

What Is an Instructional Day?

The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school. The importance of in-person learning is well documented, and there is already evidence of the negative impacts on children because of school closures in the spring of 2020. With that in mind, the Tennessee Department of Education understands that many local contexts in Tennessee do not allow all children to return to in-person learning at the start of the 2020–21 school year. The department encourages districts to prioritize in-person learning with young learners and vulnerable students. Moreover, all students must receive daily instruction, not just content delivery. If young students and vulnerable groups of students are receiving remote instruction as their primary learning environment, instruction with high levels of engagement should be prioritized over methods of content delivery.

What is the difference between instruction and content delivery in a daily schedule?

Examples of Content Delivery	Examples of Instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-minute video lesson • 45-minute online learning module • 15-minute paper assignment • 1-hour work packet with guided questions/writing task • Asynchronous recorded lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synchronous lessons with student engagement • Synchronous discussion • Synchronous question-and-answer • Phone-based question-and-answer (formative) • Phone-based feedback on student work

There are more flexible scheduling options in the synchronous schedule so the time is extended. A district should always modify schedules to meet the needs of the school as well as the minimum hour requirements.

Sample Kindergarten Schedule

(4 hours daily average plus 0.5 hours for stockpile days = 4.5 hours daily average)

In-person instruction should be prioritized for young children. The American Association of Pediatrics recommends limited screen time and high levels of teacher-to-student and student-to-student engagement. If students must receive remote learning, a district should design instruction that focuses on discovery, interaction, and limited independent practice. For these reasons, the department strongly discourages using pre-packaged content delivery with kindergarten students.

Content	Sample Remote Options
Early Literacy (90–120 minutes)	15–30 minutes of live or recorded knowledge-building content (curriculum-specific lessons such as those available on the TDOE Online Learning Tool or resources such as Storybook Online) 30–45 minutes of teacher-led foundational skills lessons (synchronous instruction is strongly preferred, and daily lessons are available on the TDOE Online Learning Tool)

	15–30 minutes of decodable practice (this practice could be completed with a family member or in small groups using LMS options)
Early Math (60–90 minutes)	15–30 minutes of live or recorded conceptual math learning (curriculum-specific lessons such as those available on the TDOE Online Learning Tool) 30 minutes of exploratory numeracy activities (synchronous learning is strongly preferred, and TDOE has a recommended suite of lessons available) 15–30 minutes of numeracy practice (this practice could be completed with a family member or in small groups using LMS options)
Physical Activity (30–60 Minutes)	Students should be encouraged to play and move for 30 to 60 minutes of every day. The department recommends that these activities do not occur using screen time.
Exploratory Activities (30–60 Minutes)	In-person learning would focus on center-based learning, science explorations, and authentic inquiry. Schools could choose to accomplish these activities through weekly kit-based learning, or the activities could focus on home-based play with things like legos, Magna-tiles, manipulatives, plastic action figures or cars, outdoor spaces, and plastic measuring equipment.

Sample Elementary Schedule

(6.5 hours daily average plus 0.5 hours for stockpile days = 7 hours daily average)

When districts are selecting digital platforms, most are choosing between two different options. One option includes a pre-packaged content delivery platform in which teachers have the opportunity to support pre-packaged curriculum. Most vendors of such content state that it is aligned to TN Academic Content Standards. The department strongly encourages districts using this option to engage teachers in adapting materials to local needs, verifying alignment to standards, and developing a plan to reinforce lost learning in addition to the pre-packaged content. Teachers should regularly plan and adapt pre-packaged content collaboratively to ensure that all students are receiving equitable instruction.

Another option for digital learning allows teachers to use an LMS platform, adapt district-adopted curricular materials, and deliver regular and consistent synchronous learning. With this option, teachers should have regular collaborative planning sessions regardless of their assignment (e.g., online learning, staggered learning, in-person instruction) to ensure that all students are receiving equitable instruction.

	Content Delivery Platform		Synchronous LMS Platform
8:00–8:30 am	Reading Instruction Module: platform content	8:00–10:00 am	Morning Meeting (8:00–8:15 launch for literacy) Synchronous Reading Block: Read-Aloud, Discussion, and Guided Questions *In grades K-2, foundational skills instruction will occur 8:30–9:00, and 9:00–9:30 will be the read-aloud portion of the lesson.

