

## Virtual Teaching Academy Session One

(piano music)

Good morning, everybody.

Welcome to our Virtual Teaching Academy.

For today's session, we will be using GoToWebinar as our platform, just a couple of housekeeping issues, before we kick off.

You, all attendees are muted by default as we start this meeting, we do encourage you to ask questions, and interact.

You can submit questions in the questions panel, and we'll be monitoring those throughout the presentation today.

So with that, Pat, I'm gonna pass the mic to you, and we'll let you get it started.

Thanks, Steve.

And hello, everyone, and welcome, we're so excited that you're here with us today.

We are so pleased that you've joined us in the Summer Virtual Teaching Academy.

I am Pat Hoge, a veteran K-12 educator,

with a great many years- (indistinct)

Brick and mortar environments, and virtual online teaching and learning.

I most recently served as the Chief Academic Officer for Connections Education and Pearson Online and Blended Learning, and also serve as an Academic Advisor for Hudson Global Scholars.

The focus on curriculum instruction, I really dedicated my career to focusing on students and their, helping them and the adults in their lives, and support and serve them, and to achieve success.

So either that's through resources, developing tools, anything on their academic journey.

I'm thrilled to be a part of this important work that we're doing through the Alliance for Virtual Learning, and to be bringing that to you today.

So just a little bit of background on the Alliance itself.

This is created with the collaborative effort through the University of Phoenix and Blackboard, and other K-12 leaders, including myself.

We know that K-12 was disrupted this past spring, and that really, K-12 education has been permanently changed as a result of COVID-19.

All of your schools were moved extremely quickly to pivot to virtual learning this past spring, which meant that each of you as teachers had to move your classrooms, to become online classrooms, and often, without the support or the resources or clear guidance, perhaps, that you thought you needed to know how to keep your students engaged, and to maintain the learning quality.

According to a recent survey that the University of Phoenix did over a thousand K-12 teachers this past spring, teachers like yourselves were telling us that less than half of them, 47 percent, felt that they had the training available to them this spring that was good or excellent, to really allow you to do your work.

And then, over half of those teachers expressed that they really wanted to learn more about creating compelling content, supporting and engaging students, (indistinct) learning how to leverage the technology for online teaching and learning.

Also, there was a recent New York Times article

reporting that most- (indistinct)

that have fallen behind where they would've been if they'd stayed in their classrooms this past spring.

(distorted noise)

Four years academic gains.

So all of this truly highlighted the needs for a longer term, or a comprehensive approach to virtual learning.

And so, all that was a call to action to us.

The Alliance of Virtual Learning was formed by bringing together leading minds in K-12 education and in virtual learning, and to really think about what would be a comprehensive curriculum, resources, and support that could help you as district leaders and as teachers.

The University of Phoenix led this effort with their decades of experience, as pioneering online education, and they really wanted to leverage their expertise and give back to the K-12 community.

So they joined forces with Blackboard, Heath Morrison and myself and others, to form this Alliance.

Blackboard, as you know, is a recognized provider of online K-12 learning management communication systems, with one in every two K-12 students nationwide using Blackboard services almost daily.

Heath Morrison is a former President of McGraw-Hill School Group, and Heath brings extensive experience in K-12 education space, including a rich history serving as a school principal and as a superintendent.

Leveraging his connections with superintendents across the country, he really brought us a unique and deeply informed perspective on the gaps that school leaders and superintendents were seeing, and are seeing in your pivot to online learning.

And really wanted to help us evolve and support these needs.

So the Alliance's efforts are really about serving students and about serving you, those who work with students each day, educators and leaders, and how do we think about the resources that we need to best do that.

So after hosting two webinars this past spring, we're excited to now extend this into the Virtual Teaching Academy.

Over the next six days, in a series of 10 sessions, we'll have the opportunity to engage with leaders in K-12 virtual learning, and in K-12 education, and go deeper into the topics and the areas that we feel are the most important, and truly essential to have a successful shift to online teaching and learning.

So we hope you'll join us for each of the sessions over the coming days.

So at this point, I'd like to begin our first session, which is the Blueprint for Success: Planning for a Successful Shift to Virtual Teaching and Learning, and I'd love to introduce my co-presenters to you.

So Tom Vander Ark is an advocate for innovations in learning.

As the CEO of Getting Smart, he advises schools, districts, networks, foundations, learning organizations on their path forward.

He's a prolific writer, speaker, author, and I've had the pleasure of knowing and working with Tom for many years now, and I'm thrilled that he's here with us today, and has been joining this conversation, so thanks, Tom.

Great to be with you, Pat.

And then, Dewayne McClary, Dewayne is the Director of the League of Innovative Schools for Digital Promise, and works to increase engagement and impact for their network of innovative schools and districts.

Prior to this, he was the Director of Educational Technology and Library Programs at D.C. Public Schools, where he supervised their one to one pilot and rollout, and other innovative initiatives.

I've just had the pleasure of meeting Dewayne, as we've been working together on the Alliance, the webinars, and this Academy, and so I'm glad

to be connected with you now, Dewayne. (laughs)

Through this.

Great to be here, Pat.

Thank you.

So our agenda for today, one, we want to spend a little bit of time talking about what's bringing us together today, now for the session, but also across the next six days and beyond in this work.

We want to share with you some of our assumptions about virtual learning, talk quite a bit about the importance of planning.

Planning that happened before this past spring, planning that should be happening now, and then beyond.

We have a blueprint for virtual learning that brings these practices together, and these topics and areas that we want to share with you, and help you use that over the coming days and weeks and months.

And then, we want to do an overview of the Virtual Teaching Academy topics and sessions.

And then we're hoping to leave a good amount of time for question and answers, so as Steve said earlier, please put those in the chat pod, or in the Q&A pod, and then we'll try to, we have a whole team behind us, working to answer questions, and we'll do that, do that as well.

So on this topic of what's bringing us together, as I said earlier, the coronavirus pandemic not only disrupted, but it interrupted education across the country, and the world, for students and for teachers and for families.

It's quite staggering, you know, when you think about over 50 million public school students and teachers in the US were all sent home to teach and learn in March, I feel like it all happened on one weekend that we can all remember quite clearly.

And we hold that 50 million data point in our head, but while online learning was the goal for all 50 million of those students, more than nine million did not have access to online learning.

And for a variety of reasons, and I'll talk a little bit about that today, and Dewayne will talk about that, and then we have, it'll come up in every session, but then Dewayne has a session on this tomorrow as well, but those students that didn't have access, whether it was because of internet access, or devices, or the support, and there was, them that did engage in online learning, only a small percentage really felt that they had the resources and the preparation to do this well.

And that many of you felt that student engagement and student learning really suffered.

So we just felt, again, compelled to come together and to help, you know, in some way.

The University of Phoenix survey that I mentioned earlier, one of the interesting data points that came out of that survey was showing did teachers feel prepared this past spring, did they have the resources that they needed, so as you can see, 38 percent felt like they had the right resources and tools, and this really gets to the point of some percentage of our school districts and schools felt ready, or more ready, you know, to make this shift in the spring, but many did not.

So you can see that 41 percent felt overwhelmed from receiving too much, we know there was quite a bit of that, sort of a barrage of things that were happening this spring, but also over 20 percent not feeling like they had enough.

So we would love to bring this, the percentages up, where folks know what the tools are, and what best practices are, and then what could, how could this look different in the next fall and the school year.

