# SUSTAINING INCLUSIVE PRACTICES FOR VIRTUAL LEARNING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

## INTRODUCTION

Since March 13, 2020, when Governor Northam declared a state of emergency within the Commonwealth due to the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in school closures, our school communities, families, and other community stakeholders have worked closely to ensure that all students within the Commonwealth received opportunities to continue with learning through a variety of modalities, most often through virtual learning options. This document offers guidance, suggestions, and resources for sustaining inclusionary practices for students with disabilities through continuous learning opportunities using a virtual platform. It is our intention that this guidance document will help you as you refine and continuously improve existing instructional practices and develop new plans over time, as we navigate through this truly unprecedented time in educating our students with disabilities.

The following considerations for educators planning virtual instruction were provided by the [AEM: Resources for Access and Distance Education](http://aem.cast.org/about/aem-center-covid-19-resources.html).

* Are students with disabilities able to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services in an equally effective integrated manner and with equivalent ease of use as learners without disabilities?
* Are the curriculum and instruction programs available to every learner, including specially designed instruction materials?
* Are the curriculum and instruction programs accessible to every student?
* Can every student use the curriculum and instruction programs? For example, how can students receive information from a device, interact with, and express or provide input into a product or a device (i.e., speech to text, keyboard options)?
* What are the technological resources needed for educators/staff and students/families? Do all students/families have access to these resources? If not, how can the school division remedy this situation?
* Are students proficient in the use of the technology resources (physical resources such as computers, iPads, etc.), software, and virtual platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WebEx, etc., that they are going to be asked to access?
* Do all stakeholders have access to reliable Wireless Fidelity (WiFi) connectivity? If not, how can the school division support WiFi in certain regions/neighborhoods/homes?
* What is the impact of virtual learning on educators/staff and students/families? What supports are needed to ensure effectiveness and efficiency?

## SETTING UP A VIRTUAL LEARNING PLATFORM

The Virginia Department of Education’s [Recover, Redesign, Restart 2020](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/health_medical/covid-19/recover-redesign-restart-2020.pdf) guidance document contains information related to [Setting up a Virtual Learning Platform](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/health_medical/covid-19/recover-redesign-restart-2020.pdf#page=81) that provides guidance and considerations for establishing a digital learning plan.This document includes very specific considerations in the following areas:

* Equity
* Computing devices and considerations when issuing to students
* Communication about your digital learning plan
* Use of digital resources
* Student privacy
* Online learning environments
* Expectations

## RESOURCES

[AEM: Resources for Access and Distance Education](http://aem.cast.org/about/aem-center-covid-19-resources.html) hosts webinars focusing on tools and resources to support remote learning in response to COVID-19. Users can watch the recordings and download the handouts and slide decks from the AEM Events page, where people can also register for upcoming webinars as they are announced. Below are organizations that provide access to materials for qualifying students.

* [Bookshare's Learning at Home Resource](https://www.bookshare.org/cms/help-center/learning-center/school-closure)
* [Learning Ally](http://www.learningally.org/)
* [DCMP: Described and Captioned Media Program](https://dcmp.org/)
* [APH: American Printing House for the Blind](http://www.aph.org/)

The [Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM-VA)](https://aimva.org/) Center is a resource providing virtual support to educators and families, and materials for students with disabilities, at no cost to school divisions.

[AIM-VA COVID-19 Support Materials](https://aimva.org/news-events/covid-19-support/) provides general information about AIM-VA resources; including information on discounted and free internet service providers in Virginia.

The [Guidelines for School Division Transfer of Assistive Technology Devices](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2013/239-13a.pdf) includes frequently asked questions and sample forms for a school division providing assistive technology devices to transfer that device to another school division or a state agency that will be serving the child, or to the student or the student’s parent.

[Accessibility Features of Common Programs and Platforms](https://atnetwork.ttaconline.org/featured-trainings) provides assistive technology quick tip videos for distance learning.

The Nebraska Department of Education’s document [Supports for Students with Significant Disabilities](https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Supports-for-Students-with-Significant-Cognitive-Disabilities-1.pdf) is a resource for teachers to use after the team has met virtually to determine what the student's priorities will be while not receiving face to face instruction. This resources includes technology-free options for each skill. The source of this document is the Arkansas Department of Education and this posted on TTAC Online: [Supports for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education)](http://ttaconline.org/Resource/JWHaEa5BS753iJXItgcQYA/Resource-supports-for-students-with-significant-cognitive-disabilities-arkansas-division-of-elementary-and).

[Remember Accessibility in the Rush to Online Instruction: 10 Tips for Educators](https://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/Remember%20Accessibility%20in%20the%20Rush%20to%20Online%20Instruction_%2010%20Tips%20for%20Educators.pdf) provides tips for embedding American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting services into live online instruction, meetings, and videos through multiple platforms (e.g., Zoom).

[Instructional Resources Supporting Students with Disabilities](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/c4l/instruc-resource-support-for-swd.docx) was disseminated in April 2020 as a repository of resources that was compiled to support Virginia school divisions as they endeavor to meet the continuing learning needs of their students with disabilities.

[Recover, Redesign, Restart 2020](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/health_medical/covid-19/recover-redesign-restart-2020.pdf) provides the Virginia Department of Education’s (VDOE’s) comprehensive guidance information and resources for schools’ reopening plans.

