



## **E-Learning FAQs**

### **If I already have a church/school partnership, what will I be allowed to do this year?**

Begin by starting a conversation with the principal of the school you partner with. Each district will have their own reopening plans in the fall. If classes resume in the physical building, volunteers will probably not be allowed in. There would still be many opportunities to continue teacher support, and there is a continued need for Backpack Buddies – sending food home over the weekend for those who are food insecure. The number of students needing this service may also greatly increase.

### **Why should my church partner with schools if E-Learning is necessary?**

Students, families and educators have already experienced a great disruption in the learning process in the spring. There were students already working below grade level. With the time away from the classroom, learning gaps widen. We have opportunities to support teachers and parents by providing resources, guidance and accountability measures for students. If you talk with educators, you will hear stories of children who never did the E-Learning. In fact, schools have not had contact with 16,000 South Carolina students since schools closed on March 16th. These students may not have had access to computers, internet or someone who could support them as they learned to navigate their assignments outside the classroom. As we engage our community through the local school, we are reflecting the life of Jesus, showing compassion, serving others, bringing hope and transforming lives.

### **How can I provide support to students and families if school resumes through E-Learning?**

Several churches are considering becoming an E-Learning Center for students. This may look different in each church depending on your community and church resources. Here are some options:

1. Become a “hotspot” for those who do not have internet to come and work on their own devices.
2. Provide a “computer lab” for students who do have access to computers or internet.
3. Become an “E-Learning Center”, enlisting volunteers to work with students to provide guidance and accountability as they do their assignments. Include a time of recreation, Bible story/Christian education and lunch.
4. Provide an After-School program with learning support for students. This could also be done on a Saturday when you may have more volunteers available.
5. Provide Media/Video resources to schools.

The first step is to talk with a school principal, identify their needs and see if they would be open and receptive to any of these methods of support. If you have their approval, you may be able to advertise and do registration through the school.

## **How would I staff an E-Learning Center?**

If you already have volunteers serving as Reading Buddies, mentors or in Good News Clubs, this would be a great place to start. It may be that some of your volunteers are part of the “vulnerable” population group. One church is asking if high school students could serve as volunteers; they often need volunteer hours for college applications, and their work would be done through E-Learning as well. Are there college students near you who might like to participate in this? Are there other churches and/or community organizations that could join with you to provide a great service to their community?

Consider training of volunteers. One principal has asked that all volunteers come in and meet the teachers and receive some training from their IT team.

All volunteers would need to go through background checks. You would always need to have two adults (non-related) in each “classroom” with students.

## **Can I talk about God, share Bible stories or share the gospel?**

If parents are registering for this service, know you are a church and this is part of the schedule, you can do this. If you are a Good News Club, this may be a great way for you to continue to share with students during COVID-19.

## **What would a day look like?**

One principal has suggested that students will typically spend about 2 ½ hours on E-Learning. You will want to have some type of movement scheduled in the day, whether this happens as a scheduled recreation time, or through games and activities during a Bible story time. You might offer an 8 -12 schedule, or if you wanted to provide something longer for working parents, consider an extended schedule for a limited number of students, depending on your resources.

## **How do we provide lunch?**

Students would have the option of bringing their lunch, but for many this may not be an option. In South Carolina, one in five children go to school hungry every week. Each district has plans for how they are going to continue to feed their students. You could see if you might be a drop-off site for those meals. You could also partner with area restaurants/businesses to provide meals on rotating basis.

## **How can a Media Team be a resource to a school?**

You may have a videographer who can create videos for your local school. When one local high school had many students not doing their E-Learning, a church worked with the principal to produce an encouraging video that was sent out to students through social media. E-Learning participation increased! You may be able to help produce an instructional video that would help parents navigate the E-Learning classroom as they help their children. There are many possibilities as you brainstorm with your school partner.

## **How can we continue to support teachers during E-Learning?**

This has been an especially stressful year for teachers. Some may be teaching in a classroom as well as through E-Learning this fall. There are many extra hours of learning and preparation involved. Many are also teaching E-Learning classrooms while also caring for and teaching their own children. Churches can pray for teachers, provide personal notes of encouragement, and/or give tangible gifts that show appreciation. Ask your school principal how you might best show your support. You may also want to identify teachers in your own church family and provide support to them as well.

## **What else should we consider?**

This list of questions will give more direction to your plans. Answers will vary from district to district, school to school and church to church.

1. Do we serve our partner school only - or several schools in our area?
2. What is our target group? Will we work with all grades in the school? If we serve an elementary school, would we also provide for middle school family members?
3. Do all schools use the same platform for E-learning?
4. How will students be chosen if we have more applications than we have spots? (First come/first serve, those considered "at-risk", those we already have a relationship with through mentoring)
5. What hours will we provide this service?
6. Will we provide transportation (social distancing, volunteers, liability)?
7. Is the internet strong enough in my building to support this?
8. Do the students in my school have Chromebooks? These would have school filters already installed. Other devices would not.
9. What would our schedule look like, accounting for about 2 ½ hours of E-learning? How do we incorporate some "movement"?
10. How long will we commit to E-learning support? When enlisting volunteers, know whether you are asking for a semester or a year commitment.
11. How can we engage the community to work together to help in this? Look within your congregation and see what resources you have for businesses who might collaborate /volunteer. We do not have to have all the resources. Remember that schools cannot ask for help, but we can!
12. How can we use our video resources to help our schools share their messages to students/parents?

## **Is there anyone else already doing this?**

Heart4Schools is a network of churches serving students and teachers in South Carolina. We can put you in touch with other churches stepping into these waters. Contact Angela McNeal, Church and Community Ministries Director at 803-227-6079 or email at [angelamcneal@scbaptist.org](mailto:angelamcneal@scbaptist.org) for more information.