Some interesting data was what teachers were telling us, where they feel like they have the most areas of concern, or their areas of need.

So the percentages are quite high.

You can see, when you look to the right of the screen, where teachers were feeling they had the activities, what were they most interested in? They needed more activities to work successfully, remotely.

They needed to understand how to use data, the technology, to understand their students who are struggling.

They need more of a sense of how to interact and engage and connect with their students.

There's a lot around social-emotional needs, and mental health and awareness.

And then, how to use the content, and how to use the tools.

So it's compelling, again, where teachers want to make this shift, and they want to be successful, and have their students engaged in learning, but there's work for us to all do.

And then another data point here is that the CRPE had reached out to, the bar on the right, really shows that they had reached out to large districts across the country, early in the spring, I guess I would say.

They were saying, you've made this shift to online learning, and are you expecting teachers to truly engage with students and provide instruction and track engagement? And about 65 percent said they were doing that.

The CRPE went out a few months later, and really took a broader swag at this, and to say, let's look at small districts, medium-sized, large, and just see where we are, and it was quite, quite stunning that this dropped down to about 33 percent.

Teachers were working hard, and students were trying to engage, but whether there was true instruction and true engagement, where folks even have a sense, like ways to track and monitor this, dropped way down.

So Tom, I don't know if you want to comment here too, because I know this- I was, I guess I was really surprised that, how few districts were really prepared for this shift, I must have spent too much time in grade schools that quickly and easily and efficiently made the shift to remote learning.

I was really shocked when I looked through the CRPE database, and found that, that especially as you stepped out beyond the big districts, that the majority of small districts were just not prepared.

I know, Dewayne, you said you weren't as shocked by those numbers?

No, (indistinct) the COVID has really brought to light the inequities that are across the United- No question.

And funding.

But Dewayne, I guess the, you know, there were a lot of us that were sort of congratulating ourselves for over the last 10 years, we had gotten closer to the point where we were one to one or one to two in most schools, and most schools had wifi, but I guess the big surprise for me, that it really showed that there's probably 30 million households that didn't have good wifi, and that both teachers and students, in both urban and rural environments, had a real tough time getting access, so it's both the access, and I think the readiness for districts to move, which is lower than I had anticipated.

Yeah, I, when people say internet access, I always ask what question did they ask in the survey,

because a lot of (audio drop) consider internet access as your cell phone.

This phone, right, yeah.

Type of bandwidth are we talking about?

So I think this (audio drop)

We have to, and we always forget about our teachers, like if- Yeah, right.

Access for sure- If they had one computer at home, and it was connected, you would count that, but if that's a household with two adults that are trying to work remote, and there's three students, you've got a big problem on your hands.

Huge problem.

Now, thank you both, and I think this is a data point that we're gonna hang on to, because hopefully, I mean, not hopefully, I'm assuming that many people that are joining us today were in one of these boats, and then this is really the work today, how to change that.

And to all look different, differently, so we have some assumptions, Tom and Dewayne and those in the alliance, you know, work together to say, what are we assuming, you know, at this point? So one, although all the districts have not announced their plans for the fall, we are assuming that virtual teaching and learning will occur in some way, to some degree, and every school and every district this coming school year.

That said, we think that schools have a plan to start the year, but that those plans will likely change during the year.

You may be on an A-B rotation, you may be on a one week on, one week off, but if we have a surge again, you know, in your state, you may, everyone may go home again, so how do we prepare for all these different scenarios? It's really about that, being able to assess, successfully shift back and forth, but one day we're together face to face, and tomorrow we may be at home.

And then, how do we do that? Our assumption is that teachers, students, and parents are still feeling unprepared for virtual teaching and learning, and that we have work to do, important work to do here on this, that we believe, I'm kind of going to belief statements now, we believe that the experience of virtual teaching and learning can be, and must be better for everyone this fall, and school year.

We've heard several times today, people say, folks were given a bit of a pass this spring, because of how quickly this happened.

But that won't be true in the fall, right? Parents are going to have different expectations, teachers, school districts, leaders, so how do we focus on that? We also believe that regardless of where students are each day, that engagement and learning can and must, should happen at high levels for all students.

We truly believe that digital learning and technology can transform education, and dramatically increase student engagement and learning for all.

We're not necessarily in the camp that we want to go back and pretend like this didn't happen.

We keep saying the genie's out of the bottle a bit, and so, things will look different, but now we can see the power of these tools, and the way to personalize learning, and to address some of the access and equity issues.

And so, that work is before us.

We also know that we have a short, it's pretty urgent, window, to be prepared for the start of the school year, I feel like it's gonna blink.

We're gonna blink, and it's gonna be there.

But we know that this is a journey, truly a journey, it doesn't just happen in 30 or 60 days, as we move forward.

So, the question is, what will it take to get there? I used this image, and this was from a news article that was in, from Douglas, was in Colorado, and it was about Douglas County School District, and the article was saying that these teachers in this county were feeling in pretty good shape this past spring.

And so, it was, you know, why was that? You know, what did they do ahead of time, before March, so that teachers felt that they could deliver online instruction and we're not losing students, so the fact that this is a smiling, happy teacher, engaged in virtual learning, just feels like that's, that's a bit of our goal.

So let me turn it over to Tom, and really launch us into this next discussion.

She was not in one of those households with two working adults and three kids, all trying

to use one computer! (laughs)

(indistinct, garbled audio)

But I do, I want to give a shout out to Thomas Tucker, a great superintendent in Douglas County, a couple other, a nearby county is Jefferson County, Dr. Jason Glass, all the big districts in Florida, Broward County, where Dr. Runcie, Robert Runcie, and next door, in Miami-Dade, Dr. Carvallo, are great examples of big American districts that for 10 years, have done a great job of planning, of building the infrastructure, adopting platforms, adopting a digital curriculum, developing digital learning protocols, being really systematic about their training, and in each of those four cases, starting early on their transition to remote learning, in each of those cases, those superintendents were anticipated this pandemic, and started their planning, sometimes in January, definitely in February, and so when they went out in March, they were able to build on 10 years of planning, and then a month of a SWAT team.

Dewayne has the good fortune to work with 100 of America's most innovative school districts, and Dewayne, I think most of your folks in League of Innovative Schools are in that camp of number one, having spent a decade building infrastructure and blended learning programs, and two, probably organizing quickly, when it was, became clear that they might respond, is that fair, about your membership, that that group was unusually well prepared given who they are? Yeah, 114 schools, been pretty well prepared, however, you know, there are still pockets where we had to, you know, get to folks that are in the more rural areas, like in Kentucky, where their, you know, internet is very sparse in certain areas, and even in some urban areas, you know, kids were struggling with, you know, getting access if they had multiple folks in the household.

Yeah, I think Dewayne, Brooklyn Lab is part of the group, and a great example of a group that is, was really well prepared.

But their community was struck really hard by COVID, and many of their families don't have good access at home, so a great example of a well-prepared school community that still really struggled with these circumstances.

So as we shift our attention to next year, the next 60 days are super critical.

I like to use the, we've been working with El Paso Schools for the last seven years, and I'm super impressed by their SWAT team approach right now, to planning for next year, they've got five or six different working groups, a couple hundred teachers are involved in that effort of updating their infrastructure, making sure that every family in El Paso has wifi, making sure that every teacher has access to great teacher training, that's the sort of all hands on deck planning that's required to make sure that schools go, that we reopen schools, where everybody feels well prepared.

Great, thanks, Tom.

