



# Illinois State Board of Education

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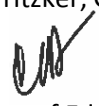
**Darren Reisberg**  
*Chairman*

**Dr. Carmen I. Ayala**  
*State Superintendent of Education*

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** The Honorable William E. Brady, Senate Minority Leader  
The Honorable John J. Cullerton, Senate President  
The Honorable Jim Durkin, House Minority Leader  
The Honorable Michael J. Madigan, Speaker of the House  
The Honorable JB Pritzker, Governor

**FROM:** Dr. Carmen I. Ayala   
State Superintendent of Education

**DATE:** May 31, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Electronic-Learning Report

The Electronic-Learning Report delineates the recommendations for expansion and revision of the program pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/10-20.56.

This report is transmitted on behalf of the State Superintendent of Education. For additional copies of this report or for more specific information, please contact Mary Reynolds at 217/782-0354 or [mreynolds@isbe.net](mailto:mreynolds@isbe.net).

**cc:** Tim Anderson, Secretary of the Senate  
John W. Hollman, Clerk of the House  
Legislative Research Unit  
State Government Report Center

**Electronic-Learning Report**

**Final Report and Recommendations**

**May 31, 2019**

**Prepared by the Illinois State Board of Education**

**Respectfully submitted to the Honorable JB Pritzker, Governor,  
and to the Illinois General Assembly**

This Electronic-Learning (e-learning) Report is respectfully submitted to the Governor and Illinois General Assembly.

### **Executive Summary**

Public Act 99-194 created e-learning days and became effective July 30, 2015. The Act was amended by Public Act 99-642, effective July 28, 2016, and Public Act 100-760, effective August 10, 2018. Senate Bill 28, passed by the General Assembly May 21, 2019, amends the Act by eliminating the requirement for the filing of this report; however, it has not yet become effective by the filing deadline June 1, 2019.

Pursuant to [105 ILCS 5/10-20.56](#), this report includes findings based on the experience of three school districts, Gurnee School District 56, Leyden High School District 212, and West Chicago Community High School District 94, that were selected to participate in the pilot program. Additional resources may be found at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Educational-Technology.aspx>.

### **Findings**

Section 10-20.56 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/10-20.56] authorized a pilot program for the use of e-learning days by three school districts to provide instruction while the students are not in attendance at the school to which they have been assigned. An e-learning day may be used only in lieu of using one or more emergency days required under Section 10-19 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/10-19]. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) filed rules effective August 20, 2015, [Title 23, Section 1.422](#), to guide administration of the pilot program.

A Request for Applications was released by ISBE on September 1, 2015. Three school districts, Gurnee SD 56, Leyden HSD 212, and West Chicago CHSD 94, submitted proposals and were selected to participate in the program. The pilot ran from 2015 to 2018, but only a very limited number of e-learning days was utilized due to mild weather conditions. West Chicago used December 16, 2016, and all three districts used February 9, 2018, as e-learning days during the pilot period. Each of the three districts adopted research-based programs that met the specific needs of all students, including those in special education and English Learner programs.

Participating districts provided staff and students with adequate training for e-learning day participation and provided effective notice to students and their parents or guardians regarding e-learning days. Each district offered technical means to participate in e-learning. For example, Leyden provided students with Wi-Fi devices that they could use on e-learning days. West Chicago reminded students to take home their Chromebooks and to check out hotspots from the library if they did not have internet access at home. Gurnee provided iPads to students as well as portable Wi-Fi units to students without Internet connectivity at home.

The pilot programs used the internet, telephones, texts, chat rooms, and other means of electronic communication for instruction and interaction among teachers and students. E-learning on non-attendance days consisted of five clock hours of instruction or school work for each student, access to electronic communication, and appropriate learning opportunities for students with special needs. Staff members also were trained on e-learning procedures. Students were trained on how to log on, complete assignments, and sign in for attendance.

Each participating district submitted reports with criteria as summarized in the following table.

