

Taylor County Schools

Performance-Based Model of Non-Traditional “Cyber Snow Days” Instruction for Students

Rationale:

The Taylor County School District is a Performance Based School District that has been using virtual learning and a student/computer one to one initiative for four years. All stakeholders have been trained and are well versed in the educational approaches and instructional strategies utilized within a performance based educational model. The Taylor County Board of Education and all three building level SBDM committees have been trained and support the performance based education model. Our current system of educating students within our performance based education model will be the driving component in our cyber snow plan application.

**“Non-Traditional Instruction”
Application per KRS 158.070**

District

Date

DEFINITIONS:

Blended Learning

A formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path or pace. While still attending a “brick-and-mortar” school structure, face-to-face classroom methods are combined with computer-mediated activities.

Innovation

A new or creative alternative approach to existing instructional and administrative practices intended to improve student learning and student performance of all students.

Learning Management System

A learning management system (LMS) is a software application or Web-based technology used to plan, implement, and assess a specific learning process.

Student Attendance Day

Means any day that students are scheduled to be at school to receive instruction, and encompasses the designated start and dismissal time.

NOTE: Expand the text boxes as necessary.

1. Please describe your overall approach to combating lost instruction on adverse weather or other emergency days? How have you involved all stakeholders in planning for this approach?

Stakeholder input has been crucial to the development of our “Non-Traditional Instruction” application. We have utilized staff, parent, student, community input to generate data indicating mutual support of the initiative. Through our district Facebook, web page, and twitter social media accounts, we have offered our stakeholders the opportunity to provide input and suggestions on the various aspects of implementing a non-traditional instruction plan to be offered in the event of weather emergencies. We will utilize our board approved early release Friday schedule to conduct parent, student, community, and staff forums to train and inform all stakeholders of the Cyber-snow plan benefits, details and procedures once we receive Kentucky Department of Education approval.

Our students currently have the ability through our district virtual offerings and capabilities to access instruction 24/7. The Taylor County Virtual Charter School is the central operational hub for our staff, students, and community to access unlimited virtual/internet offerings at no cost. The virtual academy is staffed and available five days a week throughout the year including all breaks, vacations, and snow days.

With a solid virtual foundation as well as a district wide pre-planned performance based curriculum, our district is prepared to offer all students performance based educational opportunities during both regular school days as well as days that weather may prevent students from attending on campus.

The planning process will consist of all teachers meeting during early release Fridays in grade-level (for elementary school) and content-level (for middle and high schools) Professional Learning Communities to determine how best to continue instruction while missing school for inclement weather.

A virtual method and Cyber-snow folder for all students will roll-out by December 1 of the current school year. Teacher web pages (via School Pointe) will post virtual Cyber-snow day assignments for students with Internet accessibility. Cyber-snow folders will be sent home with every student with a minimum five day assignment and maximum ten day assignment schedule focused around math, reading, and college/career readiness standards and their students’ personalized learning plan.

To allow students and parents the ability to contact teachers regarding instructional activities, the district will have two options available: Teachers will either:

- report to school call center – virtual academy or media center (providing travel is acceptable) or
- access CIITS online. Teachers may also use additional online sources (via Google Domain or email, texting, etc.) during Cyber-snow days to be available for live access to students and other colleagues. This agenda (or “meeting notes”), including their hours worked, will be shared (via email and/or hard copy) with building principals.

2. What evidence of capacity and previous experiences with non-traditional environments does the district have?

The Taylor County School District is a Performance Based School District that has been using virtual learning on a student/computer one for one initiative for four years. We have been flipping classrooms, producing video lessons for our students and providing an anytime, anywhere learning environment for five years.

Our district currently offers a virtual charter school option to all students as well as adult learners throughout our community. Within our virtual center we have both classified and certified employees guiding students through multiple internet based programs, enabling them to work on their current course schedule as well working ahead on accelerated credits. Two hundred fifty students this summer took accelerated virtual courses to get ahead, enabling them to complete their required subjects well before their senior year.

Our district allows students to choose the learning environment that matches their learning styles. We schedule our students with teachers who are most effective teaching with the instructional method that the student chooses. Our performance based instructional settings include:

Traditional

The way school has been taught for the last 100 years, what you think of when you see education. The teacher stands at the front of the class, lectures, students take notes and take a test. Students work on the same content, at the same pace, for the whole semester.

Self-Paced

Students watch teacher produced videos, complete assignments, learn material, and following mastery move to the next grade level content. Students are not required to wait for their peers to master the concept because the learning is "self-paced". The content and skills students master are the same as in the traditional setting, the delivery method is different.