Dewayne, any other comments here, and then if not, we can introduce our chat pod question.

No, I think that Tom summed it up, it's just that, you know, a lot of districts, especially an innovative school, we've been talking about this in equity for years, and now COVID has really come and shed light on things that we've been talking about.

And I hope that, when this is all over, that we don't go back to where we were.

Because I, you know, knock on wood, I don't think this will be the last pandemic we deal with in our lifetime.

Agreed, agreed.

So those of you who are, we'd love to get some chat pod responses from you, so please sort of type away, because we'll use this to help our future work, but we wanted to understand, we know there's a continuum of those who felt more prepared, or less prepared, you know, this past spring, so what were the components of virtual learning that you felt least prepared in this spring? And we're aligning that, the sessions, over the next several days, where we really wanted to inform, this is ongoing work for us, and to be able to say where are the areas of greatest needs, and how can we help? So please, enter into the chat, your ideas, and then we will bring those all together to inform our work.

So one thing, as we, which we faced this school year, and think about this virtual and online learning, we wanted to talk just a minute about the terminology that we use, because this is not a new phenomenon, there have been, we've been calling this different things over the years, and it changes sometimes, you know, feels like it's daily or weekly, or there are new terms that get introduced.

But we wanted to be consistent, while we, over the next six days, you know, when we talk about this, these areas with you.

And then beyond that, and that you're thinking about these things the same way, too.

So on the far left, on the virtual/online teaching and learning, we're using virtual and online synonymously.

Right, so if we're saying virtual teaching, online teaching, we're gonna use those to mean the same thing.

And in that case, students and teachers are in different locations, technology is really the driver, that technology is used to support and deliver instruction, it doesn't mean that teachers and students are online synchronously all day, but it means that content is delivered through the technology, students are using technology to collaborate for peer-to-peer interaction, to submit work for assessment, and that digital content, digital instruction, and digital assessments really are part of that picture.

So when you hear those words being used today, or across the next several, think about that category.

Sort of next is when there's a combination of face-to-face and virtual and online.

You, it's referred to as hybrid, blended, hiflex, you know, any number of different terms, but we're gonna use those synonymously also.

There's a continuum there, you know, as far as how much time students are together, face-to-face, and that, in a physical setting, and when they're online, what we're gonna use those terms to talk about when it's a combination, that sometimes students and teachers are together, face-to-face, and sometimes they are apart.

Technology is used in both settings, though, so then it can be the same curriculum, online curriculum, or using the same tools, it's just are they accessing it while they're at home, from the cafeteria, from their classroom, so where are they using those tools and resources? And instruction is a combination, right, of face-to-face and online.

When we move to the right and talk about remote and distance learning, sometimes those used, those words are used to be synonymous, right, with virtual learning or online learning.

We're going to posit here that they are different, because what we just saw this spring is that teachers and students were working at a distance, that they were working in remote settings, but that did not mean that they were engaging in virtual and online learning, or in a hybrid.

As Dewayne was just saying, many children were without access, they were without devices, they were without, you know, the tools that they needed.

So those students who were getting printed learning packets and were getting them mailed to them, or picking them up, you know, hopefully at their big distribution center, there was learning going on, but not virtual or online learning, so we're just going to try to not to use remote and distance when we talk about virtual and online learning.

And the last category is teaching and learning from home.

And when you're at home, again, that may not have a technology component.

Families that might be homeschooling, co-ops, where no technology is being used, we're gonna use that, keep that a little bit separate too.

So we know all of this happened this past spring, but we're going to focus today, and over the next several days, really, on this.

How to be successful in virtual and online learning, or in a hybrid blended model.

So any questions on this, please put them into the Q&A, or into the chat pod, and then we will circle back on that.

So now, I'm excited that we are, as we move into this planning and decision making phase, that we have a blueprint to offer to you.

Hopefully, you received an email from Blackboard and University of Phoenix this morning, that gives you access to the blueprint.

We felt that this was a great conversation that we've been having this spring, and that we were bringing to you this week, but what's the takeaway, how do you take the information that you're hearing or learning or reflecting on, and then truly use that to create a plan for yourselves, for the summer, and into the fall.

So if you haven't downloaded that already, please look in your email for your email communication, and for the link to download the blueprint.

You can also find it here, we'll post that.

Maybe in the chat pod, Andrea or someone can put the link too, to make sure that if folks haven't downloaded that, because ideally, what we'd like you to do is download it, if you haven't already, download it now, right, within the session.

Travel along with us as you look at the blueprint, and then certainly use it over the next several sessions of the Virtual Teaching Academy.

So when you open it up, you'll see your cover page, but then your second page should look like this.

And this is really an overview of the essential areas that we'll be focusing on, and that we think are the ones that need the most attention over the next couple days and weeks and months.

So if you look in the graphic in the top right, this is really all about moving to successful virtual learning, and the components of that are having your infrastructure in place, as Tom just mentioned.

Ensuring that we have equity in access, as Dewayne was talking about.

That teachers are trained and receiving professional development and the tools and the resources and pedagogically, online learning, and that they have instructional best practices, and that we focus on engagement.

Engagement of students, of parents, of teachers, to teachers, one another, professional learning communities, and supports like this.

You know, now we're creating this cohort of who's coming to the Virtual Teaching Academy, and how do we travel along this journey together, and support one another? So those topics that are around the circles are what you see color coded for you in front, and then this is how we set up the sessions for the next several days, so on the topic of infrastructure, we have a topic on instructional resources, and the session is not putting the cart before the horse for why first, and then what.

So you'll see under equity and access, we have the equitable access session that Dewayne will be doing, and then one on serving special needs populations, then you can see how those sort of move through.

So if you follow your color coding, on the peach color of infrastructure, and the next page of your blueprint, you'll see at the top, we're on the peach instructional resources, right, that first session.

And on the left, you'll see I'm on the teacher version page, the next page, it shows a school leader version.

So what we've done is when we look at a topic, on the left hand side, we're asking, we actually have some statements for you.

And these are really where you're rating your preparedness in these areas.

So in this one, you know, a statement around tools and strategy and parents' engagement and accessibility.

So you're going to rate yourself on a one to five, right, you're either rating yourself as a teacher or your district, if you're a school leader, or your school, and then based on your rating, then what are your next steps? If you find yourself struggling in this area, and that's a one or a two or a three, then what are your next steps, just to move forward.

Who owns that and, or supports you in that, and then what's your timing? Is it something that you need to really think about for next week, or is this something that you're gonna do in August or September? So one thing, you may not be able to feel like you could rate yourself today.

Because on this example, in the tools, "I have the necessary technology tools to effectively communicate, teach, and support." You might not know what those are, right, so it's hard to rate yourself on that, if you're not quite sure what should be in that tool bag.

So once you go to the session, the VTA session on instructional resources, listen to what Monte and Pete and Kelly are going to share with you, and then it'll be, ah, that's what they're talking about.

That's what they mean.

And then it might be, we're not quite there yet, I think we're a two, or I'm a two.

Or it may be that we're actually, like an area that we're pretty strong, and maybe you're a four there.

So that's what we want you to use, the blueprint, engage as you're in each session.

And then use this as a planning tool.

So in this case, you can see, again, there's a teacher version, and then there's a school leader version, so sometimes the statements and the questions are different, based on your role.

And sometimes they're the same.

So you'll see at the top, whether it's one that you would share, or one that you would do differently.

And then after that section will be a notes section.

