

Preparing for the 2020-2021 School Year

FAQs for Blended and Remote Learning

What types of instruction will students receive?

Students who have opted to attend fully remotely will engage in remote instruction activities each day as defined in the [Instructional Guidance for Blended and Remote Learning](#). Students who are attending both in-person and remotely will receive blended instruction, comprising both remote and in-person instruction as outlined below:

- Remote Instruction: Teacher is providing instruction remotely via a digital device, both synchronously and asynchronously as defined in the [Instructional Guidance for Blended and Remote Learning](#)
- In-Person: Teachers and students are present together in the school building and students are experiencing live instruction.

What are the ways that subjects/courses can be delivered?

Regardless of the way in which a subject/course is delivered, the instructional experiences as a whole—including both in-person and remote experiences—must be comparable in rigor, scope, and magnitude to those traditionally provided at the school.

- Blended: in a blended subject/course some of the instruction is taught by a Blended Learning On-Site teacher and some of the instruction is taught by a Blended Learning Remote teacher.
- Full remote: in a full remote subject/course the instruction is taught remotely using synchronous and asynchronous instruction. Students can participate in a remote course from home or from school when necessary.
- Full on-site: in a full on-site subject/course taught by an on-site teacher.

Can a teacher be assigned to a combination of fully remote students, blended remote students and/or in-person students?

It is recommended that programming decisions should maximize matching on-site teachers and in-person students to the greatest extent possible. All efforts should be made to assign teachers to a program that is exclusively of one type (In-person or fully remote or blended remote). There will be circumstances when this may not be practicable in meeting the programming needs for students. In these situations, principals may assign an on-site teacher to provide instruction to students who are learning remotely if the teacher's schedule allows. Teachers should not be scheduled for more periods or students than they would ordinarily teach.

What is Teacher Teaming in the Blended Teaching model?

Teaming is an approach that is a model in which a grade, cohort, or large group of students are taught by a team of teachers. Paired with shared, inclusive, digital curricula across grade-levels and course subjects,

teaming may provide teachers with the flexibility needed to share teaching responsibilities for a group of students. Teacher teams can provide instruction to both blended and fully remote students.

What are the responsibilities for teachers working in teams in a Blended Teaching model?

All members of the teacher teams in the Blended Teaching model are responsible for using the Instructional Coordination time to co-plan and coordinate delivery of instruction grounded in the school's shared, inclusive, digital curricula. Also, this team will have the discretion to determine how to share teaching responsibilities, including but not limited to: assessment, grading, office hours, and parent engagement. Teacher teams should use their school's shared, inclusive, digital curricula to plan for instruction and may choose to use materials provided by a Virtual Content Specialist (VCS), as available and appropriate. Teacher teams are generally comprised of: (1) Blended Learning On-site Teachers (these teachers provide on-site instruction consistent with the school model); and (2) Blended Learning Remote Teachers (these teachers are working remotely and provide synchronous instruction to all students in the team caseload not on site that day for remote students and/or blended learning students).

Do students need to be assigned a remote blended teacher for every on-site subject/course?

No. If schools can provide students on-site subjects/courses in which the on-site instructional experiences are comparable in rigor, scope, and magnitude to those traditionally provided, then a blended remote teacher is not required to be assigned. Schools with certain programming models and scheduling practices, like block scheduling, may be able to offer students four full on-site classes/courses which would not require the assignment of a blended remote teacher.

What is a Virtual Content Specialist?

A Virtual Content Specialist is a new position. Details about the application and selection process are forthcoming. The VCS will provide instructional content for both onsite and remote instructors. Onsite and remote instructors will be able to use the videos and instructional materials that the VCS provides.

The VCS will also:

- Create instructional content aligned to the course scope and sequence and relevant learning standards that can be uploaded to a school's chosen learning platform. Instructional content will include video recorded mini-lessons, supplemental assignments, materials differentiated for a variety of learners, and sample rubrics and grading criteria
- Curate instructional content to make it available to other teachers
- Participate in and facilitate routine professional learning
- Collaborate with other VCSs
- Where applicable, collaborate with teachers during the instructional coordination period



**Department of
Education**

Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

How can content developed from the Virtual Content Specialist be used? Are teachers required to use this content?

Virtual Content Specialists will create a variety of instructional resources that are available for schools and teachers to use at their discretion to support their school's shared, inclusive, digital curriculum, where available, these instructional resources can support schools in ensuring continuity of learning for all students within their schools, regardless of the model in which students are learning, when paired thoughtfully with the school's curriculum. Schools and teachers are not required to use these instructional resources. In cases where teachers choose to use these instructional resources, they must adapt or modify them to align to their students' learning needs. This includes adding appropriate scaffolds and supports for all students, including students with disabilities and ELLs, and ensuring that the instructional materials and experiences are adjusted to reflect the diverse backgrounds and cultures of the students they serve.

How should schools assign teachers who are teaming to Blended and Remote Classes in STARS?

As with traditional, in-person instruction, each student should be programmed for a single section of a given course to the extent possible. Teachers should be assigned to course sections in the following ways:

- For fully remote course sections, only the remote teacher should be assigned, except in sections of Integrated Co-Teaching. These sections should have a General Education and Special Education teacher assigned.
- For blended course sections taught by teacher teams, both the on-site teacher and the remote teacher should be assigned to the section and listed on the schedule. For the 2020-2021 school year, the teachers' preparation periods can be performed remotely and must be scheduled as the teacher's first or last assigned work period of the day.

What are the class size limits for in-person classes?

For Blended Learning On-site Teachers, the total number of students an in-person teacher shall serve in the classroom will not exceed health and safety guidelines for social distancing, not to exceed contractual class size limitations as per the CBA. The total number of students for whom an in-person teacher may be responsible for shall be up to the full class size limitation in accordance with the contract. For example, in High School: 34 students and 5 classes = 170 students.

What are the class size limits for fully remote classes?

For Fully Remote Teachers, the class size limitations as per the contract shall apply. The total number of students for whom a fully remote teacher may be responsible shall be up to the full class size limitation in accordance with the contract. For example, in High School: 34 students and 5 classes = 170 students.

What are the class size limits for blended remote teachers?

For Blended Learning Remote Teachers, the total number of students a blended learning remote teacher shall serve per teaching period shall not exceed a number that is twice the contractual class size limitation as per the CBA.



**Department of
Education**

Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

If periods are shorter, can teachers be scheduled for more sections in a day or week?

No. Teachers should be assigned to the traditional number of classes (e.g. in middle and high schools, 5 teaching periods per day).

Can schools on a campus coordinate to offer students a share course?

Schools may continue to assign teachers to schools within the campus in a manner consistent with prior practice.

Can teachers be assigned multiple grades to teach?

Yes. Teachers may be assigned multiple grades to teach.

Can a Centrally Funded IEP teacher be assigned to teach a class?

Yes, consistent with the posted job description, a Centrally Funded IEP teacher may be assigned to teach up to 5 periods per week.

What are the SED rules regarding out-of-license assignments?

For this year, NYSED is permitting teachers to teach up to ten classroom hours (approximately 10 periods) per week out of their certification area when an appropriately certified teacher is not available. This flexibility doubles the incidental teaching provision to .4 of a program, e.g. 2 periods a day for middle and high school teachers.