



**Gary Middle College East/West  
COVID-19 Fall 2020  
Learning Plan**

**Date of Last Update: July 15, 2020**

***UPDATE July 15, 2020: Due to the high positivity rate of COVID-19 in Lake County, Gary Middle College East and Gary Middle College West will operate on an “online/virtual” educational delivery model for the first nine-week session. Only “Option 2” will be offered during this time. County health data will be reviewed by the Board and Administrators, in conjunction with local health departments, to determine the model for the second nine-weeks session. All plans are subject to change, and we will continue to monitor the situation on an on-going basis.***

**Summary**

Gary Middle College East and West will implement a hybrid learning model for the 2020-21 school year that will combine in-person instruction with online learning in order to promote safety and well-being of our students and staff during this difficult time. Families will be able to choose from one of three options, depending on what will best accommodate their students: in person, hybrid, or online. Please be aware that this plan was designed using all information currently available from the Indiana State Department of Health, the Indiana Department of Education, and the Center for Disease Control; however, it is subject to change at any time, as we are all aware the COVID-19 virus situation changes rapidly. We deeply appreciate the support and patience of our families as we work together to navigate this challenging time.

**Parent Input**

In an effort to capture the input and needs of our families, a survey was administered that provided the district with an understanding of the needs and desires of our families in the event that schools would re-open. The results from the survey revealed that families were concerned about coming back to school with our buildings packed with students, and that the majority of families are able to support modified schedules that allow for some time in the building and some time at home. Some families even prefer a fully online schedule. This “hybrid” or “online” schedule will allow for smaller numbers of students in the building at any given time, which provides for greater social distancing. It will also allow the buildings to be closed to students

one day per week for a full deep cleaning, which will add to the safety protocols the school will implement for this year.

### **Description**

Students will still have a full year of instruction. Families may choose from one of three options for return, with an understanding that they should also be prepared for the possibility that even the “in building” days may change to “at home” days for all students if we are ordered by the state or local health department officials to close buildings for any length of time. This decision could also be made at the school level if we have a reported case of COVID in the buildings, or if all schools state-wide are ordered to close again due to rising levels.

To help our families and students transition to our blended model of learning for the coming school year we will be providing individual Chromebooks for all students, and we also have internet “hotspots” available for families who need reliable internet access. Priority will be given to families who are truly in need of internet access. Additionally, our schools are committed to continuing to provide equitable access to healthy meals for all our students whether in the building or at home. We are committed to providing as much continuity and stability to families during this time as possible.

The option selected by parents will be in effect for no less than 1 academic quarter (grading period) in order to abide by health and safety guidelines, but may extend further depending upon any additional updates/ guidance from the CDC or our local health department.

### **Option 1 - Hybrid Schedule**

Students will attend in person every other day, (Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday) and attend virtual on opposite days. Hours will be according to the established morning/afternoon/evening school schedule. Students may attend other in-person classes, if space permits. The instruction in the classroom will be the SAME for students at home and will be streamed live.

### **Option 2 - All virtual**

Scholars will continue to attend school virtually and receive instruction online.

### **Option 3 - In person**

- Scholars will attend school completely in the building. Class sizes will be reduced by 50% with a ratio not to exceed that of 1:12.
- Students will be in the building Monday - Thursday
- Friday instruction is virtual (online) for all students

*In the event that the number of families requesting in-person instruction exceeds that of our ability to accommodate seating and remain in compliance with CDC guidelines, scholars will be assigned to the A/B daily rotation.*

### **Safety and Compliance**

All GEO Academy schools will continue to follow the guidance provided by the CDC and the public health department. Masks have been purchased for all staff and students and will be required. Face shields are also available for staff. Desk arrangements and transition systems will comply with all social distancing mandates. All hallways and classrooms will be physically marked off and arranged to ensure compliance.

Lessons will be recorded and uploaded for virtual access by 4pm daily in the event that they are not able to be streamed live.

Visitors to the campus will be by appointment only and in the event that parents/ guests need to enter the building, they will be contained in one main entrance (adhering to the social distancing

guidelines) until a school representative can attend to them. Masks/ face shields will be required..