So this is a fillable PDF, and so if you're in your sessions and take your notes, and do your work, and then share.

And then, once you've gone through all of your sessions, and all your ratings, what you'll do is you'll come back to page two, this sort of key page, and then you'll put your readiness score in.

So in this infrastructure, you had four areas to rate yourself.

So you'll take the average of those scores, and then put that in to your worksheet.

So this should be able to give you that sort of stand back and look at this, and say, where are my areas of greatest need? Do I have some areas where really, ones and twos and threes, and we need to really prioritize that work, and where are we doing a little bit better? So this should really, hopefully, guide you.

And over the next several days, but again, hopefully this summer and into the fall.

So again, think about the sessions that are coming up, think about how this matches to your blueprint, and I know some school districts signed up for today, and they're sort of doing a divide and conquer, different teachers are going to different sessions, which is just great, 'cause it then becomes like your school plan, or your district plan, which is beautiful.

So we want to take a little bit of time, and just walk through each of these session topics for you, and a little bit of a view into what you're going to focus on in your session.

So let me turn it over to Dewayne,

infrastructure is yours, the peach, our peach. (laughs)

I love peach.

Good! (laughs)

All right, so talking about infrastructure, you're gonna hear a lot about the technology solution and instructional resources, what is your why? You know, why are you setting up these infrastructures, what does this look like? But ultimately, ensuring that your infrastructure meets the needs of instruction.

A lot of school systems, when they do set up these infrastructures, making sure that they're looking at their end users, the user experience, but ultimately, what expectation and outcomes do you want? What is their data and operability here? So this session will really walk you through that process, looking at technical support, but also making sure you help you develop your blueprint needs assessment statement for your district.

And this will be done by my good friends, Monte, Pete, and Kelly, Monday, on the first, at three PM.

Wonderful, thanks, Dewayne.

Then you've got two on equity and access, the first one is yours, tomorrow.

Yes, tomorrow, so we'll be talking about equity and access, and when we say equity and access, there's equity and access is more than just about giving students devices.

This is also entails digitizing your curriculum, looking at digital literacy, what are students gonna receive when they receive these devices? Once you put devices in the hands of students, what's next? So I think that's an important piece, when we talk about equity and access.

Thank you, Dewayne.

It was really- And also, as we mentioned earlier, wifi at home, right? You've got 60 days to put a SWAT team together to make sure that every student has a device, and some form of access at home.

That could be discounted partnership, a discount provided by, with a partner, it could be a wifi, could be a community hotspot that goes live again during this third phase, but it's gonna be critical to work all those educations so that when you go back to the school, every student's got a device and access.

Yeah, thank you, Tom.

If I just go back to Dewayne's infrastructure for a second on that why, and really being intentional with your choices, because, you know, what you're trying to do first, then you can go look for your platform or your resource, so if you know you want students to come together to do project-based learning, then you're really looking for a platform that'll do that.

If you're really looking for a way for parents and teachers to communicate, and have ongoing engagement, then what are, you know, what are you looking for? If you're looking for, again, students to come together and to be more about social-emotional needs than feeling as a class, right, and connecting, so it's really key, because we know this has happened, you know, or can happen at times where someone's chosen a device first, either a Chromebook is chosen, or an iPad for every grade level, and then later, it's now what do we do with that, or the kind of things that you're trying to do can't be done on that device.

So think about what you're trying to do, why you're trying to do that, and then go look to see, right, what will meet your needs.

Yeah, I'll just underscore the need here.

Because almost everybody's gonna be delivering a hybrid model this fall, with sometime remote, the ability to deliver on-site and remote in a program that's synced up, it just requires you to have a platform.

And so, schools that have put off this decision really need to make it this summer, and you have to do something that's really hard, to try to be very inclusive in your decision making, but decisive and quick, so that you have time to implement and train, so yeah.

I think you also, a lot of districts, when they think about this, they only think about students.

Also they think about (indistinct).

Having access and equity also, especially your first year teachers, who are just coming out of college with debt, and you know, they're probably staying in an apartment with multiple folks that can't afford the access, so really think about that.

Yep.

Right, and we also, I mean, this is just a reality of what just happened this spring, but it will be this fall, is that families may have had a device in their home, but that didn't mean they have enough for both parents to work from home, and the three or four siblings, right, to be doing that, so again, it just sort of changes, based on the situation.

Dewayne, you also were gonna comment on serving special needs.

Yeah, you have to, when we talk about equity and access, the other piece is the special education supports.

How are we supporting these students that already have some special challenges moving forward within their learning process? So looking at compliance, how are districts gonna meet the needs of these students? Also, when we reenter school for reopening, what does that even look like? I know a few districts are really thinking about maybe we only bring in our special education students on certain days, where we can do some social distancing within the building, because if you have a student that's really struggling with different reading levels or maybe the Braille access, you know, for reading, or may have different modalities where they can't utilize the different resources that you're providing them.

Or even the expertise in the household to provide that type of instruction.

What is your (indistinct).

So I think this is something that a lot of districts are struggling with, I know this is something that in the League, we immediately tried to address across the country, and then I think the other piece is, how do schools meet their hours, the mandates, for their IEPs, to ensure that they're in compliance? So this section, I think, is one of the most important ones here, when we talk about equity and access.

Not just talking about devices, here, but also compliance best practices, how are we looking at making sure that when we do develop these instructional lessons for students, that we're keeping the special education students in mind? And Dewayne, just to add to that, it's, this is all possible.

And it's all doable.

It's just that it takes some thought and planning, and sharing of best practices, it's really, I mean, Tracy's leading that session, with Kareem, but Tracy's been doing this for four years, and understands, you know, what does it look like when you're doing an IEP meeting virtually? How are teachers co-teaching and supporting students virtually? This is not just about special ed students, but about your gifted learners and your English language learners, so Tracy has walked that talk, and helped other teachers, you know, and providers be able to implement it successfully, you know, across the country, so this should be a popular session, Dewayne, because come and learn from folks that have sort of done this before you, and that they really want to share some of their lessons learned and best practices, and tips and recommendations for you.

So I'll take the next few, on instructional practices, under that umbrella, and one is just best practices, and it goes to what we were saying, is that many of us, many of us have been in this field for over 20 plus years,

and we've learned the hard way, (laughs)

when I learned what was happening this spring to you, so we've learned that when the delivery model changes, so do your instructional approaches.

Some things stay the same, but then some things look very different, you know, when you've moved from the classroom to an online environment, and then as a teacher, how you spend your time, and how you engage with your students changes, and your content, and your delivery systems.

So Lisa Dawley and Kerry Rice are going to do this session, this afternoon for us, and they've been leaders in teacher training around online learning and teacher development for years also.

So they're going to share some of those best practices, and I'm sure many of you will wish you'd heard those in February, right, or March.

But no time better than the present for that.

So really, also thinking about, this is not just the basics of student engagement and learning continuity, this is really about what does student choice look like, and how can technology support that? How do we really get at those higher order thinking skills, identifying and meeting student needs, that skips to the personalization and individualization, and social-emotional needs.

We'll touch on those in other sessions as well, so I'm looking forward to that a little later this afternoon.

Also, in instructional practices, we talk about synchronous versus asynchronous instruction, and such as we say, how do you balance, and what's the balance? So it's not really a balance, because, you know, you're choosing, it goes back to the why and the intentionality.

