

To: Superintendents, Principals, and School Leaders

From: Indiana Department of Education

Date: July 10, 2020

Subject: Academic Engagement Guidance

As we plan for a school year with the potential for multiple delivery methods, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) seeks to provide guidance on the term academic engagement. Regardless of the delivery method of instruction, academic engagement is paramount for student success.

Academic engagement is defined as “the quality of students’ participation or connection with the schooling endeavor and hence with activities, values, people, goals, and places that comprise it” (Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer, 2009). Academic engagement must encompass the academic, behavioral, and emotional enrichment of each student.

Best practice for academic engagement should mirror the in-school experience of interacting with curriculum and resources aligned to the Indiana Academic Standards to introduce, maintain and extend learning. Authentic academic engagement ensures that students’ skills are pushed to the next levels of learning through rigorous and relevant learning activities. This can not be accomplished solely through excessive screen time and completion of worksheets.

Content may be delivered in two contexts during the academic school year. One context is on-site, not separated by time or space, where all students are learning, applying, and practicing content at the same time. Another context is off-site learning where students may be learning, applying, and practicing content at different times in different spaces.

The amount of instructional time should be the same in each of these contexts and schools should provide guidance for staff and families about the kinds of participation and academic engagement which can be combined to reach minimum time thresholds in the off-site learning context.

IDOE is recommending schools augment their attendance policies to provide families with clarity about expectations for participation and academic engagement in the off-site contexts the school may employ in the coming school year. Additional guidance for best practices regarding attendance will be forthcoming.

IDOE has prepared many resources to help teachers coordinate, direct, and facilitate academic engagement including:

- [Continuous Learning Weekly Challenges](#) - Weekly choice boards specifically designed without technology in mind.
- [Healthy Hoosier Challenges](#) - Physical challenges to promote student wellbeing while at home.
- [Family Engagement Toolkit](#) - A list of free resources, offered by state and federal agencies, private companies, and non-profit organizations to help families.
- [Resource Database](#) - Grade level and content area resources for educators.
- [Remote Learning Resource Page](#) - Includes resources for special student groups, supports for educators, and general resources for families.
- [Elementary](#), [Elementary Spanish](#), [Secondary](#), [Secondary Spanish](#) - TV and Movie Engagement Templates - Meant to provide an opportunity for students to learn and grow while watching a TV show or movie.

Please contact Robin LeClaire, Chief Academic Officer, at RLeClaire@doe.in.gov or 317-232-0524 additional questions.