Meals will be provided as “grab and go” allowing students to transition and eat in their classrooms. Sufficient trash receptacles will be provided to decrease unnecessary hallway transitions.

Additional handwashing and/or sanitizing stations will be added throughout the building and students and staff will be encouraged to wash and/or sanitize hands frequently.

In the event that a student or staff has tested positive for the virus, the public health department will be contacted as well as parents of those exposed while adhering to all FERPA rights to ensure the safety and privacy of each student.

Each Friday, instruction for all students will be delivered virtually, allowing for a deep clean in addition to the intermittent cleaning that occurs throughout the day and each evening.

### **Student and Family Social Support**

The GEO model works to combat generational poverty while also providing a resource to its neighboring community. This mission applies directly to our eLearning approach. In the event of a short or a long term school closure, GEO will provide social/emotional and community support while connecting families to resources to assist them. GEO’s “Call Center” approach allows parents to reach out between the hours of 8:00 a.m.- 7:00 p.m. and speak to a GMC employee who can connect them with resources in the areas of:

- Counseling services
- Technology Resources
- Community Resources

GMC school leaders (or their designee) will man the Call Center on a rotating basis

### **Technology Distribution Process and User Agreements**

In addition to the Chromebooks that will be issued to all students, all special education students and English Language Learners receive differentiated packet options which include alternate work to meet the needs of their IEP or ILP and supports for speech, occupational, and physical therapy from our service partners.

### **Acceptable Use Policy and User Agreements**

Upon enrollment, parents and students must review and sign the Acceptable Use Policy that protects their scholar and the school from any unforeseeable violations of privacy or impacts of student and system safety.

Students enrolled in Gary Middle College who are of adult age assume responsibility for all distribution and policies.

In the event of damage, loss or theft, the family will be charged a fine of \$150 to cover the actual repair or replacement costs for school-issued Chromebooks.

### **Stolen Chromebooks**

If a Chromebook is known to be stolen, parents must file a police report and notify school administration. It may be required that a copy/ evidence of the report be shared with the school. The charge for the replacement of a stolen Chromebook will be at the discretion of school administration.

### **Damaged Chromebooks**

If damage to the Chromebook is deemed to be not intentional and/or egregious, a \$25.00 fee will be charged for the repair and a new device will be issued to the student. If damage to the Chromebook is deemed to be intentional and/or egregious, a \$150.00 fee for device replacement will be charged and school administration will decide whether or not to issue a new device to the student.

### **Lost or Damaged Chargers**

A replacement charger will cost \$20.00

## **Google Classroom and GEO Adopted Online Curriculum Resources**

Google Classroom was chosen by a panel of GEO Academies administrators and teachers as the primary platform for eLearning. Google Classroom is utilized by all teachers in GEO Academies and provides familiarity to both staff and students. The platform allows teachers to upload daily assignments, add students, assess and grade daily work, and incorporate learning videos. Teachers can provide real-time feedback and support students through the live chat feature and via video using Google Hangouts.

### **Grades 9-12 and Gary Middle College**

Teachers will use a combination of Achievement First and Illustrative Mathematics as well as other core subject courseware that will be posted on the Google Classroom. Additionally, 9-10 packets are supplemented with the following online resources for student who have access to both internet and family support for technology at home:

Study Island  
Edmentum  
Assistments  
ActivelyLearn  
Assistments  
Edpuzzle

Additional online resources that are utilized for eLearning include but are not limited to:

Reading Eggs  
Nearpod  
Newsela  
Reading A-Z  
Khan Academy  
IXL Ela and Math

### **Daily Routine and Schedule**

GEO's eLearning schedule will mirror that of the GEO academic day. Teachers are expected to have lessons uploaded on or before 8:00 a.m. each day. The students' daily schedule for each reflects a minimum of six hours of instruction, Monday through Thursday, allowing Friday to be devoted to assessment/remediation and offered all virtual. Opportunities to engage with a teacher daily during identified "office hours" are also available. Communication during eLearning will be accomplished through video conferencing through Google Meet/Hangout.

Gary Middle College

Aiming to serve the needs of non-traditional highschool students, Gary Middle College will continue to operate Monday–Friday from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM virtually with access to staff up

to 4:00 pm. In the event that students and families' life situations require evening hours, GMC staff is prepared to adjust instruction time to include evenings.