It's that if you're coming together with your students, or your teachers, you're asking them to come together with the students, is why is that? What's your intention there? Is this really about engagement? And it's really, again, about feeling that you're still a class, and that you need your students connecting to students.

And that feeling of belonging, or is it really about one-on-one instruction, where a group of children and students are struggling, and the data has shown you that, and you want to bring that small group together.

Is it about acceleration in learning, why are you bringing students together? And it should look different every day.

And so, you know, think about that, that it's not about 8:30 every morning, I do this, that's the beauty of online learning, it's sort of the flexibility of the schedule.

So we're going to dig into that and that's Chandre and Michele in that session on Monday.

Also, it sort of changes your role as a teacher, but also, think about the dependencies.

It shouldn't look the same for all students at all grade levels.

When you bring your kindergartners together, it should look different than maybe your middle school or your high school students, look different across subject areas, I might do this differently in math and science versus my ELA subjects, or art, you know, or music, but then also again, performance.

How are you using the data to really look at where students are struggling and need some support, and then, how am I using those synchronous sessions for those pieces? So again, go into the questions in the blueprint, those needs assessment statements, look at areas where you feel like you're doing a good job, and then where there's learning, and join us on Monday for that session.

So one more, under instructional practices, is this idea of evidence of student learning.

Things look differently when the student's not right in front of you.

You can see them when you're in the classroom with them.

Are they engaged, are they not engaged, you know, they either hand in their paper to you, you know, for an assessment, that looks very differently, and we heard a lot this spring, of teachers saying, I don't know if my students are engaged in learning.

I don't know if learning is occurring.

So we really want to dig into that.

Dan Gohl, who's the Chief Academic Officer at Broward County in Florida, has focused on this for a great deal of his career, and is going to talk with us about it on Tuesday, so how do you look at the data that you're gathering, and see evidence that your students are engaged, that they're supported, that they're socializing, that they're connecting, that they're reflecting, like, all those stages are showing that they're really involved with their work, and learning.

Let me give that, give Dan a big shout out.

Dan and Robert Runcie, along with Miami-Dade next door, have done really a terrific job preparing for and then shifting to remote learning and are, have great plans in place for this fall.

We just had Dan on a podcast, so don't miss that one.

Dan and Broward have been national leaders on the comprehensive learner record, in partnership with IMS Global.

So they're thinking really deeply about the, a comprehensive digital record for each learner, Dan's really, really thoughtful about trying to engage every learner in deeper learning, in every year, to make sure that they have a few of those transcendent moments around public products that they can incorporate into their record, so pay attention to that one.

Yeah, I would also echo that.

Broward has been a member of the League for years, and they have also been an awesome thought partner, supporting ours, bringing thoughts to our schools.

So- Pat, you're, and I'll just shout out for the last session that you decided, we had a couple of chat comments about engagement and about whether and how to use chat when you're doing hangouts, and that mixed, that new mixture of async and sync is really a live question, it's really been a blessing to have video this spring for the first time in widespread use, but we've seen some teachers try to recreate the existing classroom on video, and that's too much of a good thing.

So I think that seminar on getting that mixture right, of engaging in full synchronous occasionally, but being really intentional about when you do it, and then taking advantage of async, so that students have voice and choice over how and when they learn, is really important, so those are gonna be great sessions.

Yeah, and one that thing that just makes me so excited about this Academy, is that we are bringing these experts in the field together, and it's how to have a chance to learn from them.

And as we said, whether it's Tracy, whether it's Dan, whether Michele, all of these folks, have this just great experience there.

And to be able to sort of have that 90 minutes with each of them is really, really exciting, I think we're all going to learn a lot.

One point before we leave this is, that this note about time and learning.

One thing that happens in the classroom often is we say that time is the constant, and that learning is the variable.

So if the math class is 42 minutes, it's over in 42 minutes, whether everyone's learned or not, right, so you're constrained by time, and some students may have learned it, some may have learned it partially, some may have learned it in the first 15 minutes.

So learning is the variable there.

But once learning and instruction moves online, and then you can take away that, there's not the 42 minute bell that's gonna go off anymore, and so, the time becomes the variable, and learning is the constant.

So if the goal is really that everyone understands order of operations, I may already know it, right, and so, I'm moving on, but another student might have taken that whole day or, you know, week on that instruction, also needs some one-on-one synchronous time with the teacher, you know, may just take much more, so think about that, let go of those constraints of that time, you know, and the bell ringing, and think about how do you set up a learning environment that really has the focus on learning, and that the time has some flexibility, and I'm sure Dan will touch on that.

So Tom, we're gonna turn it over to you for engagement.

Yeah, we have a couple sessions coming up this week on student engagement, and some of you have mentioned this in the chat as a high priority for you to finally is to reengage your students.

We've heard from districts around the country that student engagement has been a challenge.

There's a few shining lights, Dewayne, I heard that St. Brain had about 98 percent student engagement, they had an even higher attendance and engagement than they did in the physical building, in the last few weeks of school.



Not everybody saw that level of success, and because so many states were really trying to protect kids by saying, we're not gonna penalize you for what happens during the pandemic, a lot of work wasn't graded, and so a lot of student engagement dropped off, because you know, things didn't, quote, "count." So the first tip is just gonna be to reengage with students.

We hope that most learners have an opportunity to go back to school in a physical way, for at least a few days in the first few weeks, to really reconnect and reestablish those personal relationships with teachers and with each other.

We hope districts really pay attention to those first couple weeks of school, and that they're super intentional about them.

Please don't try to just move learners on into the next grade, or the next class.

We think it's gonna be really important to stay flexible during those first few weeks, to reconnect, to reculturate, and to reform these expectations of engagement.

Use that on-time time that you have, which is gonna be so precious, really, for social-emotional learning, and just assess the growth, not only academic growth, but social-emotional growth, and to look for signs of trauma, 'cause a lot of our kids have been through really, really tough situations in the last three months, so use that valuable time in person, when you get it, to connect with kids, and to create new expectations for engagement.

When you do begin thinking about assignments for the fall, I'd encourage you to look for ways to do more project-based learning, and look for opportunities to add a bit more voice and choice, where you can, to try to promote interest and engagement on the part of young people.

We have a great session this week, coming up, with Pam, Debbie, Matt, and Maggie on Saturday, tomorrow, just talking about meeting kids where they are, and maintaining high levels of engagement.

So don't miss that session.

The next topic that is, has always been important, but now is more important than ever, is parent engagement.

Alberto Carvalho, the great superintendent in Miami-Dade said a few weeks ago that he's been delighted to see a new level of parent engagement in his district.

In fact, Miami-Dade is one of the districts that uses Remind, the text communication system, that really keeps parents, teachers, and students on the same page.

In Miami-Dade, they saw a 5X increase in the use of text-based communication, and it's clearly gonna drop off a little bit in the fall, but Carvalho posits that parents now have had a front row seat into their kids' education, and many of them are gonna stay involved in a way that they haven't been before, so how can we take advantage of the fact that many parents will be involved, because kids are learning at home, and want to be involved in a new and different way, and so we've got a great session coming up with Randy and Stephanie, Rodney, Chandre, on Monday, talking about parent relationships.

They're gonna look at new tools that you can use, including video and texting, but because more and more schools are gonna move on to platforms, they'll talk about the appropriate way for parents to monitor student progress, and trying to get that balance right, of not too much involvement, but the right kind of supportive parent involvement, so don't miss that session on Monday.

