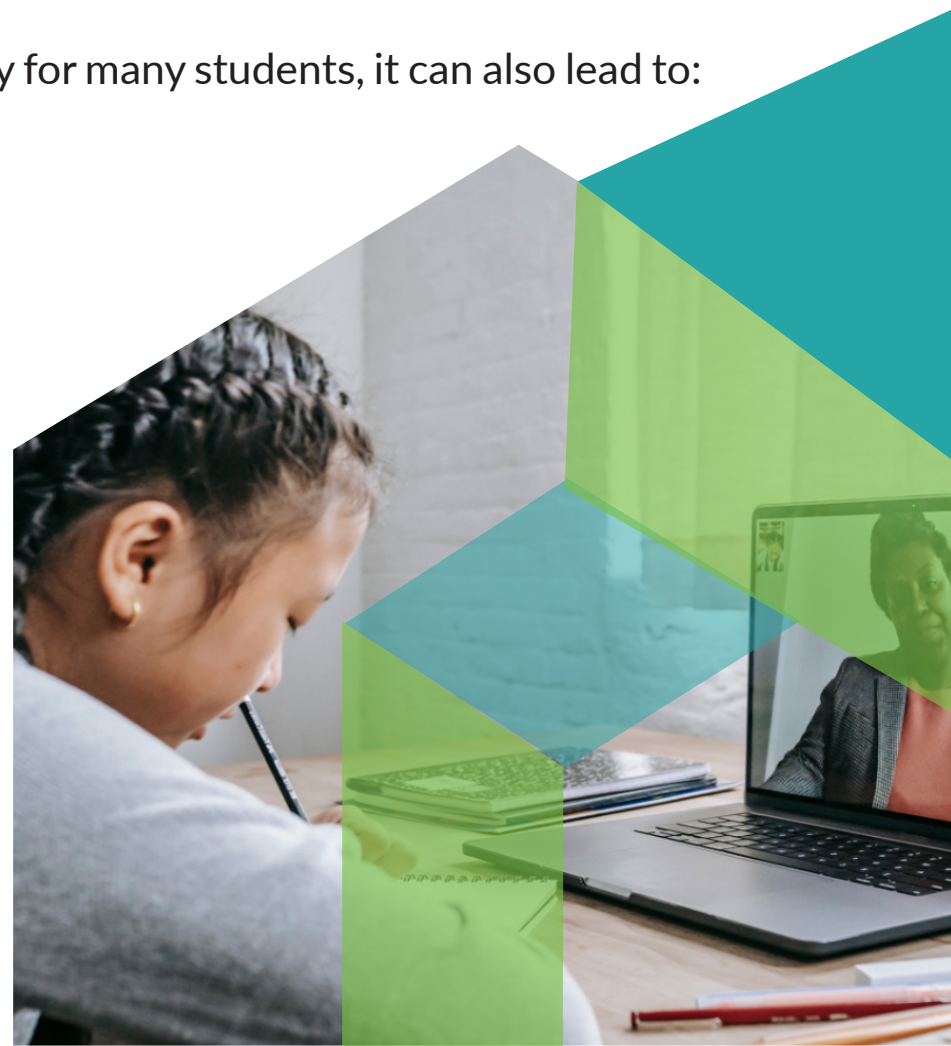# Supporting Students Through Digital Learning

Secondary Super Strategies | INTRODUCTION

Digital learning can offer unique opportunities to individualize and personalize instruction and support services, while also establishing an inclusive learning environment to meet the diverse needs of all learners. Taking advantage of digital technologies can increase and improve opportunities for building supports and scaffolds to help all students understand, navigate, and engage in digital learning environments.

While digital learning can provide flexibility and autonomy for many students, it can also lead to:

- feelings of social isolation,
- communication problems,
- frustration with technology, or
- academic setbacks.

This document provides strategies designed to support continued learning and academic growth while providing students and families with a routine and sense of community.

- Maintain your district website, student and parent portals, and any other virtual platforms with up-to-date information regarding policy changes, school closures, local support services, and more.

- Keep technology as simple, familiar, and flexible as possible.
  - √ Assess digital literacy skills to identify students' needs.
  - √ Teach students how to problem-solve and ask for help with technology through an on-line checklist and forum specifically for technology questions.
  - √ Encourage family members to become familiar with the technology.

- Provide students with multiple modalities to reflect and demonstrate their learning. This could include:
  - √ video creation,
  - √ podcast,
  - √ mind maps,
  - √ oral presentation, and
  - √ visual storyboard.

- Promote a sense of community and belonging by hosting virtual conversation circles, breakfast chats, or other small meetups to give space for listening and connection.

- Schedule regular one-on-one check-ins with students to reinforce group instruction and provide wellness check.
  - √ Consider holding virtual "office" hours at a set time each week for students to utilize when needed.
  - √ Assign peer-to-peer check-ins where each student is assigned a classmate to touch base with and have them report back with a summary.

- Establish clear expectations for two-way communication with family members.
  - √ Define when and how you can be contacted.

- Provide links to translation services for families whose first language is not English.

- Set up a virtual class social hour to help families and students connect with one another.

- Reach out to local employers and postsecondary institutions to schedule virtual tours of the facility or college campus.
  - √ Encourage students to prepare questions around the specific career or program.

SOURCES:

[1]Herburger, D., Holdheide, L., &; Sacco, D., PhD. (2020, September). Removing Barriers to Effective Distance Learning by Applying the High-Leverage Practices: Tips and Tools. Retrieved March 29, 2021, from https://ncsi-library.wested.org/resources/680.

[2]School Closure Toolkit for Districts: Special Populations. (2020, May). Retrieved March 29, 2021, from https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/health-&-safety/School%20Closure%20Toolkit_Special%20Populations.pdf.