| <b>Report Criteria</b>  | <b>West Chicago 94</b>   | <b>Gurnee 56</b>  | <b>Leyden 212</b>  |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1. What e-Learning days were used?  | Dec. 16, 2016, and Feb. 9, 2018  | Feb. 9, 2018  | Feb. 9, 2018   |
| 2. What was provided as evidence to verify that a minimum of five clock hours of instruction or school work was provided for each student participating on the e-learning day?  | Log in and submission times for each activity were tracked using logs from each app.   | Each teacher developed a webpage and link to e-learning day activities attached to his/her website. Students were instructed to complete the learning activities as assigned by each teacher on the e-learning day.   | Students were required to open a unique Google Form and submit it to check in for attendance.  |
| 3. What did the district do to ensure access from home or other appropriate remote facility for all students participating? This includes computers, the internet, and other forms of electronic communication that must be utilized in the proposed program. | Notice was given prior to the end of the day preceding the e-learning day. The district has 100 mobile hotspots that can be checked out for those lacking internet access at home. Nine-three percent of students were online during the Dec. 16, 2016, e-learning day. Ninety-six percent were online on the second e-learning day on Feb. 9, 2018.                         | The district has been 1:1 with iPads for six years, so all students preK-8 have an iPad. The district provides any students without connectivity at home a portable Wi-Fi unit loaned to them at the beginning of the school year to ensure that lack of connectivity is not a deterrent to learning. All students are issued a school email account that is only accessible by students and staff.   | The district has been 1:1 with Chromebooks since 2012. It partnered with the Sprint ConnectEd program to provide Wi-Fi hotspots to all students who do not have consistent internet at home. Familiar tools, such as Google Forms, email, and Schoology, were used.  |
| 4. What did the district do to ensure appropriate learning opportunities for students with special needs?   | Special education students who attend general education courses utilized procedures in place for general education students. Special education students received their accommodations built in to the given Google classroom activity. The special education teacher was available by email for assistance and feedback. Special education students with severe and profound | Our special education students are familiar with and utilize iPad apps and Google products through their academic work. All special education students' accommodations were either built in to the iPad or into assigned work. Students had access to their case manager through Google Hangout, Classroom, or email. Besides completion of their core academic coursework, they were also required to complete learning activities for any special services they | Students with special needs and BRIDGE programs received their assignments through Schoology as did their general education peers. They were reminded before leaving the previous day about check-in procedures, which required them to complete a Google Attendance form. They also had access to their case managers and/or facilitators to report any issues they may have had during the e-learning day. Students in Life Skills and Transition Programs either received |

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|  | <p>disabilities enrolled in the Developmental Learning Program and Transition Program received e-learning binders from their case manager/special education teacher. These binders are specifically developed with instructional materials appropriate for the student based on their needs and Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The activities allowed students to continue to work on their IEP goals during the e-learning day.</p> | <p>would have received. For example, if a child regularly received speech services on a Friday, then during an e-learning day on a Friday, he/she would be contacted by his/her speech-language pathologist and required to participate in speech activities. Students with medical needs, either SPED, 504, or general education, were contacted in person by a nurse during e-learning day and had access to the nurse through Google Hangout or email for questions or concerns.</p> | <p>electronic assignments through their Gmail or took home hard copy assignments depending on their level of functioning and independence. Some students checked in with their teachers via email or a Google Attendance form while others called in to their teacher's voicemail to leave a message that they were checking in for the day.</p> |
| <p>5. What did the district do to monitor and verify each student's electronic participation?</p>  | <p>The district used login and usage data from Google Classroom, Hangouts, and GoGuardian.</p>   | <p>Students were required to electronically submit work via email. Staff also called each student at least twice during the day to ensure engagement. Students who staff had predicted may not be as engaged in e-learning were assigned additional monitors (paraprofessionals) to provide additional supports.</p>  | <p>Students' participation was verified through use of Google forms and existing attendance processes. Also used Schoology usage logs.</p>   |
| <p>6. What did the district do to address the extent to which student participation is within the student's control as to the time, pace, and means of learning?</p> | <p>Students were required to check in to each class by 1 p.m. Students had flexibility to define their work schedule and could use time in the evening to complete assignments.</p>  | <p>Work was either completed assignments or validation of work on a program via a report from that program. Staff also called each student at least twice during the day to ensure their engagement in the process. Those students who staff predicted may not be as engaged in e-learning were assigned additional monitors (typically paraprofessionals) to provide additional scaffolding for them to ensure success.</p>  | <p>Work was designed to be asynchronous. E-learning day decisions were made by 8 p.m. the previous night. Teachers posted lessons later that evening or by 9 a.m. the day of. Students were expected to check in for attendance by 1 p.m. Students were given several days to complete assignments.</p>  |

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| <p>7. What did the district do to provide effective notice to students and their parents or guardians of the use of particular days for e-learning?</p>  | <p>English and Spanish notices were sent via autocall, posted to the website, and local media were informed. E-learning expectations communicated annually and posted to the website.</p>  | <p>Calls, emails, texts, website posting, and mass calls were done the day before the e-learning day.</p>  | <p>Automated phone calls in English and Spanish, website postings, and media notifications were utilized.</p>   |
| <p>8. What did the district do to provide staff and students with adequate training for participation on e-learning days?</p>  | <p>Teachers were provided professional development on the procedures to be followed. Professional development for staff was provided during institute days and department meetings. Students were instructed during class on the procedures to be followed, including how to access the work and the expectations for work completion.</p> | <p>Teachers received professional development in the creation of websites, iBooks, and electronic classroom management systems over the course of the previous two years. Teachers and students were also instructed on how to access the online help desk system and online chat mechanism, called Today's Meet, as a place to go virtually for any just-in-time tech help.</p> | <p>Professional development was provided for both students and staff in previous years. Instructional coaches supported teachers in converting lessons to an e-learning format. YouTube videos were created for students to explain the process.</p>        |
| <p>9. What did the district do to ensure an opportunity for any collective bargaining negotiations with representatives of the school district's employees that would be legally required?</p> | <p>Documentation, including the sign-off from the respective union presidents, was included in application.</p>  | <p>Documentation, including the sign-off from the union president, was included in application.</p>  | <p>Collective bargaining units were involved in the process from the beginning and were involved in creation of timelines and processes.</p>  |
| <p>10. What did the district do to review and revise the program as implemented to address difficulties?</p>   | <p>Some forms were not posted, zero period was missing from attendance forms, and some students thought they had five days to complete assignments. Some students felt too much work was assigned as each class had assignments, which normally would be spread throughout day.</p>  | <p>Intend to review the type of learning activities prescribed and their link to the previous days' learning activities, the amount of assistance parents or guardians are expected to provide their children, and the ability of youngest students to maintain engagement for five consecutive hours.</p>   | <p>Surveys were sent out to students, teachers, and staff, which resulted in feedback to change times that teachers submit attendance, a shorter period to complete assignments, and refinement of attendance collection procedures using Google Forms.</p> |