Thanks, Tom, and I'll just add that too, it's that everyone went through these changes in the spring, where normally, a parent doesn't hear every conversation that a teacher has with their students.

And every, you know, presentation, or every instructional component, or see every assessment.

And so, all of a sudden, the transparency that's there, that parents are seeing everything that a teacher is seeing and doing, and teachers are seeing into people's home, the way you're seeing into our homes today, and so, that just adds on a whole new dynamic, right, to this that brought discomfort and change, and then, how do we want to work through that? And so, they're really gonna help us talk about that on Monday.

And then Tom, training and professional development, a huge area for us.

Yeah, no, it's a giant area.

It's been rewarding to see so many districts shift so quickly and so adeptly, Dewayne, another one of your members is Lindsey Unified, Tom Rooney was on our podcast recently, talking about the day long Zoom fest that they did to kick off remote learning, and they did 23 breakout sessions, a great example of distributed leadership in that district of really embracing teacher leaders that became part of their professional development, and really taking advantage of the video conferencing and breakout features.

This has to be a priority, particularly if you're going to, if you're gonna be adopting a platform, if you're making changes in your instructional materials, if you're shifting to new instructional materials, if you're thinking differently about engagement strategies, differently about assessment strategies, you have to put a significant focus on professional learning for teachers.

Some of this can and should be whole group, and those sort of conference style video based opportunities like the one I described in Lindsey, but this is also a great time to think about micro-credentials, because they offer teachers, and you can prioritize the ones that are most important to your school or district, but they allow teachers to have optionality in terms of what to learn, how to learn, and how to demonstrate it.

Dewayne's shop, Digital Promise, is really the leading provider in digital credentials, so check out [digitalpromise.org](https://digitalpromise.org), and up in the right, you'll see micro-credentials, they have a great library of learning opportunities, so combine whole staff and micro-credential strategies to make sure that every teacher feels really supported during this shift.

To learn more about this, check out the session on Wednesday, Judy Campf is gonna be talking about the best practices in teacher professional development.

Thank you, Tom, and I'll just add here, you know, we talk about all the time, that for students, we want to create a safe place where they feel like they can take risks, and sort of, you know, try new things with their learning, and take chances, and so it's the same thing for teachers.

You know, if it's a new area for you, we want to create an area where you can learn, and then go try that out.

And it may not always be successful, and that you have a safe place, so that you're feeling supported by your school leaders, feeling supported by your district, and realize it's a journey, and that together, we will get there.

In each of the nine sessions that are to come, the presenters will be modeling for you what best practices look like in online learning, so that it's not a passive experience, and it's really engaging in active learning and active thinking and reflecting.

So please watch how they're presenting and see that, how they're modeling this for you, and then how you can learn from what that looks like.

So we're at next steps.

And so, thank you for joining us, and today we're gonna turn it over to some Q&A, but before we do that, we really hope that you embrace this journey, we have, over the past years, and it really does, the benefits of it, once you work through it are really astounding, as far as student engagement and learning and teacher professional growth.

So we really want an enhanced experience for you this fall, and into the future.

Please use your VTA blueprint over the coming days, and then beyond, to really help guide your work in this journey.

Please actively engage in these sessions with your presenters, they're here for you, they've raised their hand and volunteered to join us, you know, in this work, and so they really want to support, support you, and then stay connected.

We're coming together, as I said, as a group of colleagues in this Virtual Teaching Academy, and we really want to create a network of support that goes beyond just these six days in the summer.

So we'll sort of open it up for Q&A, and I don't know, Andrea or Steve or others, if there are some things that have come through for questions or in the chat pod, that you might want to direct to us.

We've got a question on engaging first graders, Pat, if you want to address that.

Was it more just of how to do that? Or...

Yeah.

Engaging younger learners.

Right.

I think that, I mean, certainly a piece of that is when do you come together in a synchronous environment, and then where do you do that, and sometimes those young learners, it is important to do that first thing in the morning, right, so you've sort of started their day with some consistency, that there's comfort, you know, in seeing their teacher, and seeing their classmates, and it may not be for very long, and it may not be for a full instructional period, but then, how do you do that? They also love to talk about something that they've done themselves, or that they've learned or they've made, so that sharing is really key, of how do you use the technology to really have them have a voice, and have them, you know, share their learning, and reflect on that.

Another thing- Let me mention another interesting tip here.

As your school teams are probably deep in thinking about schedule options right now, don't assume that every learner has to be on the same schedule in K-12.

Be really intentional, not only about your platform and instructional strategies, but be intentional about who's in the building, when and why.

In the state of Washington, they put out some really thoughtful guidance about trying to prioritize the needs of P3 learners, those primary learners, and they suggested that, for all the reasons that you're mentioning in the comment box, that it's more challenging to engage them in a blended learning model, than it might be for older learners that can work more independently for longer periods of time, and as a result, you may want to prioritize having them at the school building more frequently, maybe even daily, and then shifting to a day a week program four to 12, so part of the answer might just be having them on site a few more days a week than older students, so that they have a more structured, supportive environment.

This may also be beneficial to parents, in terms of the custodial aspect of schools, so I think there's a connection here between great online strategies for early learners, but also being really intentional about when they're in school.

Thank you, Tom, and just to add on to that, I mean, we know, this is true for everyone, but particularly our youngest learners, I mean, they really strive with routine and structure, and they are going to have expectations, and for many students, this spring, we know that what they could count on each day was that the teacher was in the classroom, or that this was going to be there, or that they were going to see a classmate each day.

And when that fell apart, that was quite disruptive, you know, for many, many children, so they are the things that they could count on most, you know, were taken away from them, and quite dramatically, so there's another part of that, of whether they're coming together face-to-face, or you're doing them in an online world, think about which of your students most need, you know, that contact and that consistency, and who can really, you know, adjust, and have more of a, a little bit more random, right, or as-needed basis.

Yeah, I agree, a lot of schools are looking at how do you keep kids moving, and how can they do some random jobs around the house, so the same way they have tasks in the classroom, continue those tasks at home.

Lot of districts have been looking at, how do we possibly send manipulatives home, so little packets where kids can actually utilize those manipulatives, 'cause you know, the modalities kids, younger kids, it's very important developing those skills.

Yep.

And that blend.

I'd say, just one more example on that is that it's really important for, as when you're going through a learning process, students, that they're hearing one another, we know that's particularly true in math or in the sciences, that if they're, you know, working all their problems off, alone, you know, and then they're not hearing other ways to solve the problem, or other ways that people approached it, so they might be doing their work asynchronously, but when they come together for the discussion, it's what was your, how did you get to that? Like, how did you solve that problem, and so that they can hear, can say, and particularly in math and science, that there's more than one way to get to the right answer, there's more than one answer, and that's how we learn, right, you don't want to be not being exposed to that thinking and that talking out loud.

So again, choose why you're coming together synchronously, and what's more beneficial, and for the age, and then the subject that you're teaching.

Right? Language barriers is a super tough one, I just want to acknowledge that.

My district here, where I tried being superintendent for a while, has about 120 languages spoken, so it's some of the most diverse zip codes in America, and languages is really a big challenge for these local districts, it's actually why, at the beginning of the pandemic, that all these local districts relied heavily on a print strategy, than an online strategy, because it was so difficult to accommodate the needs of so many languages online.

So there are much better translation services, both Google and Microsoft have really good translation services, but if you do have a very large number of languages, you may this fall have to rely on pretty extensive printing for portions of your program, just to be able to communicate with parents.

