Bethel School District
Long Range Facilities Task Force - Housing our Students

Distance Learning

Model/Option Overview

Distance Learning is typically used by non-traditional students. In this approach there is geographic separation between teachers and students during instruction. Various technologies are used to facilitate student-to-teacher and student-to-student communication. Distance Learning has existed for a long time in one form or another. In this factsheet, we’ll be considering the use of the internet to facilitate classroom interaction. This type of distance learning typically requires working with an outside vendor to help organize and deliver classes.\textsuperscript{i, ii}

Bethel Specific Information

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Anticipated cost & High School & Middle school & Elementary school & District wide \\
\hline
$ Medium & $ N/A & $ N/A & $ \\
\hline
Potential capacity increase & Low – probably under 200 High School students & & & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

What Could Change? (schools affected)

\begin{itemize}
\item Infrastructure for online education
\item Classroom curriculums
\item Teacher availability to students
\end{itemize}

Other District experiences

Distances currently / previously using this model

\begin{itemize}
\item If option moves forward:
  \begin{itemize}
  \item List districts interviewed, if applies
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

District feedback

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Anticipated/experienced transition challenges & \\
\hline
Implementation timing considerations & \\
\hline
Effects on learning outcomes & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}
Benefits of The Model

✓ Additional capacity

Students participate in courses from their home computer or laptop, since they are participating in courses online.

✓ Increased flexibility

Research shows that distance learning provides more flexibility for students and families, allowing them to take classes from wherever works for them and scheduling study time around other schedule obligations. Distance learning also allows students to move through coursework at their own pace.

□ Impacts fewer students (school-specific vs district-wide)

Challenges of The Model

Community & family

- Family schedule
- After-school care
- Vacation

Student

✓ Social development

Students have minimal in-person interaction with teachers and classmates in this model. Critics argue that socialization is a critical aspect of K-12 education and Distance Learning does not provide students with enough opportunity for interaction in these early years.

□ Safety

Instructional

- Summer school/remediation

✓ Atmosphere

Due to the virtual nature of the classroom, there is limited capacity for only one speaker to talk at a time. Discussions have the potential to take longer than in-person interactions, and discussions are prone to being confusing if two speakers are talking at once. Technical limitations on discussions and engagement can cause frustration with students.

Student achievement/learning outcomes

Teaching staff

✓ Curriculum

The 24-7 nature of Distance Learning can result in more demands on teachers, rather than less. Teachers will also need to translate their curriculums to use online, mostly likely through an outside vendor. Research shows that it can be difficult to ensure the quality of the class content.
also find that they don’t get immediate feedback from students on whether or not they understand the content of a lesson which makes it challenging to ensure that students are keeping up with the course. Additionally, it is also difficult to make sure that work is being completed by the student and not someone else.\textsuperscript{xiv}

✓ State testing

Research shows that if schools use curriculum from an outside vendor that is not state-based it can be difficult to align courses with state standards.\textsuperscript{xv}

- Classroom space
- Additional staff

Administration
- Work hours
- Additional staff

Extracurricular activities
✓ Music / band
✓ Athletics
✓ Clubs / social organizations

Distance education does not replace extracurricular activities.\textsuperscript{xvi}

Facilities
- Storage
- Time
- Access
- Increase in wear and tear
- Additional staff

Transportation
- Additional buses/routes
- Additional bus drivers
- Increase in traffic during student pick-up & drop-off

Resources


Ibid., 2.

Ibid.

Ibid., 3.


Harris O'Hanlon, L. (n.d.).


Ibid.