroom advisory		
:05 min	Passing period		
:45 min	Class	Small group support	Prep period
:05 min		Passing period	Passing period
:45 min		Prep period	Class
:05 min	Passing period		
:45 min	Small group support	Lab supervision and support	Small group support
:05 min	Passing period		Passing period
:45 min	Prep period		Class
:30 min	Lunch		
:45 min	Content design	Class	Lab supervision and support
:05 min	Passing period		
:45 min	Class		
:05 min		Passing period	Passing period
:45 min		Class	Class
:05 min	Passing period		Passing period
:45 min	Small group support		Class
:60 min	Weekly content planning meetings with department and shared student meetings (alternating); monthly professional development (PD)		

Time with students

- All teachers serve as **homeroom / advisory instructors**, and provide some wellbeing instruction to students
- Teachers **responsible for content design** have an additional content planning period in their day
- Teachers may have **multiple roles** across lab supervision, direct instruction, and small group support
- All teachers participate in **weekly content planning meetings** with their department as well as **shared student meetings**
- All teachers receive **professional development** including on supporting student mental health and wellbeing, subject-specific material, and new technology platforms

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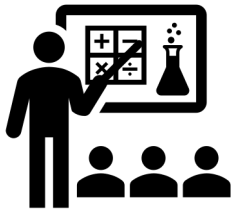
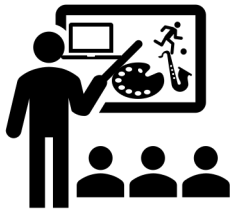
On-campus middle school model

Academic Delivery



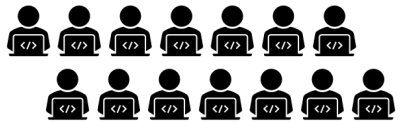
Direct math & science instruction



Direct elective instruction

Direct RLA and social studies instruction

Small group support



Math and RLA learning lab

- Students receive **direct instruction** from teachers across all academic subjects; direction instruction classrooms are typically ~20-25 students
  - Use of a learning lab enables smaller group direct instruction
- For math and RLA, students engage in a **blended learning model** in which direct instruction is paired with **online learning**
  - Online learning takes place in an on-campus **learning lab** using software which allows for **self-paced and adaptive learning**
- Students have access to small group support across all core / foundation subjects

Funding method eligibility and considerations:

- **Traditional ADA:** all students are eligible for traditional ADA funding

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On-campus middle school model

Curriculum and Progress Monitoring

Curriculum

Blended-learning subjects

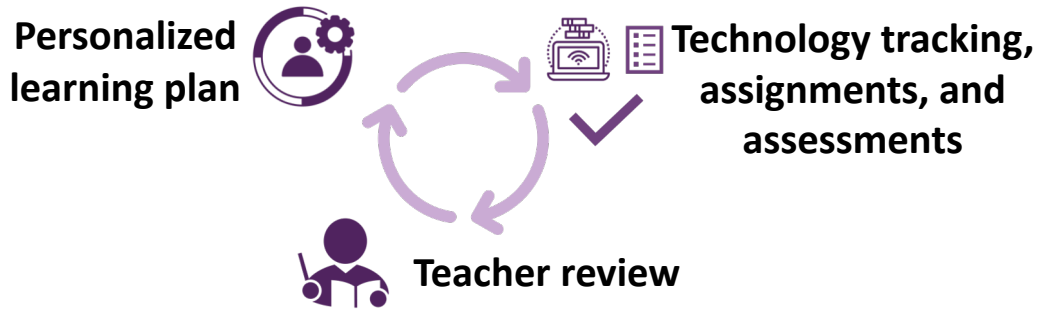
LEA adaptation of existing curriculum or adoption of blended-learning new curriculum

- Where needed, LEA will **source online curriculums and software solutions for math, English, science, and social studies**, which are standardized and implemented LEA-wide
- LEA will use and adapt existing curriculum for **all other subjects** (e.g., electives); adaptations can be made at the school/classroom level as needed
- Curriculum is modified to be able to **transition between remote and on-campus learning**

All other subjects

Existing curriculum with adaptations by schools as needed

Progress monitoring



- Teachers create a **personalized learning plan** for each student, leveraging the online curriculum to customize student learning plans, which are updated based on performance
- Technology platforms support **student pacing** and **mastery evaluation**
- Teachers leverage **technology data-tracking from online curriculum** as well as **assignments** and **formative assessments** to adapt learning plans

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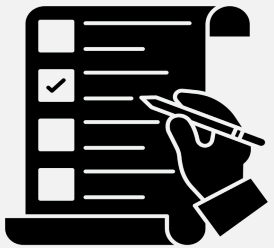
On-campus middle school model

Family Engagement

Schools host a series of **virtual back-to-school nights** during which parents can connect with teachers, and test some of their student's online learning tools

Parents / guardians receive **weekly progress updates** from teachers on student performance and engagement on the student/parent portal

LEA/schools host **a webinar** for parents / guardians on **blended learning**



LEA/schools send out **surveys once per grading period** as mechanisms for families to provide input and feedback

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Bolt & the Masked Macho