8:30–9:30 am	Teacher-delivered Read Aloud, Discussion, and Guided Questions *In grades K–2, foundational skills instruction will occur 8:30–9:00, and 9:00–9:30 will be the read-aloud portion of the lesson.	10:00–10:30 am	Physical Activity
9:30–10:00 am	Physical Activity	10:30–11:00am	Reading Practice (rotational with Tier II and III intervention included)
10:00–10:30 am	Writing (rotational with Tier II and III intervention included)	11:00–11:30 am	Writing (rotational with Tier II and III intervention included)
10:30–11:00 am	Break	11:30am–Noon	Lunch
11:00–11:30 am	Independent Reading Practice (rotational with Tier II and III intervention included)	Noon–1:00 pm	Synchronous Math Block: instruction, task-based work, discussion, debrief, and numeracy practice (e.g., number talks)
11:30am–Noon	Lunch	1:00–1:30 pm	Science Instruction/Exploration Activity
Noon–12:30 pm	Math Instruction Module: platform-delivered content	1:30–2:30 pm	Library, Exploration, Elective Rotation: virtual with extension practice
12:30–1:00 pm	Math Practice: teacher-delivered discussion and feedback	2:30–3:30 pm	Parent Check-ins
1:00–2:00 pm	Science, Exploration and Play (also additional Intervention opportunity)		
2:00–2:30 pm	Independent Reading/Enrichment		
2:30–3:30 pm	Parent Check-ins		

Sample Fifth-Grade Schedules

(6.5 hours daily average plus 0.5 hours for stockpile days = 7 hours daily average)

	Content Delivery Platform		Synchronous LMS Platform
8:00–9:00 am	ELA Instruction Module: platform content (Tier II and III intervention included)	8:00–10:00 am	Morning Meeting (8:00–8:15 launch for literacy) Synchronous Literacy Block: Read Aloud, Discussion, and Guided Questions
9:00–9:30 am	Teacher-delivered Read Aloud, Discussion, and Guided Questions	10:00–10:30 am	Physical Activity
9:30–10:00 am	Physical Activity	10:30–11:00 am	Reading Independent Practice (rotational with Tier II and III intervention included)

10:00– 11:00 am	Math Instruction Module: platform content	11:00– 11:30 am	Social Studies: synchronous content
11:00– 11:30 am	Lunch	11:30am –Noon	Lunch
11:30am –Noon	Teacher-delivered Math Instruction: feedback and discussion	Noon– 1:00 pm	Synchronous Math Block: instruction, task-based work, discussion, debrief, and numeracy practice (e.g., number talks)
Noon– 12:30 pm	Science: delivered module (rotation: 2 days platform content, 2 days teacher-delivered, 1 day flex)	1:00– 1:30 pm	Science: synchronous content
12:30– 1:00 pm	Social Studies: delivered module (rotation: 2 days platform content, 2 days teacher-delivered, 1 day flex)	1:30– 2:30 pm	Library, Exploration, Elective Rotation: virtual with extension practice
1:00– 2:30 pm	Remediation and Intervention Rotations	2:30– 3:30 pm	Additional Independent Practice Activities (e.g., iReady, Khan Academy) Parent Check-ins
2:30– 3:00 pm	Teacher Check-ins: virtual or by phone		

Sample Tenth-Grade Schedules

(6.5 hours daily average plus 0.5 hours for stockpile days = 7 hours daily average)

These master schedules will be customized based on students' career pathways, graduation requirements, content recovery, and personalized needs.

	Content Delivery Platform		Synchronous LMS Platform
7:40– 8:00 am	Daily Homeroom with wellness check	7:40– 8:00 am	Daily Homeroom with wellness check
8:00– 8:40 am	ELA Instruction Module: platform content	8:00– 9:00 am	Synchronous ELA Block
8:40– 9:00 am	Teacher-delivered ELA content	9:00– 10:00 am	Synchronous Math Block
9:00– 10:00 am	Math Instruction Module: platform content M/W/F, teacher-delivered instruction T/Th	10:00– 11:00 am	Synchronous Science Block
10:00– 11:00 am	Science Instruction Module: platform content M/W/F, teacher-delivered instruction T/Th	11:00– 11:30 am	Lunch
11:00– 11:30 am	Lunch	11:30 am– 12:30 pm	Synchronous History Block
11:30am– 12:30 pm	History Instruction Module: platform content M/W/F, teacher-delivered instruction T/Th	12:30– 1:30 pm	Elective Course: could be remediation or intervention as needed



12:30– 1:30 pm	Elective Course: could be remediation or intervention as needed	1:30– 2:30 pm	Elective Course
1:30– 2:30 pm	Elective Course	2:30– 3:30 pm	Academic Advising, Remediation and Intervention
2:30– 3:30 pm	Academic Advising, Remediation and Intervention		