### **Teacher Responsibilities**

During GEO Academies eLearning days, the teachers' role is one of facilitator. Teachers therefore must adopt a range of roles and skills to suite specific situations. These roles might include, but are not limited to:

- Leading discussions
- Asking open-ended questions
- Guiding process and task and
- Enabling active participation of learners and engagement ideas

In order to become the “facilitator” in learning. Teachers will be asked to execute the following:

### **Lesson Planning**

Teachers will create standards-based lesson plans in Google Classroom one week in advance for approval by school administration. The plans are due at the end of business on Friday during extended school closures and must be uploaded by 8:00 a.m. on a one-day school cancellation. The lesson plans on the platform must be aligned to the structure of that week or days lesson and include power standards, differentiation, grade level expectations, and alignment to the GEO Academies daily schedule and calendar.

### **Communication**

It is the expectation that GEO teachers maintain constant communication with students and parents. A minimum of 3 touch points per week via phone, video conference or email allows for students to remain engaged with their teacher and receive answers to any questions/concerns they may have. All daily communications with students and/or families in the GEO Academies are logged on a shared spreadsheet that is monitored by administration.. This spreadsheet is used for tracking engagement and attendance at the school as well as corporation level.

Additionally, teachers can communicate in real-time using the live chat or video feature of Google Classroom/ Google Meet/Hangout to help support students and parents..

During an extended school closure, teachers will schedule conferences at regular intervals with each student over the phone or via live video conference to track academic progress and provide context into the child's academic data.

## **Grading**

Students enrolled in Gary Middle College are required to receive instruction aligned to their daily schedule in each of the courses enrolled and maintain 90% or better participation and average course percentages of 70% or better

Grades should be logged in Power School and should focus on high level academic power standards. It is up to the teacher to decide which eLearning assignments to grade based on what standards will give the best reflection of mastery.

## **Attendance**

Attendance should be taken daily and recorded via scoring within each teachers' Google Classroom. Therefore, a student will be considered "present" by the evidence of their daily submission of class assignments. Attendance may also be measured via participation in scheduled video conferences. Percentages are monitored by administration. Attendance verification during eLearning is based on successful communication with the child or parent.

Weekly Professional Development /Leadership/ TAP Cluster Meetings

GEO Academies implements the TAP systems. It is the expectation that administrators and Master Teachers conduct weekly Cluster and Leadership Meetings virtually. This time allows for ongoing professional development of staff as well as consistent analysis of student data.

## **Remote Learning Resource Guide**

Grade Level Meetings are led virtually each week by the school administration through Google Meet/Hangout. Teachers must attend one weekly meeting and all team leads must meet with their teams once per week virtually to plan instruction and create a weekly eLearning newsletter to ensure parents receive a cohesive message from their grade level teachers.

## **Data and Goals**

GEO Academy administrators and teachers understand the value of a data driven culture. The expectation of allowing data to drive instructional decisions remains a priority of the principals and the network. Each principal is expected to monitor grades/weekly assessments. Our goal is that our scholars average 80% or better on weekly tasks/ assessments.

## **Parent Communication**

We understand that frequent and intentional parent communication is the key driver in the success of the GEO eLearning plan for our students who are not of adult age. We therefore require that schools provide parents with a weekly update that is delivered via Power School's Voice Message/SMS/Text and Email that shares pertinent information regarding all campuses. In addition to the weekly updates, school leaders are expected to conduct at least one virtual parent meeting per month via video conferencing to allow parents to hear a message from the school leader on academic updates, student expectations and celebrations. The main forms of communication within the eLearning plan are as follows:

via telephone  
via email/text (when appropriate)  
Google Classroom chat feature/ Google Meets/Hangout

It is imperative that parents provide schools with accurate contact information as they will be leveraging the information stored in PowerSchool to communicate local and network level updates with parents.

Information will continue to be shared via the schools' website and social media channels.