## **Recommendations**

Based on the experience of the three school districts participating in the pilot program, the Illinois State Board of Education recommends the following:

- Districts utilizing e-learning days should establish mechanisms to ensure and verify at least five clock hours of instruction or school work for each student participating in an e-learning day.
- Each district should ensure access from home or other appropriate remote facility for all students participating. Types of access include computers, the internet, and other forms of electronic communication.
- Ensure appropriate learning opportunities and supports are in place for students with special needs.
- Effectively communicate notice to all students and parents or guardians on the use of e-learning days.
- Provide staff and students adequate training for e-learning day participation, with particular attention paid to the ability of children to understand procedures and expectations.
- Ensure an opportunity for any collective bargaining negotiations with representatives of the school district's employees that would be legally required.
- Be prepared to review and revise the program as needed based on the results of implementation.

(105 ILCS 5/10-20.56)

Sec. 10-20.56. E-learning days.

(a) The State Board of Education shall establish and maintain, for implementation in selected school districts a program for use of electronic-learning (e-learning) days, as described in this Section. The State Superintendent of Education shall select up to 3 school districts for this program, at least one of which may be an elementary or unit school district. On or before June 1, 2019, the State Board shall report its recommendation for expansion, revision, or discontinuation of the program to the Governor and General Assembly.

(b) The school board of a school district selected by the State Superintendent of Education under subsection (a) of this Section may, by resolution, adopt a research-based program or research-based programs for e-learning days district-wide that shall permit student instruction to be received electronically while students are not physically present in lieu of the district's scheduled emergency days as required by Section 10-19 of this Code. The research-based program or programs may not exceed the minimum number of emergency days in the approved school calendar and must be submitted to the State Superintendent for approval on or before September 1st annually to ensure access for all students. The State Superintendent shall approve programs that ensure that the specific needs of all students are met, including special education students and English learners, and that all mandates are still met using the proposed research-based program. The e-learning program may utilize the Internet, telephones, texts, chat rooms, or other similar means of electronic communication for instruction and interaction between teachers and students that meet the needs of all learners.

(c) Before its adoption by a school board, a school district's initial proposal for an e-learning program or for renewal of such a program must be approved by the State Board of Education and shall follow a public hearing, at a regular or special meeting of the school board, in which the terms of the proposal must be substantially presented and an opportunity for allowing public comments must be provided. Notice of such public hearing must be provided at least 10 days prior to the hearing by:

(1) publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the school district;

(2) written or electronic notice designed to reach the parents or guardians of all students enrolled in the school district; and

(3) written or electronic notice designed to reach any exclusive collective bargaining representatives of school district employees and all those employees not in a collective bargaining unit.

(d) A proposal for an e-learning program must be timely approved by the State Board of Education if the requirements specified in this Section have been met and if, in the view of the State Board of Education, the proposal contains provisions designed to reasonably and practicably accomplish the following:

(1) to ensure and verify at least 5 clock hours of instruction or school work for each student participating in an e-learning day;

(2) to ensure access from home or other appropriate remote facility for all students participating, including computers, the Internet, and other forms of electronic communication that must be utilized in the proposed program;

(3) to ensure appropriate learning opportunities for students with special needs;

(4) to monitor and verify each student's electronic participation;

(5) to address the extent to which student participation is within the student's control as to the time, pace, and means of learning;

(6) to provide effective notice to students and their parents or guardians of the use of particular days for e-learning;

(7) to provide staff and students with adequate



training for e-learning days' participation;

(8) to ensure an opportunity for any collective bargaining negotiations with representatives of the school district's employees that would be legally required; and

(9) to review and revise the program as implemented to address difficulties confronted.

The State Board of Education's approval of a school district's initial e-learning program and renewal of the e-learning program shall be for a term of 3 years.

(e) The State Board of Education may adopt rules governing its supervision and review of e-learning programs consistent with the provision of this Section. However, in the absence of such rules, school districts may submit proposals for State Board of Education consideration under the authority of this Section.

(Source: P.A. 99-194, eff. 7-30-15; 99-642, eff. 7-28-16; 100-760, eff. 8-10-18.)