Dewayne, do you have any tips on that, where you have super diverse language needs in a community? Yeah, so there are various resources out there.

One thing I will say, most LMSes now have some immersive readers built into them.

And they're very good in the four or five top languages, right? Yes, they're very good in four or five languages, I do know a few that have developed immersive reader for Microsoft,

that now (indistinct) well over 80 plus languages, where it can- Wow, that's great.

So yeah, great, great resources out there.

We also got a question on platform, and I would say that, while Dewayne and I would agree that Google Classroom and Microsoft Classroom are not full LMSes, they do have the benefit of being integrated with a set of productivity tools that have really good language translation and adaption, so they, that's part of the plus and minuses that, to take a look at about those platforms.

Yeah, especially now that we're home, you gotta really think about a full-fledge LMS, 'cause you're really look at data and operability.

You want everything to work seamlessly and talk to each other.

You don't want something where kids have to go 12 different places to do one thing, one task, so that use is very, very important.

Go ahead.

(indistinct) Just to add to that, though, you know, the challenge of having multiple resources that way, so that folks are having to have multiple usernames, passwords, different, you know, that if I didn't see that email from the teacher, along with the other 20 that came, I missed, you know, what my login was.

So the more you can put things into one system, and so there's one place to go, one, you know, if there's one, you can do that with a single sign on or a way to have one username and password.

Just make that easier, because I heard that myself, you know, if the parent had to learn one more place to go- Are you thinking about kids in the special education needs? My daughter, she had an IEP when she first, she's now going to the eighth grade, but when she first went to middle school, she struggled, because she had to go to multiple places, but when she went to that middle school and they had one LMS, Canvas was there, she flourished, like, she was an A-B student, and really, it was just an organizational thing.

Yep.

Yep.

And you take away those, we're making it more complex, right, or adding complexities, you're just trying to get to the learning, yep.

Yep.

On platforms, we've got a question about platforms you'd recommend, so in addition to our host at Blackboard, the most widely used platforms, Schoology is now part of PowerSchool, so that is now an integrated SAS and LMS, Canvas from Instructure is widely used, particularly in secondary and post-secondary, we've mentioned a couple of the free platforms that are out there.

Dewayne, do you have any resources posted on platforms you'd recommend? Yeah, I can find something, I can forward some resources.

I think we have some posts.

He'll be talking about this more when you do, in your equity and access session, right? Yeah, it's important, you've really gotta look at, when you're vetting these platforms, make sure it's meeting the needs of your instructional needs.

You're just not looking for a platform that's gonna fit you now, because COVID is here.

You need to find something that's gonna fit you for the next four to five years, or even 10 years out.

Because you'll be going through this again in the next two to three years.

Yeah.

So this, we got a question about, how do you engage online, how do you engage learners online, in ways other than video? Well, the platform's gonna help you answer that question, 'cause any one of the platforms that we've talked about will help you build a blended learning program that will allow students to move through a set of assignments, and probably include a variety of content, much of it being asynchronous, that will allow them to do more learning independently on the platform.

And the, you know, Tom, you brought up Project Base learning, and then we've talked a lot about student choice, and then Dewayne, you were saying projects around the home, I mean, the more that you can get, you know, for all of us, for that way, if we can choose it, you know, or if we have a choice, that that leads to student engagement.

And that ability to come together, show your work, that whole interaction, it's really about how am I engaging with the content.

A video can be quite passive, you know, we don't think about that video being passive, but just watching a video, it's not that different than listening to a teacher do a lecture for 20 minutes.

(indistinct) Very passive learner.

So think about, do you want students actively engaged? So what is it that they need to input their reflection, their choice, their opinion, come together with other students, so the more that they have that chance to, like I said, engage, interact, then you're going to build the motivation, right, to learn, and then to come back.

Yeah, Pat, we just released a book with ASCD called "The Power of Place," that really encourages community as classroom, and we suddenly, in a weird way, have community as classroom, so how to help kids take advantage of that, how many teachers can be creative with prompts that, where and when, not everybody can walk outside and walk around the block, so I appreciate that, being sensitive to the context that your students live in.

To the extent you can invite them to walk around the block and investigate that, and reflect on that, one day, that walk can be about the biology, and the ecology that you see.

The next day, it can be about economics and demographics, the who lives here and who owns and runs businesses here.

The next day, it can be about art and architecture, so invite kids to really get to know their place that they're from, to think deeply about it in different lenses, to engage with that to the extent that they can, to write and think about it, I think those are all great strategies that we can use this fall to try to maintain engagement.

Yeah, I agree, engagement is the key for this to be successful.

You gotta think about it from a student perspective, put yourself in that student's place.

Would you want to sit 45 minutes just listening to a lecture, like we really have to look at that.

I think there's a question here, that how do teachers and students handle students, how do teachers handle school students who are out, start off strong, and then drop off.

Like, that's something that you really gotta work with with your school administration, your school psychologist, your social-emotional person in your building, always being in constant contact with your students.

Try to figure out why, why did that student stop? So I do know a few districts, they charge their teams to, if a kid doesn't show up in two to three days, they do an outreach.

You know, a phone call.

If the kid's, you know, don't hear from the kid within a week or two, I mean, that's gonna be a house visit from, you know, maybe a truancy officer or someone.

Like, you gotta really think about what's really going on with the student, maybe they don't have internet access.

Maybe we need to provide them internet access, you know, maybe with the economic downturn, you know, the parent may not be able to pay the bill.

We need to make sure to figure out how do we fix that, or God forbid, you know, something may be going on in that household that may not be right.

You know, we may have to get children's services involved.

So this pandemic has really opened up a lot of things that you know, schools are now taking on a lot more than just education.

We are really the one stop shop, and how do we best support our students, now we have to do that full wrap around service.

And integrate and work with community members even more than we have ever before.

Because a lot of our school leaders are seen as the information hub about what's going on, so it's, we gotta really step up and figure out how do we work together more.

Dewayne, thank you for that, one piece is- I got a request for a shameless plug, so the book's called "The Power of Place."  
(laughter)

Get it now on Amazon.

It's a great, we wrote it with our friends from Teton Science School, the really, the world leader in place-based education, it's, that book's built around their design principles that are, we have a question about instructional design, and I just, makes me think of the design principles here are about inquiry based, and viewing the community as the classroom, and starting with the learner being really learner-centered.

Pat, are there other resources coming up this week on instructional design that you want to point people to? We have a couple, and then one thing I wanted to mention, the session with, on student relationships with Pam and Debbie, Maggie and Matt, are really want to get to that student engagement also, so I think it's important, right, to attend that, because I know Matt and Maggie, you know, are in the classroom, right, living these experiences all the time, and how they're really working to engage students, and this point about having the right systems and platforms is, if you have the data there to show you who's showing up, who's engaging, and who's struggling, then that's where, instead of bringing all 25 of your students, and trying to do that, it's very hard to have 25 engaging at the same time.

But when these five look like they're drifting off, or look like they're losing, I'm gonna bring just those five, right, to the next session, and then they all have (indistinct), and then I'm addressing learning needs.

(indistinct) If they need to be seeing their statement, and that they have a voice.

So how do we use the data, the technology, and the flexible schedule to really do that? I want to make another quick response to the instructional design question that we had.

We had a number of questions about, how do I make my lesson virtual, how do I do a cool interactive slide show, I would encourage our audience to avoid falling into the trap of trying to recreate your curriculum as a digital curriculum, and doing it yourself.