## **Frequency of Communication**

It is the expectation that the teacher communicates at least 3 times with the student and provides access and updates to parents one time per week via an electronic newsletter, weekly updates via email/ alerts via Google Classrooms. Parents are also encouraged to utilize the teachers' designated office hours. All GEO teachers have been issued a school phone line that is made accessible to them off-campus and can be used to send and retrieve calls.

## **Extended Closure Parent Conferences**

In the event of an extended closure, school principals will designate a time for a more in depth parent conference with the teacher. The conference should discuss data, growth, student academic strengths, and areas to improve.

## **Communication Technology Supports**

GEO's staff will have access to a number of technology enhancements to help streamline the communication process with students and staff.

Google Voice-Allows for calls made from personal devices to be anonymous

Google Chat-Allows for teachers to interact with students in real-time while they work on assignment.

Google Meet/Hangout-All staff meetings occur via this video platform

Mitel Call Forwarding-Allows teachers to make and receive calls from their school line while off campus

### **Communication Tracking**

GEO school principals and teachers will utilize a daily participation data tracker. The tracker allows school leadership and teachers to log notes, participation rates, and attendance.

### **Special Programming Communication**

The GEO special education teachers and ELL staff will document all communication and academic supports provided to the Director of Special Education. This tracking will include call notes, accommodations provided, and Interventions. Special education teachers and general education teachers have individual communication logs for each student with special needs, based on their caseloads and class rosters. General education logs are monitored by building administration and special education logs are monitored by the Director of Special Education. The Director of Special Education has access to general education and special education teacher logs for all students with special needs.

All IDEA timelines for students with disabilities will remain in effect, and every attempt will be made to complete all evaluations and case conferences as mandated by IDEA and Indiana Article VII. In the event that a timeline cannot be met, an extension will be provided (with mutual consent from all parties). Until federal and state guidance suggests otherwise, eLearning will not be considered a change of placement requiring an additional case conference. If, at any point, eLearning becomes more than a short-term emergency measure, a Case Conference Committee will meet to consider adjusting the IEP to accommodate a change of placement.

All GEO special education, 504, and ELL staff will work weekly with classroom teachers to be sure that lessons are modified or accommodated to meet their student's needs articulated in the IEP. GEO administration will oversee this practice in weekly reviews of lesson plans, assessments and virtual instruction observations. The Director of Special Education will oversee all special education staff with a weekly eWalkthrough to check the fidelity of the ongoing operation.

## **Adjusted eLearning Job Responsibilities and Chain of Command**

During eLearning at GEO, staff responsibilities shift in order to meet the needs of students and families. The Assistant Principals, Registrars, Office Managers, Deans and additional support staff shift their roles to call center representatives and meal distribution, academic, counseling, outreach and tech support. These eLearning roles and responsibilities are determined by the network and school principals. In order to properly navigate communication during eLearning, the CAO and Deputy CAO will support the school leaders with any changing structure of roles, the work day and the needs of our students, families and staff.

## **Call Center Process and Supports**

As part of our e-Learning services, GMC East and West will be offering a full menu of academic and social support for students and families. Call centers will be open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. to assist with questions and connect families with resources that can help during the duration of the eLearning window. GEO cares about our families and will do everything we can to make sure they are supported during this time away from the building.

### **Call Center Contact Information**

Each GEO and GMC campus has a single-point-of-contact call center. This call center will triage incoming calls from parents to make sure all school-community needs are being met. Each school will have a main call center line open from 8 AM to 7 PM Monday through Friday. In addition to the main line, the school will have direct lines available (during school hours) for the following supports:

- Academic support- Master Teacher as point of contact
- Social services and counseling- Social Worker/ Deans as point of contact
- Tech support- Administrator Appointed by the CAO as point of contact

All call center information will be posted on the school's website, social media pages.

### **Call Center Logistics**

Pre-planning: All school sites will have their own Call Centers. In order to prepare to open the call centers, all school sites should work with the Tech Team to determine appropriate phone

lines for site-level use. Once the phone lines are running, the principal of each school will designate one person or a team of people to answer the main call center phone and others to answer individual lines. There should be a minimum of one person (and one alternate) per call center line to support families. If the eLearning session is an extended period of time, a detailed schedule for maintaining the call center lines will be required.

