Higher Ground Academy Distance Learning Plan

Distance Learning Plan:

- For students in grades 3 to 12, Schoology, a Learning Teaching Module (LMS) will be used as a primary tool for teaching and learning. Teachers will post assignments and other communications for student in Schoology. Teachers and students are already familiar with this module. Lesson for the week of March 30 will be uploaded by Wednesday March 24. For weeks after that Lessons will be uploaded by Thursday each week. All mainstream and English Language Learners (ELL) teachers, post lessons in Schoology.
- For students in Kindergarten, grade one, and grade two, the main medium of instruction will be print materials, most of which is already delivered. In addition, daily instruction as well as two way interaction for K – 2 will be provided via Schoology and other media such as telephone.
- Teachers will post assignment in Schoology. Instruction, explanation, modeling, etc., will also be posted in Schoology. Besides Schoology, Zoom, Flip grip, email, telephone calls, and other multimedia means, all of which can be imported into Schoology, will be used for this purpose.
- Students will have an assignment to work on/complete every day.
- Teachers are required to give feedback to students within 48 hours of submission.
- Teachers and teacher aides will be available to support student learning by phone, email, Schoology and other means according to the following schedule:
  - K – 6 teachers: from 7:15 A.M. to 2:15 P.M.
  - 7 – 12 teachers: from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.
  - Note: High school teachers may have specific office hours for each class they teach. Those who do will post the hours in Schoology.
- Information on how to reach teachers is posted at the school’s web page inside the “Parent” tab.
- For students with Individual Learning Plan (IEP) services will be through the school’s distance learning model, Schoology. This will support their learning and
give them access to classroom distance learning activities. These students will receive special education services in a distance learning manner similar to classroom instruction: through the Schoology online learning platform, online meeting platforms such as Zoom, and via telephone, as well as through the use of workbooks, worksheets, and teacher assigned activities.

- During this time, IEP meetings will be held by conference call. Special education teacher will contact parents to schedule a time to review IEP, including special education services, supports and accommodations. Special education evaluations requiring face-to-face assessment will be on hold during this time and will resume when the school returns to face-to-face instruction.

- For English Language Learners (ELL) services will be through the school’s distance learning module, Schoology. This will support their learning and give them access to classroom distance learning activities. These students will receive ELL services in a distance learning manner similar to classroom instruction: through the Schoology online learning platform, online meeting platforms such as Zoom, and via telephone.

- To meet their individual needs ELL teachers will be guided by the individualized learning plan that they wrote for each of their students.

Please explain how the system you have identified will ensure it can effectively support your school’s unique learning and teaching needs.

- There are a few foundational ideas that serve as guiding principles of our instructional programs. One is that all students have to be educated to high educational standards. Another one is that students come to us at various levels of academic readiness/preparedness. Therefore we have to reach them where they are. A third principle is that student progress has to be regularly monitored so that all students are supported in their learning and intellectual development.

Schoology allows us to do all three. It has features that allow teachers to link lessons to state education standard. At a minimum, this feature will prompt teachers to think about relating lessons with State education standards. Also, with Schoology teachers can design lessons for whole class, groups of students, and/or individual students. Thus, making sure that there is always work at the level of each student in his/her class.

Many educators agree that one major difference among all learners is the amount of time they need to learn a given material. What may take a student half an hour to learn may take another one way more time than that. Schoology, is designed to accommodate the fastest learner in a class, the slowest learner, and the rest in the middle. There are a few ways to do this within Schoology and our teachers are familiar with them. When students work individually and/or in small group at their own pace, it is very easy to get a better understanding of the progress made or lack of it by each student.
Describe how your school has consulted with the Tribal Nations of the students you serve, and how you will collaborate with the Tribal Nations Education Committee (TNEC) members regarding the formulation of their distance learning plans.

- Not Applicable

Describe how the school will maintain regular contact with local public health departments, county or Tribal human services departments, and Continuum of Care planning bodies on ongoing or emerging needs and to connect to resources that can assist all students and families.

- We have a designated contact person with the public health department of Ramsey County. On top of that the school nurse has been a key resource linking the school with outside resources. This will continue going forward.

**Data Privacy Assurances:**
If you are using online learning systems, please identify the platforms / programs / applications that will be used and how the systems or methods of use comply with data privacy requirements.

- We are using Schoology as our main learning teaching platform. Schoology is a highly secured system that can only be accessed by authorized users.

Describe how all aspects of your distance learning model are secure and will not allow for the release of protected student or staff information.