Project Based

Hands on learning where students learn skills and then apply those skills to achieve mastery through a project such as constructing a building, rebuilding an engine, or growing flowers in a greenhouse. Students learn skills throughout the project and classroom is blended with the project work.

Peer/Group Led

Students are grouped into teams which learn content and teach the content to other teams in the classroom. The teacher assists the groups but the groups are responsible for learning the content and presenting it to their peers in a format where it can be mastered.

Virtual

24/7/365 learning. Virtual is an online educational system which can assist students who are behind and need to catch up or students who are ahead and need to take college classes while still in high school. The virtual program also allows the district to help adults who dropped out of school, regardless of how long it's been, to get the credits necessary to receive a diploma from the Taylor County School District.

Cardinal Academy

The Taylor County Cardinal Academy encourages students to become self disciplined-independent learners. An internship matching the student's college/career choice is established and monitored. Students will complete a capstone student showcase presentation highlighting the connection of their learning experiences with the core content instruction mastered.

Our staff and students currently teach and learn in a non-traditional educational environment. This will allow for optimal success as a non-traditional instruction schedule is implemented in case of inclement weather or emergency days.

3. What learning management system will the district use to manage the non-traditional program? What features does this system possess that can track student participation and measures of learning? Include in your description how the district is following the new Digital Guidelines from KDE. What other digital platforms, applications or tools will the district use to ensure learning is taking place on non-traditional student attendance days?

As a result of our district being performance-based, we offer a multitude of learning management options to personalize learning for all students. Our school's Google Domain allows all students access to Google Drive and Apps for Education. This program offers online communication among teachers and students both through live chat and real-time collaborative editing. Cloud storage offered through Google Drive ensures files are readily available. OdysseyWare, The Carnegie Learning Mathia Software, along with MathXL are programs currently used by students for virtual learning. These provide detailed reports that track student progress and participation. Our vBrick Media District System as well as teacher web pages house teacher-created video lessons, ensuring that students are able to receive instruction on non-traditional days.

Finally, email submissions will allow collaboration and tracking of student participation. All of our management systems are aligned with the Kentucky Digital Guidelines by allowing anytime, anywhere learning at the students' own pace. All content within the platforms are aligned to the common core standards as well.

4. Please describe in detail the process the district will use on non-traditional student attendance days. Please include how you will account for all students' access to on-line resources and how you will provide equitable instructional materials for those students that do not have access to the internet? Include how community partners will be engaged and any opportunities that will exist at community locations or if the district will open schools to provide access.

Students, parents, staff and community will be notified of the non-traditional status day via our One Call system, radio messages, television, website announcements, plus social media (district Facebook, Twitter, & Instagram accounts).

Students' role on non-traditional day consists of:

- One Call along with website information will specify which Cyber-snow folder assignments to complete (snow day #1, #2, #3, etc.)
- Those with Internet access will have options to complete online activities through our online management system or traditional paper/pencil activities from their Cyber-snow folders.
- Those without Internet access will have traditional paper/pencil activities to complete in their folders.
- If students need assistance, they can collaborate with their teachers, who will be on call, via email, phone, and Google Drive.
- Students will submit assignments based on the learning management system they have chosen or by turning in assignments on the next day school is in session.

Teachers' role on non-traditional day consists of:

- Teachers will log on to various learning management systems to be available to assist students as well as track progress and participation.
- If teachers are not assisting students, they will collaborate via Google Drive.
- An administrative team will be available at each site to manage the communication flow and direct all stakeholders to the appropriate professional.

Community partners' roles on non-traditional days consist of:

- Local radio stations and emergency management system will make announcements regarding non-traditional day status.
- We will need community sponsorship for the purchase of Cyber-snow folders

5. Please explain the professional learning plan you will be implementing to ensure certified staff have the knowledge and capacity they need to provide quality blended instruction to students. Also describe how you will incorporate CIITS and any additional technology platforms teachers may use.

All returning staff have been previously trained in all aspects of non-traditional instructional delivery methods including multiple virtual platforms that will be utilized as well as blended and hybrid teaching methods. In order to refresh returning certified staff and initially develop new staff members, the district will offer early release Friday sessions to allow school content Professional Learning Communities to receive staff development trainings, develop (snow day) pre-planned instructional curriculum, activities, and common assessments. A joint committee, including teachers, principals, and district leadership, have developed the following timeline and development needs:

August 8 – application approved by all stakeholders, superintendent, and school board

August 15 – applications submitted to KDE

August 29 – Early release district-wide PLC session with non-traditional instruction plan preview

Sept. 12 – Teachers will receive additional training with blended instruction as well as the TC Virtual platforms utilized to maintain the snow day instructional schedule. The training will be conducted by the TC technology integration specialists.