During: Once a call comes in, the call center representative will ask how they can help. The representative will contact the correct staff member to troubleshoot the issue within 1-2 hours. The call should be immediately logged in the call center spreadsheet tracker.

Follow-Up: Excluding weekends, the call center representative will follow up with the family in less than 24 hours to ensure their needs are met. Upon a successful follow-up, the inquiry will be closed out on the tracking sheet.

### **Special Education, 504, and ELL eLearning Supports and Accommodations**

During eLearning GEO students with special needs receive a multitude of supports that meet the needs of their Individual Education Plans (IEP). Classroom teachers work collaboratively with the child's teacher of record to provide differentiated work packets and a supportive communication plan with each family. Each child receives daily communication from their general education teacher/ Special Education Teacher of Record (TOR). These calls and communication are documented in order to keep the general education and special education teams in alignment on the services being provided. Examples of eLearning accommodations and supports vary by student per the terms of the child's IEP. Below are examples of GEO's eLearning accommodations provided:

Extended Time on Assignments

Daily Support Calls from the General Education Teacher and TOR

Differentiated work packets

Vocabulary Worksheets

Reduced Reading Passages

Access to School Counselor/Social Worker for designated Counseling Minutes

Students who receive speech, occupational, or physical therapy services, GEO works collaboratively with the service provider to provide students with access to at home activities to meet the needs of their IEP. These materials are sent home with each student in their work packet in the event that a family is without internet access.

Per mandate from the United States Department of Education and Article 7 Federal Law, eLearning days count as official school days and thus keep our special education timelines the same for all case conferences and evaluation timetables. The Special Education teachers in each building as well as the District Director of Special Programming work to keep GEO in

compliance with all appropriate timelines. The GEO Special Education team and building leaders have developed contingency plans for all necessary steps in the compliance process including holding phone or video meetings and evaluating or providing services on-site or at a neutral site if the school building is not accessible.

During an extended school closure, the GEO administrative team in each building will meet via phone or video conference in order to continue to discuss data, track student growth, and identify students for potential special education evaluation. These meetings are recorded at the site level and the necessary interventions are incorporated into the students eLearning plan.

### **Meal Service Distribution**

Each campus will be providing breakfasts and lunches daily . For those students participating in a full virtual learning experience, meals will be provided to them each Monday for the entire week. Students selecting the hybrid schedule will have to-go meals provided on days that they are present for pick up.

School principals track meal distribution through a google spreadsheet and delegate staff members from each school to assist with preparation and distribution. Below are Breakfast/Lunch guidelines from the IDOE:

Anyone 18 and under and present for meal handoff is eligible to collect one meal/day/person. These can be handed out in bulk for up to one week' worth of meals (5 breakfasts and lunches per week per child).

Schools serving out-of-school meals must advertise with community groups, social media, website, and yard signs in common areas (parks, libraries, etc.).

Meals will be served "grab & go", non-congregate style when permissible by the State.

School staff will oversee meal distribution (2 staff per site/shift minimum)

Meals, when served in bulk, must be counted for each day. For example, if 5 breakfasts and lunches are handed out at once on Monday, these must be marked off for each meal, each day (1 x for Monday Breakfast, 1 x for Tuesday Breakfast, etc.).

### **Remote Working Frameworks**

It is the administration's decision to decide whether or not staff members are permitted to work remotely on an eLearning day. Factors that could play into the decision include, but are not limited to, road conditions, building accessibility, and the health of the individual employee. GEO Academies staff must adhere to the following remote working expectations:

Availability-Employees are expected to be onsite, delivering instruction Monday through Thursday during scheduled work hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., or as otherwise assigned.

Lessons must be uploaded (if not streamed live, by 8:00 a.m. daily)

Responsiveness-All staff members must respond to phone calls, emails, or text messages within 60 minutes on an eLearning day.

Productivity-All GEO staff members must complete all tasks in the given time frame on an  
Equipment-All GEO staff members must bring their school issued device(s) and have access to  
home wifi in order to work from home.

Team meetings will occur across the GEO Network weekly on the same days across all  
campuses. GEO staff members are expected to attend, engage and participate in these  
meetings via video conferencing through the approved platforms.