- There are different levels of authorization given to users in Schoology. The authorization granted for most users allows them to access only limited data. If it is a student, he/she can only access his/her own data. If it is a teacher, he/she will access data for students in his own class only. Parents have authorization to view their student’s data. Only a few people have access to all data in Schoology.

**Measurement of Student Progress:**
How will student learning and progress be: 1) measured; 2) monitored; and, 3) communicated to students AND parent(s)/guardian(s).

- Student learning will be routinely monitored by teachers and Assistant Principals. Parents also monitor their student’s progress routinely. Almost all the distance learning will happen in Schoology. Teachers will actively monitor progress on a daily bases. In addition APs will monitor progress both by looking at the students’ work in Schoology and having regular meeting with teachers. Parent surveys will also be conducted to collect additional data from parents

**Utilization of All School Staff:**
Describe how support staff (school nurses, school counselors, special education contractors, paraprofessionals, cultural liaisons, interventionists, and other school specialists) will support the distance learning program.

- All professionals identified in this question are essential for the success of the distance learning program. The school nurse and her assistants will be available to
answer questions by phone. They may also direct children and their families in the right direction when they are unable to answer their questions. The special education contractors will continue providing service according to students’ IEPs. Other specialist such as Art teachers and World Language teachers, will offer their class in the same manner and mode like the other teachers. Family liaison will provide variety of services. They make parents aware of how things are going with the distance learning plan, more importantly as it applies to their students. They will also make them aware of the school’s expectation of parents. They will translate and edit communication to make it more culturally aware. They will also work as a bridge between the families and the school.

**Attendance and Safety of Students/Staff:**
Outline how attendance of students AND staff will be tracked and how these expectations will be communicated to students, parents and staff.

Attendance of students will be determined based on two factors.

- For students, the two factors are completion of assigned work and participation in daily two way interaction with their teacher/s.
- For teachers, attendance will be tracked based on posting lessons for each school day, having a two way interaction with each student, and giving timely and useful feedback to students. Our policy is that students must receive feedback with 48 hours after they post.
- Higher Ground Academy has created a new “parent” tab on its web page. There are a number of links under this tab. Each of those provides parents valuable information about the distance learning program including expectations and requirements in the three languages spoken by the families. Also, messages have been and will be sent to students and parents by way of Robocall.
- Teachers have communicated their own as well as the school's expectations in Schoology. This will also be reinforced during two way interactions.

Describe the school’s plan to ensure student and staff well-being if attendance data warrants concern.

The following steps will be followed in order to ensure student well-being:

- The staff of the Citizenship Development program is in charge of monitoring attendance daily.
- If a student is marked absent on any given day, his/her teacher will call his/her parents that same day.
- If a student is absent two consecutive days, a Citizenship Development program staff calls the student's family. If the family did not respond, calls will be made to others listed as contacts in the student's file.
- If all effort to reach out to family members and other contacts fail, authorities will be notified by a Citizenship Development Program staff. At this time, we are trying to find out which authorities we shall notify.

To ensure staff well-being:
• Assistant Principals for Teaching and Learning for the Elementary and Secondary Schools will monitor staffs’ daily attendance by checking teacher participation. They will monitor if feedback is given to students, lessons are posted, and, assignments are graded. They will also check whether every teacher is participating in daily two way interaction.

• If a teacher is absent for two consecutive days without preauthorization, the respective AP will notify the Director of Human Resources.

• The Director of Human Resources will try to reach out to that teacher by phone, email, or other means.

• If after all these efforts the teacher is unreachable, the Director of Human Resources will reach out to friends and other emergency contacts.

• If all the above fail, the Director of Human Resources will notify the authorities. At this time, we are trying to find out which authorities we shall notify.

Describe how will the school maintain an awareness of, and be prepared to cope with, the potential impact these closures will have on the mental health and wellbeing of students, staff, and families.

• Answer here: The school social worker, the school nurse and family liaisons will work with students and staff who maybe struggling with mental health during this period of distance learning.

Training Plan for Staff, Students and Parents:
Outline the school’s plan for training to ensure that your distance learning program can effectively be implemented with: 1) staff; 2) students; and, 3) parents

• Relevant training has been offered to staff during the week of March 16. More training will be made available in coming weeks.

• Our students, mostly older ones, are already familiar with the Learning Management System.

• We have posted parent training materials on our webpage. Training by phone is also available. We have posted a numbers to call for those interested.

Describe how the school is going to help students understand the expectations of your distance learning plan?