Washington’s Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction [Supporting Inclusionary Practices During School Closure](https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/specialed/inclusion/Supporting-IP-School-Facility-Closure.pdf) document includes information on the following categories, each accessible through the above referenced link:

* Overview of Inclusionary Practices for Continuous Learning
* Special Education Continuous Learning Implementation Guide
* Special Education Continuous Learning Plan Template
* System Readiness Planning
* Family Partnerships and Communication
* Student Engagement and Social-Emotional Supports
* Instructional Delivery and Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
* Special Education Services through Continuous Learning
* Early Learning
* Graduation and Secondary Transition
* Online (and Offline) Educational Resources and Websites

[VDOE Special Education - Inclusive Practices](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/iep_instruct_svcs/inclusive/index.shtml) is a one-stop website for preschool-12 that provides guidance for effective inclusive practices. This website includes examples of special and general education teachers co-planning, co-assessing, and co-teaching models that can be applied when teachers collaborate and co-teach during virtual instruction

[VDOE Early Childhood - Inclusive Practices](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/early-childhood/curriculum/inclusion/index.shtml) is a webpage specifically devoted to resources related to inclusive practices in early childhood.

[Virginia Early Childhood Inclusive Practices](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/early-childhood/curriculum/inclusion/index.shtml) document is designed to assist Virginia’s school divisions and early childhood communities in identifying, developing, and sustaining inclusive opportunities within high-quality early childhood programs for children with disabilities.

[K-12 Inclusive Practices Guide](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/iep_instruct_svcs/inclusive/k-12-inclusive-practices-guide.pdf) is an informational resource to support school divisions and parents looking to improve outcomes for students with disabilities by meeting their needs to the maximum extent possible in a general education setting.

[Collaborative Teaching Virtual Instruction Tips](http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Collaborative-Teaching-Online-Tips-Final-3.27.20.pdf) is a Florida Inclusive Network document that provides tips to reinforce existing collaborative practices and provide additional ideas for making the transition from traditional classrooms to a virtual format.

[TTAC Online](http://ttaconline.org/) is a resource for professionals and family members of children and youth with disabilities (birth to 22). The website offers a wide range of resources, events (training, conferences, and webinars/webcasts) and free online training opportunities.

* [K-12 Inclusive Practices Guide (Virginia Department of Education, VDOE)](http://ttaconline.org/Resource/JWHaEa5BS75C1bTWZe8KQA/Resource-k-12-inclusive-practices-guide-virginia-department-of-education-vdoe)
* [Inclusive Practices for Preschool Programs (Videos)](https://ttaconline.org/Online-Training/MLbTE3FyBnHqoY94Q5CIos6fLFtfCF0T/Online-Training-inclusive-practices-for-preschool-programs-videos)
* [Inclusive Practices for K-12 Students (Videos)](https://ttaconline.org/Online-Training/MLbTE3FyBnHqoY94Q5CIooC_I8XW3EHs/Online-Training-inclusive-practices-for-k-12-students-videos)
* [Real Co-Teachers of Virginia Discuss High Leverage Practices (HLPs) - Middle/High](http://ttaconline.org/Online-Training/MLbTE3FyBnHqoY94Q5CIog-RKpaEBZvx/Online-Training-real-co-teachers-of-virginia-discuss-high-leverage-practices-hlps---middlehigh)
* [Real Co-Teachers of Virginia Discuss High Leverage Practices (HLPs) - Elementary](http://ttaconline.org/Online-Training/MLbTE3FyBnHqoY94Q5CIouAkz1ARnYWA/Online-Training-real-co-teachers-of-virginia-discuss-high-leverage-practices-hlps---elementary)
* [Video Series: High-Leverage Instructional Practices (HLPs)](http://ttaconline.org/Resource/JWHaEa5BS74PNYoWvZ8Qug/Resource-video-series-high-leverage-instructional-practices-hlps)
* [Supporting Students with Disabilities at School and Home: A Guide for Teachers to Support Families and Students (May 2020)](https://ttaconline.org/Resource/JWHaEa5BS77DCHxraybZBw/Resource-supporting-students-with-disabilities-at-school-and-home-a-guide-for-teachers-to-support-families)
* [Supports for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education)](https://ttaconline.org/Resource/JWHaEa5BS753iJXItgcQYA/Resource-supports-for-students-with-significant-cognitive-disabilities-arkansas-division-of-elementary-and)
* [Family Guide to At-Home Learning (CEEDAR Center)](https://ttaconline.org/Resource/JWHaEa5BS747aB_ZDe0Fgg/Resource-family-guide-to-at-home-learning-ceedar-center)
* [CEC Quick Takes: Online Instruction During COVID-19](https://ttaconline.org/Resource/JWHaEa5BS748o4-WeKaxjg/Resource-cec-quick-takes-online-instruction-during-covid-19)
* [Five Formative Assessment Strategies to Improve Distance Learning Outcomes for Students with Disabilities (National Center on Education Outcomes, NCEO)](https://ttaconline.org/Resource/JWHaEa5BS775_gyDfbSqZQ/Resource-five-formative-assessment-strategies-to-improve-distance-learning-outcomes-for-students-with)
* [Five Quick Tips for Teachers in Supporting Families of Students with Disabilities in the use of Assistive Technology during Home Instruction](http://ttaconline.org/Resource/JWHaEa5BS776cQiSKCmxtA/Resource-five-quick-tips-for-teachers-in-supporting-families-of-students-with-disabilities-in-the-use-of)
* [Five Quick Tips for Families on Using Assistive Technology to Support Instruction at Home for Students with Disabilities](http://ttaconline.org/Resource/JWHaEa5BS7721FeMXZFOJg/Resource-five-quick-tips-for-families-on-using-assistive-technology-to-support-instruction-at-home-for)
* [Assistive Technology Quick Tip Videos](https://atnetwork.ttaconline.org/featured-trainings)
* [Resources Provided for Assistive Technology Quick Tip Videos for Distance Learning (AT Network)](http://ttaconline.org/Resource/JWHaEa5BS76LM2Nr7eQs2w/Resource-resources-provided-for-assistive-technology-quick-tip-videos-for-distance-learning-at-network)