Don't do that.

(laughter)

This is now a team sport.

Yes.

You have to work together with your colleagues, and build a set of agreements around instructional resources, there is so much terrific content out there, there is so much terrific free content, open content available at OER Commons and Curriki, the free, great curriculum from EL Education, please think hard about using a common, open curriculum with your colleagues, and spend your time thinking about engagement, and relationship building, and assessing needs.

I'd much rather see you spend your time on those super important issues, especially this fall, than trying to create a really cool digital content.

Tom, that's such a great point.

And we saw a lot of the teacher stressors this spring, of saying I'm spending all day in Zoom meetings, you know, all day and then all night, I'm creating curriculum, and so that's not what we want.

So the choosing the curriculum and choosing those instructional resources, the school district leaders, right, should be doing that, you know, for,

with the help of teachers, but then (indistinct)

That goes back to the planning and decision making.

Where those decisions get made, and then teachers get the training on those resources, and the support.

Many of your series, if you're in a math series or an English/language arts series, then hopefully they have digital resources that have already been created and that are a part of the offering, and if you haven't been using those or accessing them, now's the time to ask, and so, don't do those yourself, please don't create Powerpoint presentations and do that, and as you come together, that's the discussion, that's for the deep learning, that's for the engagement.

One thing that Dan will probably talk about this on the evidence of student learning, but one thing that we used at Connections, and I know Florida Virtual, other folks have used this, is we call them discussion-based assessments.

And so, when students are learning, and they're taking assessments online, as a teacher, you really want to know, did they not only do the reading, but did they, did the learning occur, and was it deep enough that you feel satisfied that the learning occurred.

So that discussion based assessment is really a one-on-one, you know, with the student, and so you get a chance to ask two or three really deep, probing questions that really get at, right, the learning or the struggle, or the challenge.

So again, it goes to why are you coming together synchronously, how are you using that time, that doesn't take a lot, you probably already know what the questions are in your mind, right, of knowing did the students understand the chapter or the symbolism, or the message.

You know, or the conflict.

And then, how do you get at those things, and then move through that, okay, so again, think about how you're using your time.

I know there was a question about how do you convince your school leader that things should be flexible.

So this is why this, all of these sessions are for school leaders and teachers together, we didn't break them off in separate tracks, because everybody needs to be having this conversation together.

And think about, as Dewayne mentioned, don't recreate the classroom in this virtual environment, then you're going to lose the benefits that come along with the technology.

And so, how do you think about these differently, it's almost the best of both worlds.

And so, how do you kind of move in that direction.

I think it's very important for school leaders, especially when they're developing these plans, to be flexible, also have contingency plans.

Also, do you have, could you consider what your state requirements are? So if, you know, COVID affects one building, you know, are we shutting down all of the buildings in the district? Or are we just heading down this one building? I think we really have to be flexible here, and have contingency plans, plan A, plan B, and plan C.

Yeah.

Great.

I know we just have a few minutes left, and that we can still take another question or two, but I also just wanted to remind everybody, right, that we are kicked off today with the first of 10 sessions in this VTA, and that we're going through Wednesday, July first, so another session later this afternoon,

two tomorrow, Saturday, hopefully (laughs)

folks will engage with us.

Two on Monday, two Tuesday, two Wednesday.

And again, we want you to bring your blueprint to that session, and then engage with us.

Which will be great, so three o'clock Eastern Time, this afternoon, so it'll always be noon to 1:30 Eastern Time, three to 4:30 Eastern Time for your sessions.

And each of these sessions are being recorded, so we really do hope that you can join us in person, live, that's always great for the interaction, but then we know that can be hard to do, based on schedules.

So because you've registered for the Academy, then you'll receive the recordings for all 10 of these.

And the Powerpoints, and any additional resources that we're going to put on to a micro-site.

All right.

How do we educate all students, minority, foster, care group, home, special ed, equitably? That's a great question.

Start with the kids farthest from justice, farthest from opportunity, make them the priority in how you think about the schedule, the staffing, the resources, the engagement, make them a priority, and make sure that they're, as you're developing these plans, that they're at the center.

I echo that 100 percent.

I added some resources from Brooklyn Lab, which serves about 35 percent, it's 100 percent poverty, and 35 percent kids with complex needs, and they've got a beautiful set of resources, a 10 point reopening plan, there's a great blog on reopening for equity, and then yesterday, they just posted a 115 page facilities guide with really, really deep detail on how to be thoughtful about working with complex needs, both in terms of structure, schedule, facilities modifications, health adaptations, so there are a lot of great resources out there.

And Dewayne will have his section tomorrow.

A full 90 minutes, right, on the equity and access, but I love Dewayne, how you made sure that we were focusing on this digital access, and everything that it entails, because again, it's not enough to give a child a device, then just assume they know how to use it.

And all of the, again, the digital literacy, digital citizenship, you know, all those pieces that come with it.

So again, you can see why this spring was so challenging that if someone didn't have access, or didn't have a device, then they of course didn't have the other components in place, which are really just essential to move us forward.

So again, thinking about your plan, and areas to focus on that might not have been, they weren't, you know, part of the spring, because that was in a panic mode, but now they can be, right, now we need to give thought to those things.

Yeah.

And it's not, and I hope folks understand that when we, when I was in DCPS, we intentionally did not go one to one, because when I first joined, we immediately noticed that we were not ready for one to one, because none of those pieces were in place.

First and foremost, the digitizing of curriculum.

It took us a year or two, one, we had to purchase a bona fide LMS.

Once we did that, two, we had to develop the curriculum and what the experience is.

Three, we had to train folks.

So that's three years right there.

Four, we had to develop a plan of what one to one would look like, and then find funding, and then five, getting the training, not only with curriculum, but now on a platform, on devices, and then what is the rollout phase? How do we get equity to students? How do we, you know, have we surveyed kids? Do we, do kids, we know what kids need and want? Do, you know, are kids' voices at the table when you're developing curriculum? That is your end user, so they should be at the table, so it's a long process.

But I, what I, this blueprint will do is to help you break those up into pieces, and make them into small enough chunks so that you can kind of put your hands around 'em and have a starting point.

So make sure you bring your blueprints with you, really utilize them, because I think, if you don't, it'll become overwhelming.

And you'll never get anywhere.

It's just too much, right, and we know that.

We know that schools, I mean, we are focusing, we're trying to stay in our lane, (indistinct) teaching and learning, because there's a lot of conversations going on around transportation, and again, the school schedules, and cleaning, and you know, of the buildings, so there's a lot going on, and we understand that, but this part that we feel like we can do, we can support, and then we can do a better job so that more engagement, more student learning, and teachers, those of you, you know, who felt very good about your in-class instruction, and about your performance as a teacher, suddenly that became in question.

All of a sudden you went home and said, I don't feel as competent as a teacher anymore, and I did for 26 years, or however many years you were teaching, so we want to shift that back, saying how can you feel just as effective and comfortable with the tools that you have, comfortable with this environment, and feel like you're really making a difference for the students that you teach, and that you're supported in a community.

Yes.

Great.

All right.

Anything else, if not, I think we will thank you again for joining us.

Thanks for driving the bus, Pat.

(laughter)

You're welcome, it was my pleasure.

All right, thank you all, we hope to see you in the upcoming sessions.

Thanks- Thanks, Dewayne.

(indistinct)

Thanks, Pat.

Thank you.

(computer chime)

(soft piano music)