

How to Prepare for Distance Learning: IT Checklist



As the new school year approaches, administrators are doing everything they can to ensure that students receive the best education possible amidst a pandemic. Some schools are deciding to move forward with a virtual learning concept instead of sending students back to the classroom, and some are adopting a hybrid schedule that combines at-home and in-classroom learning. North Carolina and South Carolina schools are both taking variations of this hybrid learning model.

This sudden transition to virtual learning is unprecedented territory. Here are some measures that administrators should take to prepare their teachers and students for virtual learning.

Verify that students have access to the appropriate technology.

Identify the technology that students must have in order to access online learning materials. This list will likely include:

- A desktop computer, laptop, tablet or smart device.
- Headphones or a webcam if their device does not have one.
- Internet access at home.

Come up with an action plan to accommodate students that do not have access to all necessary e-learning technology.

Ensure that students are accessing their materials.

Invite administrators into teachers' virtual classrooms to allow them to verify that students can access their school materials and online learning platforms.

This will help them to track the learning progress of all students, including homeless, highly mobile and economically disadvantaged students who may not have access to the materials they need to be successful. When monitoring HHM students, administrators may find that they need to create an alternative support plan.

Make a plan for troubleshooting.

Provide clear directions that students and teachers should follow when they encounter problems connecting to their online classrooms. This plan should include details and contact information for IT support and a list of frequently asked questions.

Familiarize users with the remote learning platform.

The concept of distance learning is new for the majority of the education system. All users must be familiar with the technology. Send out a step-by-step guide for users to follow when first using the platform to ease the transition.

Follow a strict agenda.

Keep a strict lesson plan and update the calendar daily. Doing so will give students a sense of direction and urgency, which is essential when time is limited. This also gives students something to refer back to if they feel overwhelmed and lost while distance learning. Following an agenda can also encourage students to participate by being more prepared before class.

Encourage communication.

Remember that virtual learning works best when it is interactive. Teachers should encourage webcam use when in a class setting or communicating in groups. It is also crucial for teachers to interact with their students throughout virtual lectures to maintain participation.

At BridgeTek, we aim to provide the best hybrid learning environment for your student and teachers. Contact us for more information on preparing your school for virtual or hybrid learning.

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