October – All certified teachers will utilize three early release Fridays to pre-design ten days equivalent of instructional activities with common assessments aligned to common core, college and career readiness measurement standards.

October 31 – Pre-planned performance based instructional activities will be uploaded to applicable websites, virtual platforms as well as individual student snow day folders (all students will utilize snow folders as well as offered the virtual opportunity to complete their performance based activities).

November – Final accountability rubrics devised along with implementation of a student performance based credit report system to be utilized district-wide. District staff will specify the procedures to be followed by all staff to indicate student completion of instruction resulting in performance based attendance credit.

Communication plan reviewed with all parents, students, staff, and community stakeholders. The communication strategic plan will focus on procedures, notifications, instructional access to teachers and certified support staff followed by a call center or web-based district Q&A site to address all student and parent needs. (All certified staff will train and inform students of procedures and value)

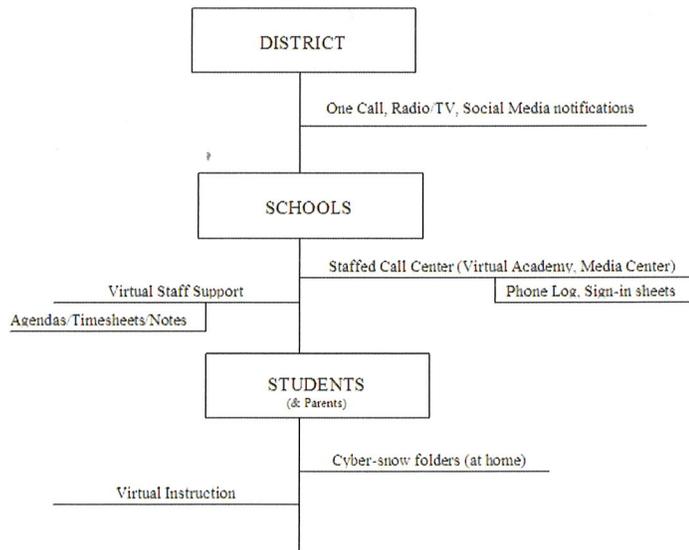
December – Activate snow folder take home version with all students which includes instructional activity guide, step by step procedures as well as district contact access times.

6. Please describe the deployment of certified and classified school staff on non-traditional student attendance days. In what ways will certified and classified school staff complete their contractual obligations on these days (access the learning management system from home, serving as facilitator at school or community access points, serving as a phone facilitator). Please include a visual representation (e.g. chart, spreadsheet)

Designated staff (to be determined at Professional Learning Community meetings prior to December 1) will develop a plan for accessibility, either virtually or physically on Cyber-snow days.

All staff have keys to enter buildings, so either the media centers and/or virtual academy (at middle and high schools) will be designated as “open” if said staff are able to travel to work that day. Once said staff are there, they will answer phone calls, email, etc.

Staff planning to work virtually will begin by accessing Google Drive by 8am with their cohort. An agenda will be developed collaboratively to determine what direction they need to focus, for example program review, monitoring student progress (in CIITS), common assessments, etc. Staff will provide building principals of agenda and “minutes” (or copies of common assessments, etc.) as evidence of fulfilling their contractual obligations.



7. Please describe the process the district will use to collect information on participation, what outcomes are expected and how those outcomes will be assessed on non-traditional student attendance days?

The Taylor County School Board of Education will support the non-traditional instruction process with the following student accountability guidelines:

- All students will complete pre-designed performance based instructional activities each day that a Cyber-snow day is announced per the superintendent.
- Student activities will include instructional lessons from all contents included on the students' current schedule.
- Each instructor will be prepared to score their student caseloads upon assignments returning from the school weather emergency day.
- Students will have two days to complete the assignments and return to teachers to gain credit for full attendance credit.
- Teachers will produce a detailed report of completion credit to each building principal for approval.
- The building principal and school based attendance clerk will submit a performance based attendance report to the DPP and superintendent for final approval to be sent to KDE.

Due to currently operating under a performance based instructional model, we fully expect continued optimal learning to take place during snow days. We will monitor the effectiveness of non-traditional Cyber-snow days through our pre-designed content common assessments and the pre-planned MAP assessment calendar.

We certify that this application was reviewed and approved by the

Taylor County

Board of Education at a regular meeting of the Board on

8-12-14

Date

David Cook 8-5-14

Superintendent

Date

Jay Adams

8-5-14

Local Board of Education Chair

Date

Terry Holliday, Commissioner of Education

Date

Please download this application and return completed form, including required signatures (scan completed document as a PDF file) to david.cook@education.ky.gov or mail it to:

David Cook, Director
KDE - Division of Innovation and Partner Engagement
1st Floor CPT
500 Mero St.
Frankfort, KY 40601