• The expectations are posted our web page together with other relevant information.

• In addition, teachers are responsible for communicating with their students their expectations.

Process for Review and Revision of the Plan:
Describe how the school will monitor the efficacy of distance learning plans for all students, and its process for considering alternatives or additional support needs as part of that review.

The following measures will be taken

- We intend to conduct online and phone surveys among students, parents, and teachers.
- We will monitor participation by students and teachers

**SPECIAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS:**

Describe how the school will ensure supports identified on a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan are provided.

- For the website and/or distance learning plan:
  Higher Ground Academy will continue to provide special education services through the school’s distance learning model to support student learning and access to classroom distance learning activities. Students will receive special education services in a distance learning manner similar to classroom instruction: through the Schoology online learning platform, online meeting platforms such as Zoom, and via telephone, as well as through the use of workbooks, worksheets, and teacher assigned activities.

- During this time, IEP meetings will be held by conference call. Your child's special education teacher will contact you to schedule a time to review your child's IEP, including special education services, supports and accommodations. Special education evaluations requiring face-to-face assessment will be on hold during this time and will resume when the school returns to face-to-face instruction.

- For more information click at the link below:

Outline how the school is communicating with parents and guardians regarding their child's services. Include information on how the IEP team will determine if current IEP plans need to be amended to address how best to meet the student’s needs in a flexible learning model.

Follow the link below

- [https://www.hgacademy.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=441412&type=d&t ermREC_ID=&pREC_ID=819171](https://www.hgacademy.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=441412&type=d&ter mREC_ID=&pREC_ID=819171)
Detail the school’s plans for communicating with school staff to ensure that the school meets the needs of students eligible for special education. Include detail on Child Find activities, process of evaluations/re-evaluations.


**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER REQUIREMENTS:**

Describe how the school’s distance learning plan addresses the individual learning plans of its English Language Learners. Explain the methods available to support ELL students.

Answer:

- For English Language Learners (ELL) services will be through the school’s distance learning module, Schoology. This will support their learning and give them access to classroom distance learning activities. These students will receive ELL services in a distance learning manner similar to classroom instruction: through the Schoology online learning platform, online meeting platforms such as Zoom, and via telephone.
- To meet their individual needs ELL teachers will be guided by the individualized learning plan that they wrote for each of their students.

Describe how the school plans to communicate with families that do not use English as a primary language. Be sure to address how this communication will be implemented given the technology determined to exist in your ELL families’ households.

- All communications, text and audio, will be presented in English, Somali and Oromo.

**PROTECTIONS FOR STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS OR HOUSING INSECURITY:**

Specify how the school will satisfy the Federal requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, to support students experiencing homelessness throughout this crisis and promote their full participation in their education throughout the duration of the distance learning period. Please include school plans for monitoring their students to identify changes in status.

- Not applicable. HGA does not have homeless students.

Describe how the school will monitor participation and engagement of students experiencing homelessness in their distance learning. Be sure to address both attendance and performance of students experiencing homelessness, and how your school will respond if changes are needed in staffing and support.

- Not applicable.
Describe how the school will monitor the efficacy of distance learning plans for students experiencing homelessness, and is prepared to consider alternatives or additional support needs as part of that review.

- Not applicable.

Describe how the school will maintain regular contact with local public health departments, county or Tribal human services departments, and Continuum of Care planning bodies on ongoing or emerging needs and to connect to resources that can assist students and families experiencing homelessness.

- Not applicable.

**SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICE EXPECTATIONS:**

Detail the school’s plan for providing meals to all children who need them. Include: how families access meals, staffing plan for preparing and distributing meals, and method of distribution that aligns with public health guidelines.

- Parents will be surveyed by phone to determine if they are interested in having meals delivered to their house.
- For those interested, a week’s meal will be delivered every Monday.
- CKC good foods will prepare and deliver food to HGA Marshall.
- The school bus will deliver meals to families.
- The program is open for families to join if they become interested in upcoming weeks.

Detail the school’s plan for providing childcare for the elementary children of Tier 1 emergency and healthcare workers. Include: how families access childcare, a plan for staffing childcare, transportation of childcare participants, if you plan to include children of Tier 2 workers, and plans for following the CDC and Minnesota Department of Health’s guidelines.

- Parents will be surveyed to determine who qualifies for this service.
- Based on the number of qualified families and children, staff will be recruited.
- Full service (instruction, transportation, meals, health and well-being) will be provided for those in the program.
- Service will be provided during regular school hours.