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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES REMOTE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS AT CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot joined Chicago Public Schools and City Colleges of Chicago today to announce both institutions have established remote learning plans to ensure instructional time continues while school buildings and campuses are closed. Both CPS and CCC have created continuous learning opportunities that help students stay engaged and connected despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We will not allow this crisis to be an obstacle to our students’ futures and their dreams,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “It was a herculean effort to shift one’s curriculum to an entirely new medium—especially in such a short amount of time—and it’s a testament to the passion and commitment of Chicago’s entire education community that they have been able to do just that. While our schools remain closed, thanks to our city’s countless faculty and staff, education in Chicago remains open.”

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In alignment with new guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) that will require school districts to convert future days of suspended in-person instruction to “remote learning days,” Chicago Public Schools (CPS) today released district-wide guidance that outlines expectations, strategies, and available resources for schools to implement remote learning beginning on April 13. The guidance provides flexibility for schools to design remote learning plans that best support the unique needs of their school communities. Parents, guardians and educators are receiving the remote learning guidance today, and families will hear directly from their schools by April 6.

“Nothing can take the place of classroom time with our dedicated educators, but now more than ever, we need to come together as a CPS community to support our students and help them stay engaged during this unprecedented time,” said CPS CEO Dr. Janice K. Jackson. “Schools know their communities best, which is why our guidance is centered on flexibility, with an emphasis on family and student engagement. We understand this is a difficult and unprecedented time for families and staff, and we thank them for their commitment and patience.”



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The district's guidance supports schools in establishing detailed remote learning plans for their students. Learning plans will include daily digital and non-digital learning opportunities for all students, office hours for parents and students, and more. Through remote learning in CPS:

- Schools will provide students with daily learning activities.
 - Schools will offer both digital and non-digital learning options to promote equitable access to instructional materials.
 - Schools can create their own activities or augment enrichment activities provided by the district, which will be created every two weeks during the closure.
 - Teachers will provide weekly feedback to students on the assigned learning activities they complete.
- Teachers will be directly available to their students for academic support, which may include digital learning and follow-up with students who lack digital access.
 - Schools will have the flexibility to determine how best to provide learning opportunities, and teachers will be expected to be available for four hours per school day. Potential activities include:
 - Streaming live activities, including a mini-lesson, book reading, digital discussion or lecture, with a maximum of two hours of digital learning.
 - Providing “office hours” in which teachers are available to students virtually or over the phone or email to answer questions, engage in discussion, and offer general academic support.
- Schools will provide office hours — via phone, virtual methods or email — during regular hours of the school day to answer any questions and support ongoing learning.

The primary goal of the district's remote learning plan is to keep every student engaged and connected to their school community through daily learning opportunities. While students are expected to complete assignments and schools are able to grade work, grades cannot negatively impact any student's academic standing and incomplete assignments will need to be made up following the remote learning period. The guidance is designed to meet the needs of individual school communities and includes specific instructions for engaging students in temporary living situations, diverse learners and English learners.

While Chicago Public Schools cannot close the digital divide overnight, the district is committed to leveraging existing inventory, purchasing new devices for distribution, and working with philanthropic partners to help narrow the gap to the best of the district's ability. In order to expand access to remote learning, the district is undertaking an effort to deploy more than 100,000 devices to its highest-need students. CPS is working to put more devices in the hands of families by moving approximately 65,000 school-based devices into homes, allocating 37,000 devices that were recently purchased, and deploying additional devices acquired through potential philanthropic contributions. The district will prioritize schools with the greatest need based on a hardship index, percentage of students that



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qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, and percentage of students in temporary living situations.

The district's goal is to begin distributing devices promptly, and families will receive specific information regarding device distribution in the coming days. The district is focusing distribution on computing devices, including laptops, ChromeBooks and iPads. While the district does not have the resources to provide Internet access for every student, Comcast and AT&T are currently offering free internet access for high-need families.

To improve access to modern technology in schools throughout Chicago, in 2018 the district launched a multi-year strategy to ensure all schools have the devices and bandwidth for students to learn using state-of-the-art digital tools. Currently, 145 schools have one device for each student, and the average CPS school has one device per 1.4 students. According to a recent survey, a quarter of CPS schools have already sent home devices with at least some of their students.

CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO

On March 23, City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) implemented remote learning and shifted classes for its more than 30,000 credit-earning students online. The community college system went from 10 percent of credit class sections being taught fully online to 92 percent of credit class sections being taught fully online as of today. City Colleges also shifted its student services from previously being almost entirely in-person to exclusively online. City Colleges students can access admissions, advising, the library, tutoring, financial aid, registrar, business office, veterans services, transfer services, wellness center, information technology help desk, disability access centers, and our Call Center, all online at www.ccc.edu/vss.

"I am so proud of the teamwork and flexibility shown by our students, faculty and staff who made the transition to remote learning in just one week's time," said Chancellor Juan Salgado. "We recognize our students, in particular, are facing unprecedented challenges, and we are committed to providing them every possible support to ensure they persist in their courses and reach their academic and career goals."

To facilitate the transition to remote learning, City Colleges offered faculty and staff trainings on Brightspace, its online learning management system and Zoom, its online meeting tool. Nearly 850 laptops have been shipped to students in need to date with at least another 627 shipping today, and loaner hotspots will also be available for students on a first-come, first-serve basis later this week. City Colleges is also transitioning its emergency fund online. The COVID-19 City Colleges Student Emergency Fund will begin the process of offering payments directly to students for emergency needs later this week.

On April 13, City Colleges' free adult education courses, including GED and English as a Second Language, will start to be offered via distance learning. City Colleges is also offering loaner laptops for adult education students, who can apply at <https://apps.ccc.edu/LoanerLaptop/login>.



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